

From the Reformation to the Third Reich

Protestantism's Impact on Western Culture



The 2014 Conference on Gospel Discernment and Spiritual Tyranny

John Immel Sessions 1-6: Transcripts and Power Points

PDF File

JOHN IMMEL 2015 SESSION 1 FC

JOHN IMMEL: I know that people online can't see this, but this is - luckily, you guys can see this. So about three weeks after the conference last year, I get an e-mail from Paul, Paul Dohse, the organizer of this conference. And the title of the e-mail is "Thoughts?" In the body of the e-mail it says, "See attached jpeg." That's it. So I read this and I can't for the life of me figure out what he's talking about. So I write to Paul back and I say, "Paul, can you explain this?" Now you have all heard Paul speak. So it is at no end of irony that Paul's e-mails are notoriously short to the point of cryptic. There are no rabbit trails in Paul's e-mails. So I write on the reply, "I have no idea what you want from me here." So finally, Paul writes me back and he says - is this hot? Is this a little too hot?

PAUL DOHSE: A little, yeah.

JOHN IMMEL: Can you turn it down just a touch? Check, check, check? Does that work?

PAUL DOHSE: That's better.

JOHN IMMEL: That's a whole better? Okay, good. All right, so he writes me back and he says, the idea - now mind you, with this in mind, this is Paul's response. "The idea that freedom of man is practically a pipedream because he is enslaved to his own desires spiritually, hence, at the very least indifferent to political freedom on a social level." So, here's his question. "So will the New Calvinist Movement cause political indifference in American society among Christians?" And I'm like, "Oh, I get it." So then I go back to this. And for those of you online, you can't see this. But this guy, Mark Ray, I get to use the cool pointer now. Mark Ray here, I don't know who he is, don't care, don't matter.

He says right here, "It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters." And this is when I finally understood what Paul's after. And he's interested in me commenting on the impact of New Calvinism on American culture, what it's trying to do.

Now, of course, he, this Mark Ray, is actually quoting a guy by the name of Edmund Burke. You can look him up. He's not really an enigmatic character. But Edmund Burke held the fundamental assumption about human existence, and this quote ultimately that the nature of man requires that man can only be governed by a totalitarian government, that the function of government is human restraint. So anyway, Paul is asking me to weigh in on this particular issue. And my response was, yes. I'll summarize. Yes, this is exactly what the Neo-Calvinist movement is willing to do. Now my e-mail response to Paul was about 500 words. I gave a detailed explanation, and it turns out - well, I gave that explanation. I won't tell you what I said. And so then, I send them off to Paul, and Paul says to me, "This would be a perfect progression from this year to next year. This could be your 2014 thesis for next year's conference." So this is exactly what we're going to talk about, the Edmund Burke comment and its specific impact on the progression of American thought, where we are. Now of course the flyer says that I'm going to talk about National Socialist Germany. That is true. We are going to talk about that.

But before I get too much farther into this, I guess I do need to make some introductions. My name is John Immel. I like to introduce myself this way. I am no one from nowhere. And the important thing about this is that there is a general trend and a general move within Christianity. The assumption being that if you're standing behind a pulpit that you bear some form of authority, and that the expectation is that whatever I say, you have some obligation to accept. I reject that as a fundamental premise. I'm not here as a representative of authority. I am here to present to you ideas and the most powerful

arguments that I can bring to you. And your part of this conversation, and it is a conversation, is for you to bring your highest and best rational self to this engagement. I'm going to make the most powerful argument I can, and I want you to engage your brain and to think and to analyze and to find out what is correct, what is true. And if I've done my job well, you will end up agreeing with me because I believe I hold right ideas. But here is how this works. If you can find a flaw on what I said, then you have the ability to say, "Hey, John. Now here I think is an adjustment." And if you make a powerful argument, if you make a good argument, and I apply my rational individuality to that, I go, "You know what? That's true."

Now having said that, I did write a book. I wrote a book, this book, called *Blight in the Vineyard: Exposing the Roots, Myths, and Emotional Torments of Spiritual Tyranny*. You can buy this online at amazon.com. It's \$23.99 online. If you like what I say in the conference, those of you who are watching online, if you like what I say, you're going to find more of the same in here. Now I will say this. I wrote this, and I'll get into this just a little bit more here in the moment. I wrote this using a modern denomination called Sovereign Grace Ministries as my anecdote. But the book is not about Sovereign Grace Ministries specifically. The book is about how the ideas embedded in what we're going to talk about shaped this specific ministry. So I talk about a who so we can talk about a what. And the what are the ideas that are behind it. And in particular, the Neo-Calvinist, the new resurgent movement of Calvinism in the United States.

Now it is a little dated because when I wrote this, most of the major players, and those of you familiar within evangelical Christianity certainly will have heard names like CJ Mahaney, Brent Detwiler, Joshua Harris. These were all people at the top of the uber super apostles, whatever they want to call themselves now. There's been a split within that denomination, and so that current history is not reflected in the book, but it actually doesn't matter because the book is not about the personalities or the organization of that

denomination. The book is about how the ideas were used to create this denomination in Sovereign Grace Ministries and ultimately how that causes them to act within that denomination. So you'll still get the same things even though like I said it's historically dated.

So this conference, this specific conference represents the culmination of about - at least 20 years of thinking for me. And to give you a sense of scope, which is what I think I do best, I think I give people the framework best. I need to actually talk about me personally a little bit. I got born again when I was 15. So my exposure to Christianity is going on 30 years. Now I got born again and became immediately a part of a brethren church in Eaton, Ohio, actually not too far from where we are now. And my introduction to Christianity was dramatic. I'm confident there are people that can tell you about my life during my high school career. But I took Christianity seriously, and I invested in Christianity. I invested in what I believe to be the truth with absolute commitment. So by the time I was 18, I was fully invested and fully committed to Christianity, modern American Christianity. Now I'm going to make a distinction here. Modern American Christianity, Christianity in America, and we'll talk about this much later as a historical development. In America, Christianity first had the opportunity to disagree, the first to fundamentally diverse from the historic Calvinist roots. And about starting in the early 19th century, in the United States a unique brand of Christianity showed up, and that was the Pentecostal movement. And the Pentecostal movement was a renewal movement, a return to the gifts of the Spirit--speaking in tongues, healing, and a very immediate, very specifically present kind of Christianity. And it was rooted in and it had some of its intellectual roots in the Wesleyan movement. They rejected determinism. They rejected predestination. And they believed in free will.

Now when I say charismatic and when I say Pentecostal, unfortunately, there is some profound limitations to those definitions because there really is no formal

definition of Pentecostal and no formal definition of charismatic. I can tell you what they tend to emphasize. Well, all renewal movements are necessarily movements of personality. Most of the early revival movements in the United States came from men with specific messages--John Alexander Dowie, John G. Lake, William J. Seymour. If you have any interest at all in learning the evolution of charismatic/Pentecostal movements, these names are going to be at the top of the list. Now by the time we hit fast-forward a few - probably about 40 years, we're now in the middle of a resurgent charismatic movement called the Charismatic Renewal. And it was Pentecostalism all grown up. And one of the primary leading figures of that timeframe would be men like Oral Roberts, one of the first men in the history of the world to impact the globe by mass media.

Now when I came into Christianity, this is around 1981, '82, the charismatic renewal was still unformed. There weren't really mega churches as you and I know mega churches. We were still back then arguing whether or not you could have guitars in church, whether you could have drums in church. Now today, if you don't have contemporary music and guitars and drums, nobody shows up. But back then, people were going to war over whether or not you should have a guitar and an amplifier, to give you some sense of proportion of how far we've come. Now mind you, by the time I'm 19 years old, I end up going for a series of reasons to Oral Roberts University, thinking that I would arrive at say charismatic utopia. People that believe - most of my young life, I took, you know, the idea of taking the Gospel to the streets very seriously. And so I was very much on the frontline, and the nature of social hostility, I had experienced that. So I was tired. And so I was looking for a place where I could fit in and blend in. Now unfortunately, my personality and who I am pretty much eliminates that as an option.

So I get to Oral Roberts University, and my love is, of course, ideas. And so I find myself terribly attracted to studying theology. My degree is in Systematic

and Historical Theology with a minor in Old Testament. What that basically means is that the sum of my education, my bachelor's degree, was in church history, the progression of church doctrine and systematic theology. Now the funny thing about Oral Roberts University was this. I get there thinking that I would necessarily fit in and that many of the doctrines that I have grown up learning and investing in, that they would be reflected in the school of theology. And then you have Oral Roberts as the icon, the school of theology then therefore. And mind you, this is not Bible school. This is a real genuine committed school of theology. Well, aha me. I get into the Department of Theology and the department head at the time was Siegfried Chasman [SOUNDS LIKE 0:14:53]. And Siegfried Chasman was a Calvinist, a committed Calvinist from Europe. I think he was from not Germany, the country that stays perpetually neutral.

MAN: Switzerland.

JOHN IMMEL: Switzerland. I think he's from Switzerland. I could be wrong, but I think that's where he came from. So he's a committed Calvinist. Now mind you, most people make this fundamental mistake. They assume that Calvinism is somehow negotiable, that we can somehow pick and choose which parts of Calvinism we want. And so then they try to hybridize a lot of these ideas. And in particular when confronted with the charismatic movement, the doctrines that are most consistently ascribed to that renewal, people tend to think, "Well, we can kind of pull them in, but this is really the true core of the Gospel, and if we can figure how to somehow successfully integrate it all, then everything will be fine." This is false. It's not possible. It does not work, and we're going to eventually figure out why. And on many levels, Dr. Chasman was a super nice guy, but he was a committed Calvinist, and he organized the Department of Theology around that body of idea. And he knew he had an entire student body committed, for the most part, to the Pentecostal

charismatic concepts. So he was patient. But at the end of the day, in his mind, real theology was rooted in Calvinism.

Now herein is the implicit conflict. You would go to chapel Tuesdays and Thursdays, and the charismatic speaker of the day would blow through and say whatever they had to say, and the Theology Department who sat physically, if you can envision this, in maybe center would sit up here, and I could physically see them, and without fail, they were universally outraged at whatever was said up front. And I will never forget the day, I think it was the leader of music, stands up in front and he's leading worship for the student body, and he stops and he says, "Now everybody clap because when we clap, we summon angels." I can see why some of you looks - you're like, "What?" Exactly. That was the kind of doctrinal output that very often came from the front. Now I'm not saying that it was universally bad. I'm just saying that you could hear things like this. And the Theology Department would react mildly. So I was dead square in the middle of the ongoing fight, the power and the effectiveness of charismatic style doctrines and the critique of pure, well, effectively, the only form of academic theology that is Protestantism [SOUNDS LIKE 0:17:52].

So now I'm going to fast-forward through about a decade. Of course, I graduate and I have no home. Charismatic churches don't have the interest on what I've learned or what I know. But by the same token, I get to spend an entire college career addressing the fundamental problems that I saw with Calvinism as such, combating those arguments, being aware of these arguments, writing endless papers on those arguments, defending those papers against myself and the entire classroom. So I am no stranger to the fight. By the time I get to Washington, D.C., the Washington, D.C. area, specifically Gaithersburg, Maryland, I am now 26 years old, and I land on the doorstep of a then People of Destiny International. Now for those of you who don't know, People of Destiny International eventually becomes Sovereign Grace Ministries, but this is still

them in their sort of infancy. They have become sort of a national player, but they have not made the dramatic move from where they were as a generally charismatic church--they believe in speaking in tongues, laying hands on the sick. Now granted, there was very qualified doctrine from their church, but they still practiced it on some level. Along about 1991, they started to make a transition into what I knew was Calvinism, and I had fundamental objections to Calvinism from that point. Now of course they look at me - well, let me say this first. When I first got there, they presented themselves as these very broad-minded, interested in ideas thinkers, social commentators, and frankly, I thought it felt home. I was eventually to learn that was totally false. They had no interest in ideas. And they had no interest in anybody else's input. I made the faulty assumption that I could object, that this was a reasonable action on my part, on anybody's part as I saw a problem with the doctrine, that they should be able to say, "No, that's not true."

This of course embroiled me in all manner of church conflict to the point that they eventually told me I was deleterious. "And oh, by the way, why don't you go out and start your own church?" That has never ceased to amaze me, the irony. By the way, you're deleterious, which means, if you don't know, evil, wicked, pernicious and destructive. You're deleterious. By all means, go out and start your own church. To this day, I think that's hilarious. Yes, by the way, we can't control you. Would you really go out there and wreck everybody else's life?

So I'm confronted with these ideas. And trust me I was a half an inch - even knowing what I know, I was a half an inch from making the jump. I was a half an inch from making the jump and committing myself to Calvinism as such. Now that didn't obviously happen. And it took me a long time to unravel the problems. But because of the way I tend to approach the world, I saw commonalities. Now of course the original criticism was, "Well, the reason there's a conflict, John, is because you're here. The conflict is you." Okay. And

in as much as you accept some other assumptions, then that makes abundant sense. But remember, by the time I land on their door, I got almost a decade of Christian life behind me. I already have an identity, an identity that spanned a number of different denominations, a number of different church flavors, plus the intention to create theology as a professional pursuit. So the standard denunciations and the standard objections to me didn't work. I did not quickly embrace the notion that I could be so fundamentally wrong. But this ultimately set me on the path of identifying what is the commonality here? Because here is what I noticed, I had already seen these doctrines in some form and in some fashion even in the charismatic churches. I get out of Sovereign Grace Ministries and I go participate in other churches and I still see the same themes, the same ideas. And trust me, I was one of the few people going around when - this is back in the '90s, actually objecting to the broader actions of Sovereign Grace Ministries. I was absolutely a lone voice. So any preacher I ever heard that ever said to me, every preacher in the pulpit, "Your job is to submit to me. It is my job to defend the sheep," if I heard that, I specifically went to them and I ask them to get involved in protecting the sheep in context to the conduct of this ministry. Universally, they said no way.

So I see these things creeping up consistently, and fundamental to them was the doctrine of submission and authority, the presumption that select men had the moral right to dictate to me intellectual conclusion, and that concurrent with that submission, that they were somehow uniquely qualified to understand the truth and nobody else really was. And that by virtue of that authority, that they had the right to treat me however they chose. However they qualified that justification, at the root, that's what they presumed. And if I was not willing to embrace what they said, it was a moral failing on my part. And the presumption is that the moral failing began with me. And for a while of course I accepted the presumption that the problem was me. But then I realized, wait a minute. This stuff exists whether I'm at the church or not. There's only one other common denominator, and that is the doctrine.

Well, I had enough historical background. My degree made it possible for me to understand the evolution of Christian thought effectively from the 1st century to about the 18th century. And I had enough church history background to understand that this was actually not uncommon. Once I identified those fundamental elements, I realized this has happened before, and it's happened over and over and over. I finally had to ask myself, how is it possible that the Church finds itself in bed with tyrants or abetting tyrants or as tyrants itself? And let me catch up on the slides here.

And that's when I came up with this. I've shown this in pretty much every conference we've got. This is the Gospel According to John Immel, and I identified this consistency. "All people act logically from their assumptions. It does not matter how inconsistent the ideas or insane the rationale. They will act until the logic is fulfilled. Therefore, when you see masses of people taking the same destructive actions, find the assumptions and you will find the cause." Why is the church so consistently found aiding and abetting tyranny? When you see masses of people taking the same destructive actions, find the assumptions and you will find the cause. I wasn't the only person that had ever made this observation.

Now of course when I formulated this, I hadn't read James Madison's. James Madison actually said in the *Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments*. James Madison, point 7, "Because experiences witnesseth that ecclesiastical establishments, instead of maintaining the purity and efficacy of religion, have had a contrary operation. During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity been on trial. What have been its fruits? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the clergy, ignorance and servility in the laity, in both, superstition, bigotry and persecution." Point 8, "Because what influence in fact have ecclesiastical establishments have on civil society? In some instances they have been seen to erect a spiritual tyranny on

the ruins of civil authority. In many instances they have been seen upholding the thrones of political tyranny. And in no instance had they been seen as guardians of the liberties of the people." And James Madison nailed it. The bulk of Christian history is one long slow motion train wreck of tyranny. This bothered me viscerally. This is a problem. If we ultimately genuinely believe that God is love and yet with stunning consistency and the church that he sees, supposed to call his own, ends up at the forefront of tyranny, there is something seriously wrong with this picture.

Of course, like I said, we are going to talk about National Socialist Germany. But for me to do that, I need to reclaim being able to talk about Nazism. For the most part, the moment you say Nazi, people tend to assume that it's pejorative and that you're describing someone who is a jackbooted thug, and the tantamount assertion is that you just want to start sticking people in ovens and killing them. So on some level, I understand why the discussion of Nazis has become taboo. People who don't know what they're talking about tend to toss around the accusation without any real association or attachment to reality. But this doesn't really explain why the discussion of Nazis is so taboo. And I have a conspiracy theory, and I'm going to tell you my conspiracy theory because I think it bears directly on what we're going to ultimately talk about. I am stunned at the veto power people believe they have when we discuss Nazis, how quickly they are to dismiss the discussion.

National Socialist Germany is an instructional morality event of epic proportions. Let me put it to you this way. If I start talking about Joseph Stalin or Lenin and I talk to you about the things that they did, the fact that they turned Soviet Russia into a bloodbath, the fact that Joseph Stalin created a government-created famine to wipe out a third of its population, if I talk to you about the fact that they had concentration camps and that they did all these evil things, for the most part, people shrug and go, "Okay, maybe that's true." And at the end of the day, if they actually want to really carry any discussion

on it at all, particularly from the Christian perspective, they go, "Well, of course, that's what happened. It was a bunch of atheists, you know. If you abandon God, then you don't have any foundation for morality. And if you don't have any foundation for morality, you get to act whatever you want, you know, a bunch of atheists, secular humanism, all those bad things." And people go, "Eh, that's not such a big deal." But the moment I say Nazi, there's a visceral reaction and a visceral rejection of any objective observation of what happened. I find this curious, because in each instance they actually produced the exact same outcomes. The Nazis did exterminate 7 million Jews, but they also exterminated 7 million other people. The body count in Germany was 40 million people, and communists were leading among them, men who held ideology, not race.

And here's why I think this is. And here's why I think being able to reclaim this, resisting the veto, the stigma. Two things: Germany in the 1920s was Christian by any definition. Not only was it Christian, it was Lutheran Christian by any definition. Of the 60 million people that resided in Germany, 40 million identifying themselves as evangelicals. For the most part, evangelical Germany is effectively the same as evangelical America. The doctrinal distinctions, the doctrinal deviations are so minor as to be ultimately irrelevant. The other 20 million identified themselves as Catholic or some variation of Protestantism, with only about 1 percent embodying a genuinely non-Christian mysticism. You understand? And the second thing is that I don't think people want to notice that National Socialism was about socialism. And I think this is actually the biggest problem. Most people tend to believe that socialism is a kinder, gentler version of economic organization. And if they can keep you away from noticing too closely, then it was socialism was the underlying goal. The Final Solution, the destruction of undesirables, that's the leaf on the very end of the social tree. But the underlying premise was always that it is the state's job and the state's responsibility, it was the state's moral obligation to take productive work and redistribute it for the masses. This is a prevailing

assumption that we are actually seeing emerging in the United States. And the thing that I think that people want to prevent is people noticing the relationship between socialism and the ultimate action that came next in National Socialist Germany. Of course, I firmly reject the notion that people have the right to veto this conversation. It doesn't make me a nut. All I'm doing is making an observation in the content of history.

Of course, there is a common objection that the reason the evil in Germany took place is because a select few did bad things and that good men did nothing. The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing. Does this explain what happened to National Socialist Germany? I'm going to let you ponder that question. Before we can genuinely answer that question, we need to do some serious remedial work. We need to understand what shaped Germany in the 1920s. And the reason we need to understand history is because as Adolf Hitler once said, "A man who has no sense of history is a man who has no ears or eyes."

Now for me to do my job, I'm going to have to introduce you to philosophy. I see some new faces. Some of you have seen this before, but I need new ideas, fresh ideas, different ideas need to be repeated and repeated until people grasp the implication. Of course, in Christianity, the moment somebody says "philosophy," their minds immediately jump to Paul talking about vain philosophies and they go, "Hoo, punt [SOUNDS LIKE 0:36:05]," and this conversation is over. Well, there are vain philosophies. There are philosophies that the nature of their formulation is vanity. That is true. But the concept of philosophy, the study philosophy is the integration of ideas. Philosophy is comprised of these five disciplines. The first one is metaphysics. The second one is epistemology. The third is ethics. Fourth is politics. And the last one is aesthetics. Here's an explanation of what this means. The nature of existence is metaphysics. How man knows what he knows is called epistemology. How we

value what we know is ethics. How we interact with people is politics. And how man creatively reflects his existence back to himself is called aesthetics or art.

Now here's the thing. Man cannot help but integrate his ideas. It's the way he's built. From the time you're this big, the first thing you want to understand is how it fits together. He must organize his ideas into a cohesive system exactly like a fish must breathe in water. For man, his ideas do not hang in a vacuum. His ideas must be attached to something. And he must start from the most rudimentary part of his existence. He must start at the beginning. It is a hard thing to learn to think in essentials, to think in principles, to think in terms of ideological relationships. It is hard to learn to think philosophically. However, most people are unaware of this big picture. Most people don't think in these terms. But they're constantly treating their ideas as if - most people take ideas kind of like smorgasbord. Oh, I like this one, and I like this one. Nah, I don't like that one. I like this one. And they put it all in a basket and they [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:38:39]. Yeah, that's pretty good. Yeah, that's pretty good. And they treat the ideas very carelessly. And yet, they will often find themselves dead square in the middle of some form of conflict, some form of psychic pain. And because they treat ideas carelessly, they don't recognize that the psychic pain that they hold is directly tied to mutually exclusive ideas, mutually exclusive values that are in conflict. And this is because they have not done a successful job at integrating, eliminating the errors from the most rudimentary level of their ideas to the practical outworking. And the result is uncertainty. Susan made a fantastic point in her presentation, and she was talking about the woman who could not reconcile whether she was going to heaven or not. She is experiencing an enormous amount of psychic pain because in her mind, was she damned or was she elect? She could not reconcile the question because by doctrine, she cannot reconcile that question, unless she does what? She commits an act of atrocity that she knows in her mind, at least by doctrinal construct, can never be solved, can never be fixed. But notice, she could not handle the intellectual chaos. She could not handle in her own head

that she couldn't resolve this fundamental problem. Her metaphysical existence, the very nature of her fundamental existence, she needed that result. And that drove her to kill her own baby. This is indicative of the very need that man has to solve this problem in his own mind. It is this kind of power that philosophy really has over the minds of men. It is the nature of who we are.

I have another Gospel According to John Immel quote. Since I'm quoting myself, it seems ironic that I can't think of the actual reference. Man abhors chaos like nature abhors a vacuum. Man cannot abide intellectual chaos. He must order the nature of his world. And the anecdote that Susan identified, the reason people went insane, the reason there was so much psychic pain in the Puritan world is because the nature of the ideas, the full philosophical statement that is Calvinism drove them to ideological chaos. Man cannot tolerate this. Hence, the quest for an integration of ideas is what's dominated the whole of human history.

So philosophy is the process of learning to think in integration, learning to think in putting things, ideas together, learning to see essentials, learning to think in principles, learning to be aware of how you integrate your ideas. Don't treat ideas carelessly. Learn to identify, wait a minute. If I believe this and I believe this, you realize those don't go together. There's a conflict. And the moment you experience psychic pain, one of the first things man tends to do is to go, "Oops, I don't like that reality." Poof. And he punts [SOUNDS LIKE 0:42:29] the inconsistency into the abyss. Man's greatest vice is his determination to look at reality and go, "You know what? I don't care." To wipe reality out of existence, to take what is and just go, "You know what? I don't like that." In a recent blog conversation, a man advocating the power of the Matthew 18 ethic finds himself in the middle of a fight he doesn't like against someone's argument he cannot handle. And his response was to go, "You're dead to me." To solve his intellectual problem, what did he do? He wiped that

man out of existence. This is man's greatest vice. I want to introduce one rabbit trail. If you read the first chapter of Romans, it is man's determination to look at reality and wipe out its causal relationship. It sends him into depravity. Rabbit trail, I'll let you chew on that.

Since it is the subject of this conversation, we are already familiar with how this actually breaks out with Augustine, with Calvinistic thought. Now you're going to hear this relentlessly. When I say Augustine, I mean Calvin. When I say Calvin, I mean Augustine. They are absolutely connected. And there is no reasonable man with any rational integrity that would like to make a case otherwise. I don't really understand how I can be any more blunt. Doctrinally, there is fundamentally no distinction between Augustinian doctrine, Lutheran doctrine and Calvinist doctrine. So Augustine says, what is man's basic metaphysics? Man is corrupt. Man is metaphysically corrupt. He is corrupt from the nature of his existence. He has no redeeming good quality in his existence. Anytime you think you've got something good, you don't. Because man is metaphysically corrupt, that means epistemologically, you can't know anything. Because man can't physically know anything, his moral responsibility, his ethical responsibility is his own self-destruction. And because man cannot do good, in other words, he will not follow through on his ethical standard, he necessarily needs a government that will compel him to that action. So if you won't sacrifice you, there will be a government that will sacrifice you. And last of course is aesthetics. Aesthetics, we're not going to talk a lot of it, but I'm going to make a couple of references. This is how man reflects the world back to himself. Let me see if I can figure out how to say this quickly. Man needs a means by which he refuels his existence. And he needs a means by which how he takes his most rudimentary assumptions about his life, and he puts that into a form that when he looks back at it, he is refreshed. This is the root of aesthetics. However, if you presume man's metaphysical corruption and you presume all of these fundamental things that Augustine presumes, what kind of art do you create? You create churches lined with

gargoyles. You create Dante's *Inferno* where the nature of your art specifically reflects man catastrophe, destruction, impotence, fear, terror, all that anxiety, all that neuroses, all that psychoses is what is reflected back. So your art will always follow your most rudimentary philosophical assumptions.

Now I want to introduce this. You need to understand these elements to understand what I'm going to talk about. The dominant philosophy on the planet is collectivism. It is the presumption that man is first and foremost the property of the state, the property of society, the property of tribe, the property of community or denomination or local church or sect. The almost universal assumption about the nature of man's existence is that man is the property of the state. Now I know I have statism up there. I'm using this as a generalization. We have collectivism is the biggest box. Everything else is a reflection of this. So we have collectivism, statism which is the political organization of a given geographical political organization, society or the tribe or the community or denomination or sect or church. The presumption is that man is by design a part of this. All right?

Now this I introduced last year. If I may be so bold, this is my contribution to philosophy. I've never seen this anyplace else. I think this is a John Immel original. I have identified five categories of arguments that you will see in all forms of tyranny. I don't care the ideological pedigree. Ultimately, all arguments - and there's a specific reason I actually put this in a spider web. I wanted you to see that these are connected. These are not static boxes to put stuff in. You will see these arguments consistently with dynamic tension throughout. And here they are. And they start with, inasmuch as they start anywhere with the idea of incompetent masses. Man is fundamentally, metaphysically incompetent. And because he is metaphysically incompetent, he is universally guilty. In the Augustinian construct - this is the foundation of Augustine's construct. Man is metaphysically a sinner, metaphysically morally reprobate. He is universally guilty. He can never escape his guilt. It doesn't matter what

action he takes. And because man is this and this, it requires that he has a government that dictates good. Once we get to the government stage, the government organizes everything around - the government must first abolish ambition. And what I mean by this is our government must first abolish individual initiative. Man can possess no individual self-motivation. The self must die. And once it succeeds in abolishing abolition, its specific goal is collective conformity. You will remember this here, this right here, this is the goal. The goal is utopian prestige. In every collectivist ideology, you will ultimately see the proclaimed ideal is some utopian ideal, whether it's the Marxist's workers' paradise, whether it's the Gaia, the utopia of earth nature rule, nature worship, whether it be heaven, racial purity, it's always some utopian ideal that has no material expression. In other words, you'll never see it here.

Now I want to go back to - I have one more point that I want to make. Now remember I asked you the question, for evil to triumph, the only thing necessary is for good men to do nothing. This is where most people encounter the philosophical system, ethics. For those of you watching me online, I'm pointing to ethics.

PAUL DOHSE: Actually, we can see the chart pretty good.

JOHN IMMEL: Okay, good. Most people have very little exposure to formal metaphysical salience [SOUNDS LIKE 0:52:27] or formal epistemological salience. What they will very consistently do is quote ethical expectations, and they don't realize that they're actually admitting and committing to an ethical formulation that is part of a bigger picture. When you hear people say something like, "He's selfish. He should sacrifice," I mean, you all have heard that. How many people have said that? Those words, the expectation that it was moral, that selfishness was specifically immoral and that the nature of sacrifice is specifically moral, that is actually reflective of a much bigger

philosophical statement that we are going to eventually talk about. Usually, our culture's social values are expressions of ethics, what we find offensive, what we get offended by in public is specifically a reflection of our ethical values. And those ethical values are ultimately reflected in all of the entire progression here. Do you understand? People don't know where these ethical formulations come from, which means they don't really think about what they mean. But when you hear such comments throughout a culture, they are reflecting a full integration of their root [SOUNDS LIKE 0:54:03] philosophy.

Now ethics is where man experiences a political or philosophical formulation. Remember the question I've asked you because this is going to be the theme we're going to hammer on throughout the entire five, however many, sessions I got. I ask you the question. The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing. Ponder that question in light of that right there. All right? That's the first session.



David Ingram

A country where all of it's citizens were truly governed by the Golden Rule would need no laws.

Like · Comment · Share · 7 hours ago ·



Heather Ingram and 7 others like this.



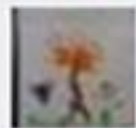
Mark Ray Yes, only defense against such nations not similarly disposed. Edmund Burke would agree in this way, "It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."

6 hours ago · Like



Paul M. Dohse Sr. David, is there a way you can block me from seeing comments on your posts? I want to see your posts, but I really don't care to see the comments. If I have a comment I will email you. Same for Heather to if you don't mind.

4 hours ago · Edited · Like



David Ingram Not as far as I know.

4 hours ago · Like




Paul M. Dohse Sr. Ok, well, I don't suppose there is a filter for biblically illiterate philosophical stupidity that came out of Europe during the Colonial Era.

8 minutes ago · Edited · Like




Paul M. Dohse Sr. I.e: every person born into the world has the works of God written on their hearts and a conscience that either excuses or accuses them. The idea that a free mankind is an oxymoron because of the whole total depravity construct is pure ignorance.

4 hours ago · Like



“The idea that the freedom of man as a practicality is a pipe dream because he is enslaved to his own desires spiritually. Hence, at the very least indifference to political freedom on a social level. So, will the New Calvinist movement cause a political indifference in American society among Christians?”



“It is ordained in the eternal construction of things that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.” - Edmund Burke


Gospel according to John **Immel** Chapter 3: 1-3

- 1) All people act logically from their assumptions.
- 2) It does not matter how inconsistent the ideas or insane the rationale. They will act until the logic is fulfilled.
- 3) Therefore, when you see masses of people taking the same destructive actions, find the assumptions and you will find the cause.

James Madison:

7. Because experience witnesseth that ecclesiastical establishments, instead of maintaining the purity and efficacy of Religion, have had a contrary operation. During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity been on trial. What have been its fruits? More or less in all places, pride and indolence in the Clergy, ignorance and servility in the laity, in both, superstition, bigotry and persecution.
8. Because . . . What influence in fact have ecclesiastical establishments had on Civil Society? In some instances they have been seen to erect a spiritual tyranny on the ruins of the Civil authority; in many instances they have been seen upholding the thrones of political tyranny: in no instance have they been seen the guardians of the liberties of the people.

Memorial and Remonstrance Religious Assessments



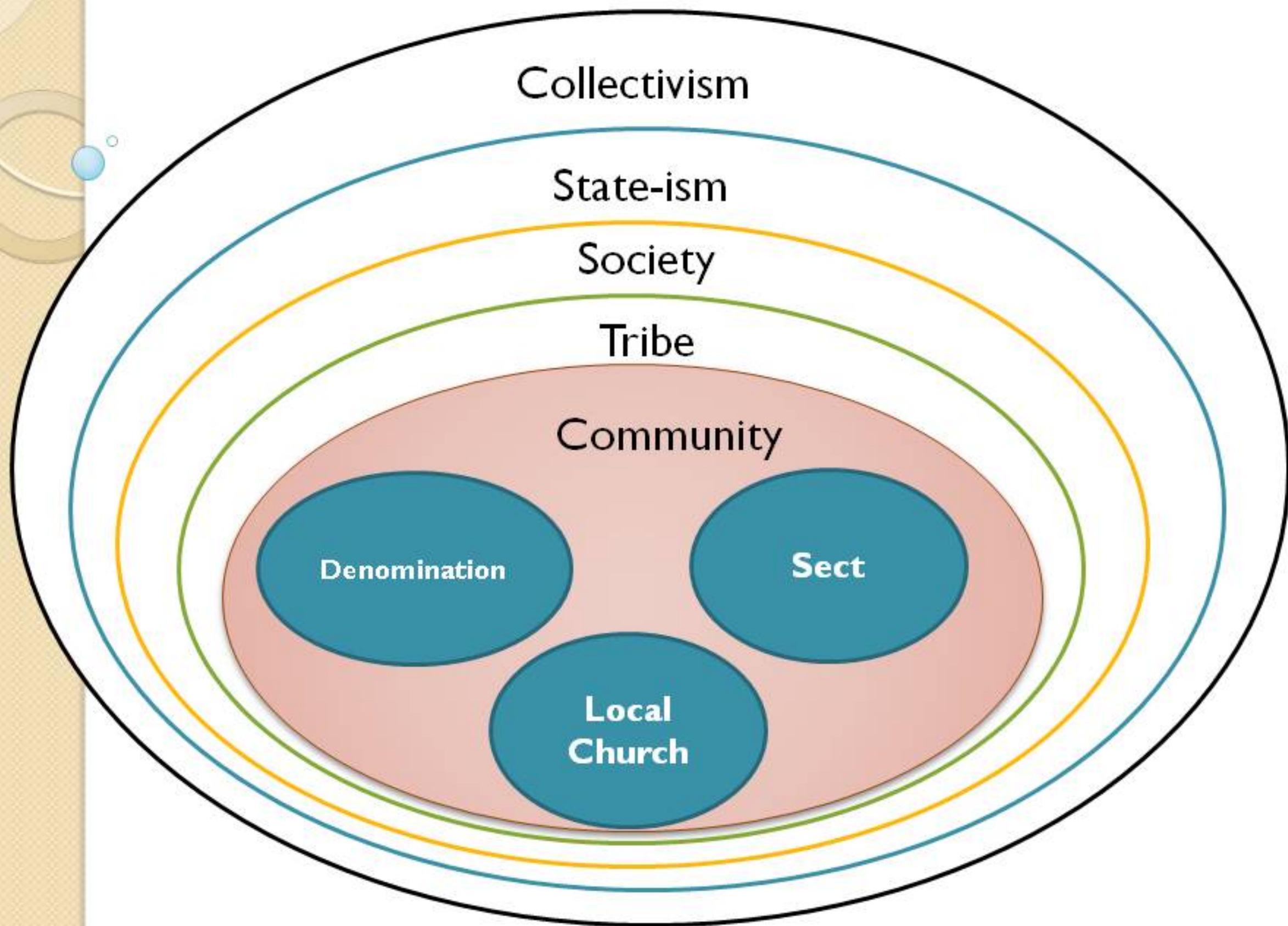
**“The only thing necessary
for evil to triumph is for
good men do nothing.”**

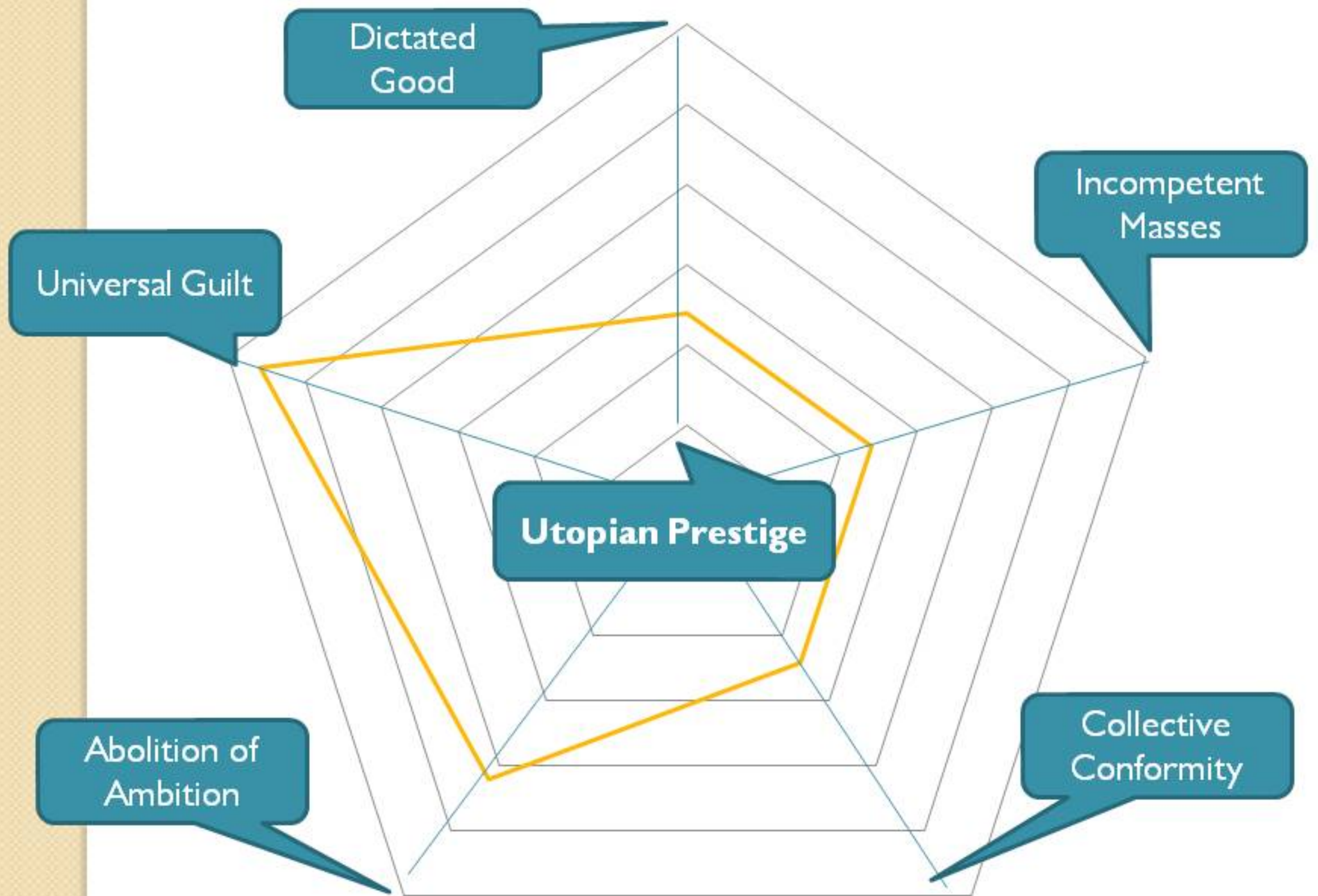
Philosophy

- Metaphysics
- Epistemology
- Ethics
- Politics
- Aesthetics

Philosophy

- The nature of existence: **Metaphysics**
- How we know what we know: **Epistemology**
- How we value what we know: **Ethics**
- How we interact with people: **Politics**
- How Man creatively reflects his existence back to himself: **Aesthetics (Art)**





JOHN IMMEL 2015 SESSION 2

JOHN IMMEL: All right. For those of you who are joining online, assuming you haven't seen my first presentation, my name is John Immel. I'm going to continue with my case on the nature of philosophy, how it is a driving force of human action and how ultimately it has impacted the evolution of Western thought in particular and specifically how it ultimately shaped National Socialist Germany and how it's ultimately shaping the current United States of America.

TANC 2013, I began explaining the evolution of Western thought, and I started all the way back from Heraclitus. I highly recommend that if you had seen my TANC 2013 presentation, it's five hours, it's a lot of material, but it's essential to understanding. And one of the biggest challenges I had, and for most Christians, Christians tend to believe that Christianity kind of sprang up out of a whole cloth, but it actually has a very specific place in context to the evolution of Western thought. And the roots of those ideas can be seen as far back as Plato and Pythagoreans, and ultimately, many of our doctrines, our moral doctrines, come from the Cynics and the Stoics.

Now I'm going to pick up where I left off there because this will lay a foundation. I basically brought us up to effectively about 150 AD last year. I'm going to pick up effectively at about 150 AD. With just a touch - I'm going to touch back on Plato. Remember earlier I said that there's an ironclad relationship between Augustine, Christian doctrine goes from Augustine to Luther to Calvin. The dirty little secret of Western thought and particularly Christian thought is that the roots of Augustine are really Plato. It's actually not really a dirty secret. The fact of the matter is that anyone with any effort at all can find this relationship. It's not a secret. It's hidden in plain sight for everybody. But I want to talk to you specifically about the evolution of Platonist

thought that ends up in Augustine's hands. Plato of course wrote *The Republic* and many other works. He writes right around about 400 BC, give or take 50 years. He of course as the classical world starts to decline, he falls into some elements of obscurity.

In roughly 200 AD, a guy by the name of Plotinus picks up Plato's doctrine. Now Plotinus picks up the Cynic and Stoic doctrines. Now if you remember from last year, I will reiterate this point, the Cynics and Stoics believed that the flesh, that the material world was corrupt. Now they predate Christianity by some time. So they don't get this from Christianity. Christianity largely picks up this soul-body dichotomy from the ancient Western thinkers, that the presumption of the soul-body dichotomy is that the material world is fundamentally corrupt and that there is an inevitable other realm that is somehow pure. The Cynics and Stoics ultimately believe that the nature - and they had different variations on the same concept, but they ultimately believe that the way man approach and achieve knowledge, achieve virtue, was by the discipline of the flesh, that because the flesh was weak, it required kind of like an athlete's training. Well, this concept, of course, you can see the flavor of that concept in Paul's writing, who of course picked up a lot of these concepts from the Cynics and the Stoics. Paul tended to pick and choose whatever he thought advanced his particular ideas. But Plotinus takes these concepts, the Cynics and the Stoics, and he takes it to the next logical progression. Not only is the material world inferior, it is in fact totally morally depraved.

Plato believed that this earth was a shadow variation of a perfect world. This world was not true reality. It was really the reflection, the shadow on the wall of a cave. The otherworldly realm was called the world of Forms. Plato believed that man's grasp of reality was limited. Plato believed that man's ethical standard was his subordination to the state. Plato believed in compulsory state of education. Plato believed in communism, and Plato believed in totalitarian government. Let me back up and make my observation in - this right here,

right? This right here has pretty much summarized what Plato believed. Collective conformity, he believed in compulsory education. This is collective conformity. He believed that man was inferior. He believed that certain men, what he called philosopher kings, should be in charge. They should dictate good.

Enter the Cynics and Stoics. The Stoics begin to actually have an impact on Western thought. They believed that the denial of flesh was an existential ideal. The physical body limits man's ability to attain virtues. They practice rigorous physical training to attain those virtues. The Cynic and Stoic ideal became the Christian ideal. You see this reflected in Paul's comments, "I beat my body. It is better that man cut off a hand such that he enters the kingdom of heaven." The physical body is corrupt and the material world is corrupt. Plotinus, by contrast, you need to understand this contrast. Plato still has a secular philosophy. In other words, he still believes that man, select men, can get to this transcendent world, this world of Forms. And the way man does that is by virtue of his reason. Now it wasn't a clean blanket statement that all men had this ability. It was really reserved for a select few men who specifically practice virtues that gave them access to the forms and higher levels of knowledge, but it was still a secular version. He introduced...

PAUL DOHSE: Can I interject with a question?

JOHN IMMEL: Sure.

PAUL DOHSE: Because I guess that's the way we're doing it in the conference. If any of the speakers felt, you know, wanted to wait till afterward, that's fine. Let me know. But Aristotle believed the same thing, but he believed everybody had that ability?

JOHN IMMEL: I'm actually going to talk at length about Aristotle, so let me handle Aristotle when I get to Aristotle.

PAUL DOHSE: Okay.

JOHN IMMEL: I'm trying to illustrate Plato's full philosophical statement introduces a transcendent reality. Whether there's still a secular reality, it still has some form of man's ability to get there. Plotinus drops all vestiges of the human element. According to Plotinus' disciples, Plotinus had zero interest in the physical life. His entire obsession was attaining a transcendent reality. But his transcendent reality was a religious transcendence. Now I need to make one specific note. He accepted the premise of the mystery cults, the Gnostics. The Gnostics were mystery cults that rose right between the - towards the end of the 1st century up through the middle of the second century. And they said that because man is specifically corrupt, there was a certain initiating practice that gave them access to the knowledge, and they were uniquely qualified to get to this knowledge by virtue of their specific denial of fleshly existence. Well, their condemnation of the physical world ultimately shows up in the latter part of the 1st century as a direct assault on Christianity, and we'll talk about that here in a minute. This concept is carried forward to Plotinus. And Plotinus ultimately says that men no longer has any ability to access this higher dimension. The only means by which man gets to this dimension is through revelation. Plato's transcendent world is a secular world. Men has some ability to get to it. Plotinus, it is no longer secular. It is entirely religious realm, and it is only accessed through revelation. Do you see the difference? Do you see the fundamental difference? Yes? No? You think I'm crazy? Okay?

The secular transcendent world is graspable because man is the secularizing part. But a religious transcendent world is not graspable because man has no place in that world. Here's how Plotinus describes this. And I want you to hear the echoes of this that become Christianity. Let me read. "The One is, in truth,

beyond all statement; whatever you say would limit It; the All-Transcending, transcending even the most august Mind, which alone of all things has true being, has no name. We can but try to indicate, if possible, something concerning it. If we do not grasp it by knowledge, what does that not mean that we do not seize it. How does man come to seize knowledge of a transcendent being? It is impossible for man to cease transcendent knowledge by reason." Now I want you to notice that he wanted reason to be part of man's incompetence. Man would be entirely dependent on mystic visions, but actually my notes I think are actually in here. Ahh, these are my notes.

The All-Transcendent was by mystic vision. To gain access to the Transcendent was by mystic vision. Or in Christian parlance, Divine Revelation. The next paragraph is something that Plotinus said. "The All-Transcendent God, the universe, and the universe, the material world has left God out - oh, for heaven's sake, John. These are terrible. These are actually still my notes.

The All-Transcendent, God, the universe, and the universe is it left God to become - I really have written this wrong. The point being, the all-transcendent world and men, the corrupt world, are apart. They're not together anymore. It left God. The material world left God. That's his point.

Now once you understand Plotinus, it becomes very simple to understand Augustine. Because this is the version of Platonism that Augustine got hold of. He did not actually have the original versions. So Augustine sees in his mind he sees the one, the All-Transcendent, he sees that as the Christian God. And it is from here, this is the framework within which he places Christianity. And here is why. Here's the problem with early Christianity.

Jesus shows up in Israel talking to Israelites about Israel issues. He repeatedly says that he's talking to the lost children of Israel. He repeatedly says that his focus and ministry is specifically to them and that it is limited, which is why

particularly in the Book of Mark and the Book of Matthew, you see virtually no recognition of a world beyond Palestine. You see functionally no understanding of the broader Hellenistic world. Now the first two gospels--Matthew and I believe it's Mark, I think is the first; Matthew I believe being the second--they have no broader exposure because it was not important to them. The original sources compiled were to those specific audiences. By the time we get to Luke, Luke of course being a Roman has much more concern with the broader Hellenistic world. And his original works are actually to someone named Theophilus. Now it doesn't matter if Theophilus was a man or a general word for a group of people. Ultimately, Luke's interest is to a broader Greek world. But even then, Luke's focus is only in as much as he wants to show the progression of effectively the great commission going to the outermost parts of the earth to these people. That's his primary driving force. So even by the time we get to the Book of Acts, he still is just focused on that evolution. Interestingly enough, Luke makes no mention of Paul's writings. We have Paul, but we have no mention of his writings, which tells me the early Christians had no real exposure to Paul's writings.

And herein lay part the problem. As this Jewish movement started out in this little backwater no nothing territory of the Roman Empire moves in to the broader Hellenistic world, it is confronted with some profound intellectual problems. The Hellenistic world has no association with the Jewish background of the things that Jesus said and did. And this becomes so stark and so dramatic that by the time we get to the Gospel of John, the introduction of the Gospel of John is a full-on polemic against Gnostic doctrines. And that's because the Gospel of John is probably dated sometime in the late 1st century. So by the time we get to the Gospel of John, we have very obviously now have begun to encounter ideas that we do not know how to overcome. And the shaping and forming of those early traditions was hodge-podge, sporadic, and it didn't have a lot to do with what Jesus originally set out to do. So Jesus, these words, these gospels, these mini testimonies to this life of Jesus and the

Jesus followers and the Jesus movement now is confronted with the broader Roman world. Now trust me, the Roman world would have been fully acquainted with the evolution of these ideas. The Classical Greek world would have dominated their thoughts. They would have had some association.

Now you remember this very strange encounter where Paul decides to go to Mars Hill and debate the local philosophers, and of course Paul, he doesn't have satisfaction. He's bothered by these guys. Well, they were looking for a more robust intellectual solution. Paul of course thinks they should have accepted what he said. And here is the essential problem. There was no quick way to explain the nature of the Jesus movement to this broader Hellenistic world because it was not a full philosophical statement. It is a collection of stories and aphorisms and parables. And so to that world and to that mind, it did not have a lot of direct relevance. So by the time we get into the 2nd century, Christianity is really reeling from its exposure - remember, Paul said he went to the Gentiles, but the fact of the matter is he got no traction amongst the Gentiles. He ended up in the Diaspora, talking to Jews, displaced the Jews and debating the merits of their Diaspora theology up against the life and existence of Jesus. That's what Paul gets most of his traction. But to the broader Roman world, it doesn't get a lot of traction until you have man start to integrate these ideas, starting roughly in the 2nd century, into the broader philosophical statement.

Now the first people to actually try to incorporate - well, actually, one of the first was Philo. Philo was a Jew, and he was definitely a Hellenistic Jew, and his goal was to take Platonism and merge it into Judaism. And he is one of a number who were making these attempts. So you see Christianity struggling because it does not have the ability to - it doesn't have a cohesive statement. It doesn't have the ability to win broader arena of ideas. It has some ideas that have some endurance, but it doesn't really have any philosophical staying power, which is why by the middle of the 2nd century, ultimately when the

Church moved towards orthodoxy, it identified over 80 heresies. I made this point last year. Imagine the robust intellectual environment that must have existed for the people who ultimately purged heresies to identify 80 of them that had Christianity attached to it. That means there was enough ideas in action and enough variance on those ideas that they collected a tradition and that that tradition was ultimately seen as somehow antithetical to what was defined as orthodoxy. So you have a lot of intellectual activity. Unfortunately, the people in charge of who defined that orthodoxy, who defined that intellectual statement believed in violence. And so they were ultimately able to purge it.

And so of course this is Augustine's - this is actually Christianity up till about 3rd century. This is Christianity's fundamental problem, how does it sustain - in this broader, virtually hostile world, how does it sustain and compete with all these other ideologies? Well, this is the fundamental problem that landed on Augustine's lap. And it was Augustine who set out to finalize the integration of these ideas, and what he used was the turnkey solution of Platonism to do it. Because he saw, of course, as I pointed out, he saw the fundamentals of the Christian transcendent religious concept in Plotinus. And that's what gives him the whole breath to this statement. Now concurrent with this, the Roman Empire is crumbling. There is a lot of chaos, both political and social, happening in the world. And so people are looking for some means and some way to begin to explain these things. And so a corrupt material world and a corrupt man in a war-torn and war-ravaged and famine-ravaged existence, this seems to make an enormous amount of sense.

Now concurrent with Augustine is the political side to this equation. Oh, I need to describe one thing, dogmatism. Augustine also believes and accepts the doctrine of dogmatism. Dogmatism is the expectation that select men are morally qualified, morally justified in dictating intellectual content. Do I need to repeat that?

MAN: Yes, please.

JOHN IMMEL: Dogmatism is the belief that select men are morally correct, morally justified to create intellectual content. In other words, the defining measure of epistemology is force, those morally qualified to use force. You understand? Okay. So Augustine ultimately believes, of course, man can't get to God but my revelation. The All-Transcendent, he can't get there the way he does get - the only way he ever experiences God is by revelation. God appoints select men who are morally qualified to dictate what that revelation is. Alakazam! Poof! We have dogmatism. Right? Okay.

Concurrent with these theological development is a guy by the name of Theodosius. Christianity started emerging from the fringes of Roman society. Now mind you, for the first two, three hundred years, Christianity was just really very obscure - actually, it's considered a mystic cult for the longest time. People didn't know what it was. They were mostly scandalized. They consider Christians atheists because Christianity believed in one god, monotheism, which was a radical concept for that time period. And so the broader Roman world whenever they encounter these atheists, they condemn the Christians because they did not sacrifice to all of the gods, and all the bad things that were happening was the Christians fault. So that's the early part. By the time we get about to 250, Christianity is starting to emerge as a player in the social-political structure of the world. By 300, the Church was full of all sorts of political ambition. Bishops became effectively synonymous with rulers. Constantine then capitalizes on the Christian statist ambition as he presided over the Council of Nicaea. The Council of Nicaea is when we decided the doctrine of Trinity that you all take as an absolute doesn't actually show up until about 325. And it took about 50 years when they finalized their formations. So what you believed about the Trinity, that God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are one and the same, is a product of this specific event. Now the

reason it's the product is because ultimately Constantine says, "You know what, guys? I'm tired of hearing you bicker. I'm going to put an end to this." And the Trinitarian doctrine that you all believed is what he said was it. And he called all opposing positions to be demented and insane, and then they decided to persecute anyone who happen to believe otherwise. And by the way, by contrast, the Homoyan [SOUNDS LIKE 0:24:42], basically, the Homoyan concept had been the dominant thought for the better part of 200 years. So the Trinitarian concept that you have was not the most prevalent doctrine. There was actually a preceding doctrine. A little bit of trivia for you.

So Constantine galvanizes ecumenical support for his power in the failing Roman Empire. And then he uses his civil authority to condemn opponents to what is what we now call the doctrine of Trinity. In trade, the winning bishops pledged their allegiance to Constantine. Now Constantine dies in 337, but the Council of Nicaea lasted for almost another 25 years. And as each year passed, the Church became increasingly more embroiled in civil governance. And I want to read this. Fast forward to many civil wars and political machinations, wars with the Persians and endless skirmishes with the Goths, the death of Valentinian, the death of his brother Valens at the Battle of Adrianople and the appointment of Flavius Theodosius to emperor in 379. Theodosius' role in history and more importantly, Church history, has been as Charles Freeman notes in his book *AD 381*, airbrushed out of existence. This is a profound failing because in 381, Theodosius, emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, decreed that all of his subjects were to pledge commitment to the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit as co-equal on pain of death. For the first time in Greco-Roman history, religious orthodoxy became synonymous with political power. In 381, the power of the state was galvanized into Christianity forever. This forever changed the face of the world. And from this point forward, the leading Christian theological concern was who had the authority, the force, to compel doctrinal outcomes. No matter the specific theological hair being split, the underlying fight was who held the force to suppress the dissenting opinion.

By the way, that's from an article I wrote on SpiritualTyranny.com, so I didn't plagiarize somebody. That's actually me.

Here's why this is important. Secularism gets a black eye because we tend to assume that secular means immoral. This is actually not true. It's a false equation. Secularism only means the division of religious orthodoxy from political orthodoxy. A secular state is effectively an agnostic state. It means it has no - the state doesn't care. The force of government does not care what the specific religious convictions of people are. The Hellenistic world and in particular the Classical Greek world was effectively - even though they believed in hundreds of gods, was effectively a secular state. Man could believe what he chose. He was not compelled by doctrine to believe anything. The only other manifestation of a truly secular state in the history of the world is the United States of America. And it's important for people to begin to grasp this. The simple greatest political achievement the world has ever seen was a secular state, meaning man was free to believe what it wanted. The state didn't care and neither should the state care. I'm going to talk about this at length. This is the first point I want to make.

Theocracy on the other hand is the merging of political power with the theological orthodoxy. A theocracy means that man is compelled to a given theological standard by force of government. And this is exactly what happened with Theodosius. Augustine's doctrine then is able to reign effectively for the next thousand years without contest. No one can muster an objection because it is considered treason to object to Augustinian doctrine. Augustinian doctrine, therefore, is still unopposed. Man's metaphysical corruption, the doctrine of Original Sin - I asked you [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:29:24] Google the doctrine of Original Sin. If you do some work, you're going to find that the doctrine of Original Sin was actually proposed by a guy by the name of Irenaeus, a bishop in Lyons, in about 250. If you read his definition of Original Sin, you won't recognize it. Because the doctrine of Original Sin that you know

doesn't actually show up until about 400. And that was done by Augustine. Augustine basically decides because he has cared for all the basic premises of soul-body dichotomy of the - mind-body dichotomy from the ancient Greek doctrine, he believes that man is epistemologically corrupt, he abandons reason, and he gains a commitment to dogmatism, dogmatism being of course the presumption that select men are morally correct to dictate intellectual content. Of course, he believes in the primacy of the state, which is of course in his mind the primacy of the church. Now the practical application of this is the three estates through the Middle Ages. The three estates was a class society. The classes were broken down in three parts: some pray, some fight, some work. Which basically meant that the feudal society is organized around priests, knights, and serfs.

Now I want to talk to you briefly, remember when we're talking about the Cynics and Stoics and how they approached the physical body. Man's physical body, nature and material world is physically corrupt. What does this mean practically? Do I have this right here? Yes, I do. This produces what is known as asceticism. Asceticism is a philosophical commitment of the individual to destroy every facet of his physical existence. Asceticism is the practical application of the soul-body dichotomy, the evil material world put into practice. Christian asceticism took Paul's determination to beat his body literally and seriously. The Church taught that asceticism, point one, gave access to the supernatural through the mortification, literally, the death of the flesh. Paul has talked about the doctrines of mortification and vivification. Most Christians tend to assume that when we talk about mortification, we're really talking about something they can pick and choose. No. literally, mortification, the death of the flesh. It also taught that it appeased or thwarted demons. Say for instance it was believed that the spirits enter the body through food. It drew attention from God that self-destruction would earn God's pity. Self-destruction showed that man was full of guilt.

I want to give you some examples of ascetic practice. The first one at the top of the list is celibacy. That's a very common one. Virginity was considered an ethical value, an ethical ideal, and it was tied to the belief that the natural world was evil. Women, and this actually hit women very hard through the Dark Ages, women had no sexual identity because women were either virginal or whores. Women were seen as tempters of men. Celibacy was the means to prevent, and I make this observation, celibacy was also a means by which the Catholic Church could keep their property from disappearing into inheritance. Priests that don't marry don't have kids, won't have wives. The Church gets the money. The Church gets taxes. The Church keeps it. Because when the priests dies, he doesn't give it away to his family. Another ascetic practice was the renunciation of material possessions. For example, a guy by the name of Alexander Acomidus [SOUNDS LIKE 0:33:31] or Acoimidus? My Greek is rusty, so I don't know. Actually, I don't know Greek. He married poverty, which I think is hilarious considering our current preoccupations with defining marriage in America. So he would beg his food and did not keep his excess. One commenter on Alexander's wife said that his form of monasticism was better because it didn't create the housekeeping problems of say the Franciscans. In other words, he didn't have cleric. I think that's hilarious. Of course, another ascetic practice is the renunciation of food. The ideal Christian fasted for 40 days, as of course practiced by Jesus. It also turns out that starvation past 40 days killed you. They reduced or prevented sleep. They turned sleep into torture. They slept on beds of nails. They were beaten if they fell asleep. Syrian monks tied ropes around their abdomens and slept standing up. Others hung themselves in awkward positions. They condemned hygiene. They refused to cut their hair, fingernails or toenails. They dressed in filthy rags and allowed sweat and dirt to accumulate. I don't really need to go into how much of that - how nasty that would have been. They abandoned movement. It was common to lock themselves away in monasteries, but they also then would take it further and lock themselves into cells, into smaller and smaller cells. Some ascetics, and I find this horrific, would go into the desert,

sit down on a pile of rocks and stay there until their legs are rotten away. They beat their bodies. Men would stare into the sun until they're blind so that they would never succumb to the lusts of the eyes. Monastic orders wearing girdles around their loins. They would do this so that they would not desire women. Castration and self-flagellation were very common.

Now here's the point that I want to make. These practices never actually made it into general practice for the simple reason it is not livable. It is by definition designed to kill, this stuff. It is a commitment to death and destruction that cannot be practiced. Now here's what I want you to notice. It was venerated. It was seen as an ethical ideal. The men who did practice such action were considered saints. The Church turned these people into heroes. Because of Augustine, through the Dark Ages, we have an entire intellectual collapse. Reason cannot grasp God and there is no earthly reality. Remember, we're talking about the All-Transcendent, a mystical otherworld, an undefinable world, a world entirely apart from men at all. The only means by which he gets to reality is through revelation. Have you ever met somebody who is so heavenly minded they are of no earthly good? You've talked to them, right? And it's surreal. Everything they do is somehow proof-text. The Puritans you talked about earlier, the way they justify, you know, what did you say? The earthquakes, they said - how they find out? I'm sorry. I don't think I remember.

SUSAN DOHSE: It was like from the Book of Amos where God thundered from Zion.

JOHN IMMEL: Right. God thunders from Zion. They have an earthquake, and so the way they explained earthquake is because God thunders from Zion. You talk to people like this and everything they do has - they have no ability to grasp causality. Just basic concepts like gravity, everything they do is in terms of this grand otherworldly perspective. Imagine an entire culture built like this, the entire culture is organized around this fundamental presumption. And I

want to make the specific point of the proof-text mindset, the need to use authority to validate ideas. The proof-text mind cannot think in terms of causality. It is a mind that equates causality with authority. It is a mind that does not grasp principles. Proof-texting is merely an appeal to authority, and it is the validation, a rational content because of authority. Of course, what this really means is we're talking about an entire culture built on rational dependence. In other words, it gets all of its rational content from somebody who dictates. Of course, this is impossible for a scientific society because a scientific society is built around rational independence, the ability to independently review the world and explore the world and find commonalities and find causalities. So the result through the Dark Ages was intellectual stagnation. It paralyzed all critical thinking. Authority was what governed human interaction, and the result was war, war, war, and more war. Because God was always in the business of smiting someone else who got it wrong through the sword of the state. The concept of rights was really a discussion of prerogatives. The Divine Right of Kings is really the divine prerogative of kings. The king is entitled to act without restriction, all based on - I do think I have this note, right? Yes, I do. Ah, I'll get to that in a moment.

I would like to give you some fast facts about the Dark Ages. Infant mortality rates were estimated at 50 percent. Some sources suggest maybe as low as 30. By age 12, a boy was considered old enough to pledge his life to his sovereign, meaning he was considered old enough to go to war. By 12, girls were considered old enough to marry. They were sold as a chattel, considered a societal burden because they're a mouth to feed. They could not endure the rigors of agricultural life. The concept of a dowry was designed to make marriageable females more attractive to male suitors. Men were basically paid to take on women. Ninety-five percent of the population worked at agriculture with farm implements out of the Stone Age. Yields were estimated at a quarter of the seed sown. Therefore, it took roughly two acres to feed one person. By comparison, modern farming methods yield in excess of 80 percent, and it

takes less than a third of an acre to feed one person. There was no concept of germs, no antibiotics, vaccines, no anesthetic. Anesthetic was considered sinful. Your pain was necessarily the product of your sin, and God deliberately did it to you. And this all made sense because of course suffering is a virtue. Death is a virtue. Pain was merely the natural state of human existence. The three estates divided in between some work, some pray, some fight, this practically meant that 95 percent of the populace were slaves, 2 percent did nothing, and the nobility fought wars of conquests for profit. The largest class, of course, were the people called the *villani*. It means villager, but it is the root of our modern word, which is villain. They were born into slavery, a generational slavery. This is important to understand. As a class society, as a class based on determination, if you were born a serf, you would be a serf. Your grandson would be a serf. Your great grandson would be a serf. Your great grandfather would be a serf. There was effectively no escape. You were committed. You were basically born into subservience, and there was no ability to get out of it. This is of course the logical conclusion of Augustine's theories of predestination carried out to practical application.

PAUL DOHSE: John, let me quickly interject that the Puritans taught that upward mobility is a violation of the Fifth Commandment.

JOHN IMMEL: Yes.

PAUL DOHSE: If you want to be upward mobile, you were disrespecting your parents' heritage and place in life.

JOHN IMMEL: Yes, it is exactly the same mindset, exactly the same body of doctrine.

PAUL DOHSE: And in colonial America, in Boston, you can be put in stocks for dressing like somebody in the upper class.

JOHN IMMEL: Correct. It is exactly the same. Remember I told you that most people encounter their broader philosophical statement at the point of ethics. This is exactly the same thing. This is ethical premise of moral inferiority put into practice. A villager, serf, his husband, wife and surviving children, and I do mean surviving from mortality rates in upwards of 50 percent, I mean, surviving, lived in roughly 700 square feet, and they share that space with livestock. Seven hundred square feet would be this room? Oh no, not even, not even. Maybe from here to the wall. It's small. Justice, and I used the bunny quotes, was meted out with brutal efficiency. Man who stole from a lord's property, which is effectively everything in sight, could be penalized by being pilloried, drawn and quartered, cut open, limbs, noses or ears cut off. Women, who were accused of crimes, say daring to seduce a priest or lord, and when I mean by seduced, I mean they lusted after her, had their genitals impaled with hot irons, locked in iron maidens, burned at the stake and drowned. The Church sanctioned all of these actions by government. By Paul's quote in Romans 13, can I borrow somebody's ESV? That was a joke. Certainly, there's no ESVs in here, right? Romans 13:1-2, will somebody read it out loud for me. Go ahead, Andy.

ANDY YOUNG: This is King James.

JOHN IMMEL: It doesn't matter. It says the same thing.

ANDY YOUNG: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

JOHN IMMEL: This is ultimately the foundation of the Divine Right of Kings, the presumption that the king is appointed of God and whatever he happens to

do is exactly what God chooses. This is also a corollary of the doctrine of predestination. It's what God intends. What you see manifest is specifically what God is after. The Dark Ages are dark in principle, and it's imperative that you understand what this means. Philosophically, it is dark on purpose. It is specifically trying to separate all of man from any good. The fundamental formulations of Augustinian doctrine sought to eradicate man on every fundamental level. Christianity elevated pain and suffering and pestilence and poverty to the highest ethical ideal. The whole of historic Christian doctrine revolves around the veneration of death. Human suffering reaches its pinnacle in Western thought. Destruction of the flesh is the ethical ideal. It's what you're striving to do. It doesn't take an art scholar to understand why the Ichthus, the symbol of a fish, in remembrance of the disciples was replaced by the cross as an enduring icon of Christianity. For the first 400 to 500 years, the cross does not appear in Christian art. But by the start of the 6th century, the cross, which is an emblem of political subjugation and torture, becomes Christianity's central icon. But what other icon would be appropriate for a religion built on human suffering? Four hundred years after Jesus came to preach life in the covenants of promise, Christianity became a cult of death that ruled the world with a nihilistic iron fist.

I get some heat on occasion for calling Christianity a cult of death. But I challenge you, show me I'm wrong. The sum of Christian doctrine is based on the death of man. It is obsessed and fixated on man's death. And it worships an icon of death and culture. It holds out Jesus' death and destruction as its highest ethical action. It preaches at its root man's highest ethical ideal is his own self-destruction. Now I challenged you with this question: The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing. So here's what I think is wrong with this question. The question must be, what causes good men to do nothing? If they are good, that presupposes they have values, right? That's what that presupposes, that the nature of values are such that they act

consistent with those values, right? What causes good men to take no action? Change the definition of good. Turn death and destruction into good.

You want to know what happened in National Socialist Germany? Change the definition of good. Now for me to actually explain why this is so important, we're going to have to do some more remedial work tomorrow. Because most people sitting in here don't really hold the Augustine standard of good in their head. Most modern Calvinists don't hold the Augustinian, Luther, and Calvin doctrine of good in their head. Most of them get their definition of good from a very different source. And that's what we're going to talk about tomorrow. Thank you.

PAUL DOHSE: Leave those all in there. I've got some closing comments. Yeah, go ahead.

ZACH: I was pondering your question to us, and I arrived at the same conclusion. I said, well, [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:50:37] take the philosophy to its logical conclusion, doing nothing is man's greatest good, the realization of man's moral imperative to do nothing. And what is the best way for man to do nothing? It's for man to no longer be. The closer man gets to be doing nothing, the closer man gets to be dead, which is what all of this is about. It's all about telling man that his greatest moral good is to not be himself, which is death. And that's why people, good people, do nothing because the functional definition of good has to change, just like you said.

JOHN IMMEL: And I want to continue to echo what Zach just said. This becomes crucial in understanding all tyrannies and all functions of tyrannies. Life is movement in action. Life requires the ability to identify and move and act towards values. The moment you eradicate values, you eradicate the premium of life. There is only one other option, and that is death. Another comment, Paul? I saw Andy I think starting to say something [SOUNDS LIKE 0:52:00].

PAUL DOHSE: Okay. Yeah, I've got lots of comments. A question came in from somebody observing the conference in regard to Andy's talk. Apparently, she had a power outage or something and by the time she got back, Andy was done. So we'll address that, and I want to address that, make some closing comments. As far as the question, the fish and the cross, okay, throughout my young life as a Christian, you would hear Christians from time to time saying, "Yeah, you know, the cross, it's kinda weird. That's kinda like an electric chair being on top of the church, you know, that if Jesus would come and die in our time, we wouldn't be worshipping a cross. We would be worshipping an electric chair, right?" So another thing that people are very uncomfortable with, overall Jesus emphasized his death very little...

JOHN IMMEL: Actually, I would like to really expand that. The fact of the matter is that Jesus talked about his death very little and only within the last about three months of his life.

PAUL DOHSE: True.

JOHN IMMEL: It's never a big deal, and he actually avoids the conversation. And the only time he really pops off about is after basically Peter, remember get behind him saying - has hounded him to the point that he doesn't have a choice but to say something about it. I have contended, well, for the better part, certainly since I left Sovereign Grace Ministries, the thing that clinched it for me that I knew there was something fundamentally wrong with their doctrine is they specifically defined the gospel as Jesus crucified, when in actual fact, Jesus never preached that. He let that be. The gospel, the thing that Jesus preached is centered in Luke 4, basically verses 17, 18, 19 and 20. The spirit of the Lord is upon me for he has anointed me to preach. Good news to the captive [SOUNDS LIKE 0:54:40]. And he goes on to expand that the nature of the anointing on him was to improve people's lives. You never hear

this message coming out of a pulpit. The definition of the gospel has always been abundant life. The thing that Jesus brought to the table, the thing that made people gravitate to him with such power is the fact that everywhere he went, people got better. Their life improved. And when confronted with the hardship that the disciples experienced, Jesus said, "Are you going to leave me?" And Peter goes, "Where are going to go for words of limitless life?" Now the historic translation is eternal life. And that gets reinterpreted to be the All-Transcendent, the future, the out there, the heavenly life. But the word is actually more better understood by limitless life. But the word is actually more better understood by limitless life. And the cross was not central to what Jesus preached. And I contend ultimately it is an entire misunderstanding of what Paul was talking about when he talks about I preached Christ and him crucified. Christ is in fact the same word Messiah, which is the same word anointed, which is exactly a reflection of what is in Luke.

PAUL DOHSE: Well, again, though I [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:56:05], so I'll say this quickly and then [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:56:08]. But look, the Bible's gotta be interpreted in context. When Paul said these things, he was - let me just cut to the chase real quick. I'm not like those philosophers that come to you speaking all of this deep gnosis, okay? I just came as a simple man who doesn't speak well originally speaking to you about the gospel of actual biblical term here, the gospel of first importance, okay? Yeah, when he came to Corinth originally preaching the first gospel of first importance to people who were all turned upside down with all of these great philosophy, and you mentioned Philo, in my estimation, in my studies, Philo was it in Jewish culture.

JOHN IMMEL: Yes, he was very important.

PAUL DOHSE: He dominated to the point where Jesus says to Nicodemus, "You must be born again." Nicodemus has not a clue as to what he was talking

about. I guess my question is before we go to comments is how far does this go back and to what degree can we compare this with Moses saying, "Choose life"?

JOHN IMMEL: I've really never laid this out with any specificity, and it really does require being laid out with a lot of specificity. But I contend that life is the fundamental premise, is the fundamental conflict. The issue has always been life or death. From the beginning with Adam, it was life or death. The issue was not sin directly. The issue was Adam's destruction. It was Adam's death. It was Adam's pain and suffering that were at issue. And so I think this actually is all reflective - it's all about man's life.

PAUL DOHSE: Yeah.

JOHN IMMEL: Bo [SOUNDS LIKE 0:58:29]?

DR. GRISSOM: First of all, [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:58:31] very informative and thought-provoking, but the thing about the cross, I think I have to disagree with you on that. In 1st Corinthians 1...

PAUL DOHSE: We allow that here.

JOHN IMMEL: Well, wait a minute now. No, you need to submit to my authority here.

PAUL DOHSE: And I need to say some words about all this, make sure we stay on line in [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:58:52].

JOHN IMMEL: Go ahead, Bo.

DR. GRISSOM: First Corinthians 1:17-18, "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of

Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." I think the cross [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:59:20]...

JOHN IMMEL: And that's fundamental...

DR. GRISSOM: [UNINTELLIGIBLE] to the cross...

JOHN IMMEL: That is a very Christian anachronistic interpretation, and I understand where you get it, and I haven't really...

DR. GRISSOM: Well, it's based on the Hebrew roots, too, that there was a [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:59:37]. And I think the reason it's important is because if we didn't have that, we would have a God that is not just. We'd have a God that's arbitrary [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:59:53]. But Andy was pretty - got it.

JOHN IMMEL: What I find fascinating - and I want to answer your question and your observation this way. What I find fascinating is that for all of Protestant Christianity's determination to insist that it is not Catholic, it remains metaphysically Catholic, and it remains doctrinally Catholic. The explanation you just gave for Paul's assertions is very definitely has its roots way back in Augustine. And it's still...

DR. GRISSOM: It's in the Bible...

JOHN IMMEL: No. And this is actually a very important point. There is a difference between something being in the Bible and the interpretive methodology that you arrive at a conclusion being necessarily biblical. And that is a - it's actually one of the reasons I stay away from doctrinal arguments because I think you have read in specific assumptions, and you have cut and pasted ideas together that may or may not go together, and those are

interpretative conclusions. And that is very different than that being a sound doctrine. Anyway, like I said, that's my take on the subject.

DR. GRISSOM: John the Baptist said [UNINTELLIGIBLE 1:01:13].

JOHN IMMEL: Correct. But what John the Baptist said is not specifically related to what Paul said.

DR. GRISSOM: I have another question.

JOHN IMMEL: Sure.

DR. GRISSOM: I have a book at home. I think it's called *The Church in the Wilderness* by Wilkerson or Wilkinson.

JOHN IMMEL: Okay. David Wilkerson or...?

DR. GRISSOM: [UNINTELLIGIBLE 1:01:38] evidence that there was another branch on the original church [UNINTELLIGIBLE 1:01:51] that went to the East and actually [UNINTELLIGIBLE 1:01:55] India and China.

JOHN IMMEL: Correct.

DR. GRISSOM: They weren't affected by the Reformation, and they were consistent [UNINTELLIGIBLE 1:02:04].

JOHN IMMEL: If I remember correctly, it was an extra preparation of a Roman holiday. The Sunday...

SUSAN DOHSE: It finds its roots in [UNINTELLIGIBLE 1:02:27].

JOHN IMMEL: Yeah, it finds its roots in - yeah, I think she's right. I think it's
[UNINTELLIGIBLE 1:02:32]

PAUL DOHSE: The Sabbath.

JOHN IMMEL: Yeah, the Sunday Sabbath.

SUSAN DOHSE: Sunday.

DR. GRISSOM: So are you familiar with that branch of...

JOHN IMMEL: Actually, I am - well, I'm familiar enough with it. I understand - first of all, the evolution of Christian thought, what I'm discussing is the Western thought. Christianity, I made this point earlier, Christianity had many flavors. You have the Eastern Orthodox Church. And you're exactly right. There was an entire evangelistic effort that made its way all the way to Japan. And it remained kind of an underground sect until it was destroyed and wiped out by, I don't remember, some emperor in Japan. And that, you know, what we're talking, it lasted all the way to 16th, 17th century. And a lot of the doctrines you see throughout the Eastern Orthodox Church, you wouldn't recognize specifically as Christian. I think their canon, one of the primary things is their canon is like ten books, eight books, something like that. They don't have all the books we have as Protestants. And of course the Catholic Church has a hundred and whatever the heck it is, ninety-something, I don't remember. So, yes, I am familiar with those traditions. Andy, did you have a comment? You raised your hand, but I think...

ANDY YOUNG: I can't remember what it is.


SUSAN DOHSE: Just briefly. You were talking about pain and sacrifice
[SOUNDS LIKE 1:03:53]. That was a concept that was very big with the

Puritans, too, where they're really accusing American midwives of witchcraft because the Native Americans had herbal medicinal history, and the Native American midwives would actually give the women in labor herbal brews that would lessen the pain. And if a Puritan midwife gave anything to lessen the pain of childbirth, they were accused of witchcraft and quickly sent to death, to their death, or they could be whipped in public where they could at least be watched in public. What they don't realize is a super amount of superstition brought over from Europe and incorporated into religious thought [SOUNDS LIKE 1:05:06].


JOHN IMMEL: Yes, correct.

SUSAN DOHSE: But the theological reason why they were not supposed to have anything to relieve pain is because she had the seat of Eve in her, and all women have the seat of Eve. Therefore, they are of lesser value, of lesser importance, weaker vessel, all of that...

- The One is, in truth, beyond all statement: whatever you say would limit It; the All-Transcending, transcending even the most august Mind, which alone of all things has true being, has no name. We can but try to indicate, if possible, something concerning It. If we do not grasp It by knowledge, that does not mean that we do not seize it.
- How does Man come to seize knowledge of the transcendent being?
- It is impossible for man to seize transcendent knowledge by reason. He wanted reason to be incompetent such that Man would be entirely dependent on mystic visions to gain access to the All Transcendent was by mystic visions. Or in Christian parlance: divine revelation.
- The All Transcendent (God) the universe and the universe (the material world) it left God and became corrupt. The longing of the universe is to be reabsorbed back into God. The means to being reabsorbed back into God is by the purification of our souls.



“The Only Thing Necessary for Evil to Triumph is for
Good Men Do Nothing”



The question must be:
What causes “good” men
to do nothing?



ANSWER:

Change the definition of Good.

Gospel according to John **Immel** Chapter 3: 1-3

- 1) All people act logically from their assumptions.
- 2) It does not matter how inconsistent the ideas or insane the rationale. They will act until the logic is fulfilled.
- 3) Therefore, when you see masses of people taking the same destructive actions, find the assumptions and you will find the cause.

JOHN IMMEL 2015 SESSION 3 FC

So for those of you who were part of the last session and you heard the rather robust conversation, some days I really do think it would be better to be a Neo-Calvinist preacher. I could just say, "You gotta believe what I say and shut up." No, actually, I don't think that's true at all. It was an intense conversation [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:00:21].

Oh, for those of you who don't know me, I need to introduce myself. My name is John Immel. I wrote a blog called SpiritualTyranny.com. I want to make a point of distinction. My blog is not a discernment blog. It's a blog about ideas. I wrote a book called *Blight in the Vineyard: Exposing the Roots, Myths and Emotional Torment of Spiritual Tyranny*. If you like the kind of stuff that you hear me talk about, you will find a lot more of that in here. I highly recommend. You can find it on Amazon, \$23.99. Shameless promotional plug. I'm a capitalist. Buy my book, please.

Okay, I've brought you up to the collapse effectively of civilization. And that collapse lasts for almost 800 years because Augustine stands virtually intellectually unopposed. There are of course medieval theologians and so forth that do rise up. Some of them were pretty smart, but ultimately they had nothing important to say in the evolution of Western thought. The result is for all of their departures and all of their good ideas, they never abandon the rudiments of orthodoxy, and so they have nothing new to offer until we get to about 1250 with St. Thomas Aquinas. Now everybody in this room, I need you to look around and become very particularly aware of the environment you inhabit. And everybody online, I want you to look around your house, and I want you to pay attention to all of the things that you have, and in particular, the things that reside in science--light, the switch on the wall, the electricity, your computer. The fact that you're looking at a computer screen that takes

advantage of quantum mechanics to produce everything, your ability to interact with us here. Everything that you see in your house is based on what comes next. Now it takes man an enormous amount of time to unravel [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:02:38].

St. Thomas Aquinas reintroduces Aristotle into Western thought in 1250, but we don't actually get to freedom - and I think you can see the outline if I walk all the way over here. We don't actually get to freedom, liberty and knowledge until almost 1700, well, right about 1700. Man spends an enormous amount of time in this doleful horror story. And it is Aquinas who gives us Aristotle, and Aristotle bails us out of the madness. The reason I want to talk about Aristotle, because ultimately I am going to get to the impact of Neo-Calvinism on the United States of America. And by the time I get down with the next two sessions, I want you to be absolutely aware that America is not possible without Aristotle and without John Locke. The impact, you gotta know what you're about ready to lose. If you don't understand what you're about ready to lose, you won't understand why you're about ready to lose, you'll never understand why I object to Augustine and Luther and Calvin. Because if that's your total frame of reference, what difference does it make? If you live in Syria today and I say, "You know what? If Neo-Calvinism comes roaring back and it's going to actually stop the jihadists," the jihadists would probably say, "What's the difference? I effectively live in the Dark Ages already under Islam. What's the difference?" There is no difference because ultimately Augustine's doctrine produced the exact same Dark Ages that is still prevailing in the Middle East. And it's all because they ran Aristotle out on a rail. They did exactly the same thing to Aristotle, what the Church did to Aristotle. They condemned him.

Now I'm not going to go over how Aquinas integrated Aristotle into Christianity. That would be a long and tedious project. So I'm just going to start with Aristotle and the elements and roots of Aristotle. Oh, I do want to explain why I had Paul write this up here. I go back to my house last night to finalize

PowerPoint slides, and I can't find it. And it actually - getting all this laid out in PowerPoint, how I want to do it, I knew it's going to take longer than I had, so I had Paul, somebody - and I can't write this well. So if I wrote this out, you would think I was illiterate. So Paul wrote it. Thank you.

Okay. Aristotle is the most important figure in all of Western thought. Now with that endorsement, do I recommend you read him? No, not so much. Here's why. Of course since I'm constantly encouraging people to follow up with my scholarship, go read what I say. Go find the sources that I talk about and do your own work. That probably seems like an awkward thing to say. However, if you go to Aristotle, this is what you will be treated to. Category Section 1 Part 1. Now this is part of Aristotle's purpose, and actually I think this is the first two paragraphs out of his work. Here's how it reads. For those of you online, you can't see this. "Things are said to be named 'equivocally' when, though they have a common name, the definition corresponding with the name differs for each. Thus, a real man and a figure in a picture can both lay claim to the name 'animal'; yet these are equivocally so named, for, though they have a common name, the definition corresponding with the name differs for each."

I'm going to stop there because you get the idea. It is long and tedious. And here is the problem that we've got with Aristotle. The core of what we have we think are lecture notes. There are historical sources that attribute to him an amazing speaking capacity and that his writing was a pleasure to read. Well, that's not that. So of course the conspiracy theorist in me, when the Church condemned him, I fully expect that they set out to eradicate his writings just like they did every other heretic for 1,500 years. So I think the stuff that was easy to read and understand was either wiped out by the Catholic Church or it was wiped out by Islam. Islam did get a handle on one of the - Aristotle made a brief stop I think right around 1000, 1100 AD, and they actually had a renaissance of sorts, and eventually that itself died out because the logical end of Islam is war and destruction, and of course they set out to destroy anything

that wasn't endorsed by Allah. So I think a lot of the works were lost to that intellectual purge, but the stuff that we do have is very highly, highly technical. So it takes an enormous amount of effort to unravel what he's after. I didn't learn Aristotle by this. I learned it from a lot of other sources.

Okay. So as we know, Plato creates this world of Forms. Aristotle spends 20 years in Plato's Academy. For a series of reasons, he leaves Athens, and eventually, those series of reasons resolve and he comes back and he creates his own school called The Lyceum. But while he was in Plato's Academy, he was considered one of Plato's best students, and he was a committed Platonist. He accepted the premise of Platonism from the beginning to the end, the full philosophical statement. However, during his time away from Athens, he began to rethink. Why he began to rethink, I guess I don't know. I'm sure somebody does. I don't think I do. But at the end of the day, he decided Plato was wrong, and not just a little wrong. Plato was catastrophically wrong. And as such, he began to rethink the whole of philosophy and the whole shape and scope of philosophy. Now in the grand scheme of intellectuals, Plato was a genius on levels that is hard to grasp for people in everyday life. But still Plato had ideas that came before him that he built on. Aristotle had nothing before him to arrive at his conclusions. Everything before him was exactly the opposite of what he said. And so for Aristotle to arrive at and not only just in the philosophies specifically, but he went on to - he was a biologist, scientist. He had an enormous capacity for learning and knowledge and understanding. So his level of genius has probably not been paralleled since on planet earth [SOUNDS LIKE 0:10:20]. It's really probably that simple.

Now having said that, there are some substantial errors in Aristotle, or at least the forms and sources that we have, there are some errors. And so one of the biggest problems that Aristotle always had is his inconsistencies have always been the undermining value. What we have of Plato is large and consistent. What we have of Aristotle is actually very narrow and there are some

fundamental inconsistencies. And in the world of philosophy, the most consistent formulation wins. And it's crucial that you understand why this is important. We are here specifically challenging the rudiments of the Neo-Calvinist movement, and we are actually pushing back against a huge body of ideas that are all internally consistent. The heavy lifting has been done. The modern age, the modern Neo-Calvinist thinkers are really third and fourth-rate thinkers. All the heavy lifting has already been done for them. All they're doing is taking the heavy lifting and repackaging it for the modern age. So whenever they see an inconsistency, all they have to do is refer back to the arguments of old. And as a rule, the arguments of old handled the inconsistency. One of the biggest problems within Christianity has been no one has ever successfully sustained a consistent, whole, developed thought in response to Calvinism. And that includes Arminianism. Arminianism is actually not the opposite of Calvinism. And because Augustine spoke unopposed for so long, most of the people who did offer a model [SOUNDS LIKE 0:12:13] were ultimately condemned as heretics. One of the most obvious examples is Pelagius. Most of you are Pelagians. However, you don't know it. And the reason you don't know it is because Pelagius was condemned way back in the 3rd or 4th century. I'm sure there's a scholar out there who will correct me. But way back there, most of the doctrines that we talk about, particularly regarding the doctrine of sanctification are Pelagian doctrines. And of course the Calvinists condemned Pelagians and even semi-Pelagians. Pelagianism, okay? You can actually go read *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. I believe it is, Chapter 3, and Calvin will overtly condemn the kinds of things we're talking about, sanctification being semi-Pelagianism and it is actually heresy.

So now back to my original point. The consistency of a line of thought, the most consistent formulation wins in the world of philosophy. But now we get to see the power of ideas because even with these inconsistencies, the Aristotelian framework is enormously powerful, and you will begin to understand why. Aristotle begins to object to Plato's world of Forms. He is going to reject Plato's

metaphysics at its root. And here's what I'm going to do. We're going to talk about his forms. We're going to talk about Aristotle's rejection of Plato's Forms. And then we're going to talk about particulars, and then we're going to talk about universals. I know that this doesn't make any sense to you right this minute, but this shapes the roots of what Aristotle had to say. And the conversations that we have had, I think you'll immediately begin to identify why we've struggled so much in this context to organize our arguments.

So here we go. We'll start on Aristotle's attack on Plato's Forms. I need to make sure everybody knows what those are. Let me briefly reiterate. Plato created a transcendent world that everything you see from where you're sitting, everything that you see, a table, that table is actually a shadow of the real thing, of the perfect thing. And that was actually located in this world called the Forms. There was a perfect table in the world of Forms, and the table that you see is a shadow. It is imperfect and therefore a shadow of this perfect thing. Aristotle says no, the Forms are a useless theory because it does not explain this world. This world is filled with particulars, things that move, change, grow and act. Now a particular is a table, a chair, a camera, a plate, a shoe, a Phil [SOUNDS LIKE 0:15:15], a Zach [SOUNDS LIKE]. Those are particulars. You understand? This is the world that man needs to understand. Man does not need to know Plato's static supernatural world. Here's an example. This world has chairs, tables, dogs, and Calvinists. Plato says that to understand this world, another world must first have chairs, tables, dogs, and Calvinists. As far as Aristotle is concerned, this creates a useless duplication. All that Plato has done is create a useless metaphor and that it does not address the root question, how does this world reflect the world of Forms? By what mechanism does this take place? And of course there is no answer. Because by definition, all that Plato was saying is this world of Forms is somehow a bright enough light that it casts a shadow here. But yet there is still this fundamental division, which means that man is still living in a world that is somehow functionally unreal.

Now here is Aristotle's major objection that gives you a flavor of the kind of argument he levels [SOUNDS LIKE 0:16:37], but here is his major substantive rejection. To understand this rejection, I need to introduce two concepts: forms, particulars, forms, I already did that, particulars and universals. Particulars are self-contained and self-enclosed things. They are entities, something that exists in itself.

MAN: [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:17:02]

JOHN IMMEL: Yeah, it doesn't matter. Whatever you see in the world is a particular. You understand that? Now universals are what is common to a number of particulars. It is the characteristic possessed by many particulars. What is the common denominator of say table-ness or chair-ness or circle-ness? When men conceptualizes these things, he universalizes the concepts into an abstraction. Let me see if I can explain this. I'm mommy's face, and I've got baby on the other side of me. And I look at baby and baby smiles. And I put blanket over my face and baby frowns, and I drop the blanket and baby smiles. Baby is making a perceptual understanding of mommy's face. But baby has not yet conceptualized mommy's face doesn't disappear with the blanket. Do you understand? Yes? No? I'm crazy? This process of learning to identify a particular. This is a remote, but it's not the specific remote. I have remoteness in my hand. I can generalize remote into a generalized concept. That concept can be abstracted to the nth degree because now I don't have to remember every single remote I ever see in my lifetime. I can now hold in my head the concept, the abstraction of remote, and it encompasses all of the remotes on the planet. You see, this is an enormously powerful part of human cognition. And it is Aristotle's ability to identify the process of going from a particular to the concept, to the abstraction that gives Aristotle's metaphysics and epistemology such enormous power.

Now the concept of universal, what Plato did is he took the universal, he said table has a perfect table somewhere else, so that table is the universal and that's how we know a table generally. Aristotle says that's silly. What you just did is took the abstraction, remoteness, created universal perfect remote somewhere in another world, and then said, oh by the way, this remote is a reflection. So in other words, Plato took the universal and made it a particular. This is a powerful, powerful argument. Aristotle called this reification or literally, thing-making. Pretty much he said Plato made up this world that had no function and no purpose and that all that was necessarily important was here and now.

MAN: Question.

JOHN IMMEL: Yes.

MAN: What you're saying according to Plato, that's not really a remote.

JOHN IMMEL: Yeah. No, this is a shadow of something else. It's a shadow of a perfect thing. You understand?

MAN: Got it.

JOHN IMMEL: You understand?

WOMAN: It's not material.

JOHN IMMEL: Yeah, it's not material.

MAN: It's not real.

JOHN IMMEL: Not real.

PAUL DOHSE: Let me chime in to why this is important. I do a lot of Reformed reading. The constant things throughout much of the literature is Plato versus Aristotle.

JOHN IMMEL: It is. And let me get to why that is. I'm headed that route.

PAUL DOHSE: And basically, you're reading all of this stuff on a good Christian reading about theology, what's all this bickering back and forth about Plato and Aristotle? This is key.

JOHN IMMEL: It is key because this is the fundamental conflict, and you'll see why. Here's how Aristotle explains this. We separate common characteristics of entities, particulars, by our selective awareness, by observing the differences among them, we then reduce things to a common denominator. And this is how we go from particulars to universals. When a baby first enters the world and looks around and sees chair, chair, chair, chair, chair, chair, it doesn't understand all of these chairs. These are all somehow unique and individual events. But eventually, it identifies the common denominators of chairs, and it begins to conceptualize chair in general, and then it abstracts to the bigger picture.

Now notice Aristotle's distinction. Just because we can perform the action of selection does not mean that the common denominator exists in a separate supernatural reality. But separating things in thought is very different than being separated in reality. When man practices this selective process, he is performing abstraction. For example, within this room, you could identify all the shapes of the circle in the room, so we can ignore color, and if it's a part of a chair or connected to the wall, we can extract the concept circle from each instance. But this mental process does not mean that the circle is out there somewhere in a form. Like I said, Aristotle calls Plato's world of Forms the

fallacy of reification, literally thing-making. Plato is making a thing of a human cognitive process. This is a brilliant deduction. Aristotle identifies a fundamental flaw by pointing out that this is really nothing more than how the human consciousness works. It is part of the human consciousness identity, which we're now going to talk about Aristotle's metaphysics.

Now you should have some basic insight into how Aristotle conceptualizes the world. Here are the basics. Reality exists. What man perceives is reality. There is no conflict between reality and appearance. Reality is what man observes, and any formulation that says otherwise is error. Particulars are the units of reality. The things you see are particulars. As I said, anything you can physically point at, look at, identify, subtract and blank out everything else and look at that, that is a particular. Everything is an individual and a concrete. Individuality is the particular's irreducible element. The thing that individualizes it is the thing. Aristotle expands this concepts by saying the particulars are a *this* and a *such*. And here is where we get the validity of classification. Remote is a this, but it's also a such. It's a specific kind of remote. This remote goes to that little gadget right there. There are other remotes that are classified as television remotes, and there are other remotes that are classified as computer remotes. There are Paul, man, classify different than Susan, woman, a this and a such. This gives us an enormous power of abstraction and organization. Here's another example. The particular man can now be put into the class Homo sapiens. Man does this with all particulars. Chairs are class this type of chairs. Tables are class of type of tables. Circles are class of type of circles. And abstractions are universals. Remember Plato said universals were reserved for this place in the Forms. Aristotle says no, this is a function of human cognition, and an abstraction is the universal. All we have done is now make the progression between perception to conceptualization to abstraction. The abstraction is the universal. This is a brilliant development in Western thought.

Here's how he defines the process of abstraction. Men perceives individual trees until he forms the concept of tree that he abstracts into tree-ness and then subsequently categorizes maple trees, oak trees, et cetera. The abstraction tree-ness is then the universal. Here is Aristotle's distinction, and this is a direct contrast to Plato. Universals are real. Universals are the objects of conceptual thought. Universals are the abstraction of particulars, but only particulars exist. Let me make a distinction. There was a common paradox that was called Zeno, Zeno's paradox. Zeno said you couldn't actually cross a room. The reason you couldn't cross the room is because you could not cross distance. You would go to half and then to half again and then to half again and then to half again and to half again, and you could not cross a room by definition. Of course, this is error because it takes the concept of infinity and turns it into a thing. You do not cross infinity. You cross an identity. And the identity is the distance of a room, 30 feet. Aristotle correctly destroyed Zeno's paradox by observing that the abstraction infinity was not real. It didn't exist. It was an abstraction. We use it as a mental unit, as a mental organizer, but it is not in existence like this. So can we cross a room? Absolutely. Why? Because we're not crossing infinity. We're crossing an identity, 30 feet. We're crossing a particular of measurement, here. Do you understand? Yes, got it. Specific, I heard you say it right. Correct.

Now most of the - and I'm going to make a little editorial insertion here. Most of the conflicts that we have regarding the Neo-Calvinist group and all collectivist ideologies is the failure to grasp the distinction between concretes and particulars, concepts and abstractions. Most of our theological discussion in here has failed because it has misunderstood these specific distinctions. And the reason the Neo-Calvinists kick our butt so consistently is because they are masters at manipulating the difference between concept and abstraction. I'll let you mull. Particulars, concepts, abstractions, okay?

MAN: Can you give an example of that?

JOHN IMMEL: Off the top of my head, no, I can't.

MAN: I'm sorry if I put you on the spot.

JOHN IMMEL: Off the top of my head, no, I can't summarize. Well, let me ponder that, put it on a note to me. Maybe I'll think about it.

MAN: Okay.

PAUL DOHSE: They're masters at...

JOHN IMMEL: They're masters at manipulating the difference between particulars, concepts and abstractions. Actually, you say this all the time. They change the terms. They redefine.

PAUL DOHSE: Well, I thought that was - I was going to say that I'm thinking that's a little bit elementary. Let me throw in the one thing you'd see when you listen to them talk is this consistent either-or construct. It's either this or it's that. You're either a Calvinist or an Arminian. You're either Augustine or Pelagian. I could throw that out there.

MAN: I think what John's saying is - I think total depravity is a perfect example because you have the particular man, man is the same, and you have the concept, the abstraction of total depravity. In Calvinist doctrine, the Reformed doctrine, total depravity becomes causal. It becomes an actual thing that has causal power over men. And when you search the reality of man, it becomes its own real force. It ceases to be a concept that man creates to organize what he observes and then it becomes a force itself. So they're constantly defining the world in terms of real objects and external forces which determine them or control - is that something...

JOHN IMMEL: Actually, I think he's dead on. Did you understand what he just said? It's actually a pretty good example. They turn the abstraction, the metaphysical abstraction, human depravity, into a thing. And that thing imposes itself on man. That's the kind of manipulation I'm talking about. All I'm doing is observing the rudimentary manipulation that they make. And unfortunately, it's not necessarily indicative of just the Neo-Calvinist movement. You see this exact same thing in Marxism. You see this exact same thing in Augustinian doctrine. This is not unique to them. It is learning to identify this manipulation. The better you get at learning to think in principles, learning to think philosophically, the faster you get at being able to point out the flaw in what somebody's saying because you can reduce it down to its simplest elements. Being able to learn to think in terms of this is a particular, the concept that I extrapolate of this remote and then I can subsume it in the broadest sense. But the broadest sense does not exist. Okay? You understand? Let me keep going here, and I think that will start to unravel a lot of [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:32:57]. And granted, I've been at this a long time. This is easily fourth year undergraduate work, first, second year graduate work. So be patient with yourself as this starts to make more sense. Because you are daughters and sons of the Enlightenment. I guarantee you, you believe this stuff because you conduct your life after these principles because you have lived in the time of the Enlightenment. So let me continue.

PAUL DOHSE: We function according to what we experience.

JOHN IMMEL: We function according to the belief this exists. And this is a thing and we can identify it and understand it and touch it, measure it and then manipulate it. We understand that. Let me keep going.

And here is Aristotle's terminology. He says matter is the uniqueness of a particular. Form is the universalizing of those things that a particular shares

with other things. So he takes over Plato's concept of Form, but he uses it entirely differently. And here is Aristotle's metaphysical wall. You cannot have form without matter, and you cannot have matter without form. Here is Plato's fundamental error. He creates a world of Forms without matter. And this is the exact same failing in Augustinian doctrine. Augustine's form is the heavenly and the universal worldly godly realm. This earth has no form. And that's ultimately what Augustine manipulates to the nth degree throughout the entirety of his ideology. Here is the summary. Particulars exist. Reality is what it appears to human senses. Action, quantity, motion are merely naming what the particulars do. The nature of identity - what is the identity of John? John is a man. John is tall. John has gray hair as a man, but the man-ness of him gives him the ability to move, to act, to walk. John has weight. John can be in motion. All of these things are elements of my identity. And identities are what you encounter in the world.

So here is what this means. Aristotle is the creator of what is called the Primacy of Existence. Everybody prior to Aristotle said that it was consciousness that was primary. Some consciousness, whether some variation of man's consciousness or some divine consciousness imposed its will on the world and shaped it after its fashion. Aristotle says no, this is backwards. It is reality that comes first and consciousness engages reality. And this is the Copernican shift in philosophy because it puts reality and consciousness as co-weights, co-counterweights in the ability to define what is. It gives the ability for objective knowledge. With the primacy of consciousness, you have no guarantee of objectivity because the first question you must ask is whose consciousness defines reality? Is it Allah? Is it God? Is it Isis? The moment we say, is it Paul? Whose consciousness? Or if you are a follower of Hegel, it is the state that defines reality? Can the state impose its collective will on the world? With this, all you have is the term subjectivism. The primacy of consciousness is nothing more than subjectivism. It is reality first, the primacy of existence first, the correlation of consciousness perceiving that reality that gives you the

ability to have objective knowledge; it gives you a plumb line, because man has every confidence that what he sees is. Man's obsession to alter reality by the mind is the heart and soul of magic. And this is the primacy of consciousness' preoccupation. This is how pond scum in the Middle Ages magically became frogs. This is how churches magically produced Neo-Calvinist preachers. That was a joke. Everything is it is not. Everything is mutable and changeable. There is no reality and there is no causality. Man practice the primacy of consciousness metaphysics all the time. They see something horrible and the first thing you do is start saying, "No, no, that can't be." The blogosphere is doing this with Calvinists all the time. They see one more manifestation of Neo-Calvinist abuse and just magically go, "No, that can't be. It can't be the doctrine." They pretend the relationship between ideas and outcomes do not exist. That must mean it is not reality. This is the implication of the primacy of consciousness. They are defining the measure of truth by their own determination at a given consciousness.

Now let's move to Aristotle's epistemology. A man starts his existence *tabula rasa*, as a blank slate. Man has no innate ideas. One of the biggest problems with Plato's world of Forms is well, how does man - okay, there's this other world, but how does man ever get this concept of table? Where does that come from? It just showed up? If he has no ability to perceive it by any means, how does he get it? Well, the historic solution to this was the concept of innate ideas, that somehow man knew it. Before he was born, man knew it and he remembers it as he grows. Well, this creates a whole list of problems by suggesting the preexistence of souls. In the Augustinian version, are you saying that man fell before the Fall? All of these things, these innate ideas, all originate pre-consciousness.

PAUL DOHSE: Sounds like Socrates.

JOHN IMMEL: This theory was very common throughout. This was not unique. But this explanation of how man arrives at these universals, this was his explanation. And of course it opens up an enormous number of philosophic problems. Aristotle opposes this thought. He said no, man is born a blank slate. That's not where this comes from. The way man gets his knowledge is that it begins with the senses, perceptions. Man's faculty for understanding reality is his perceptions. All formulations that write off the senses at this point are wrong. If you write off the senses, you basically wrapped man in bubble wrap and blinded him and deafened him, and he can - there is no ability for him to actually experience the broader [SOUNDS LIKE 0:41:01] reality. Paul, you have a question on your face.

PAUL DOHSE: Oh, well, you're going to have that problem with me because everything you're saying I read all the time. I mean, in theological terms like what you just said ten minutes ago about the primacy of truth...

JOHN IMMEL: Primacy of consciousness.

PAUL DOHSE: Oh yeah, primacy of consciousness. Why am I thinking John MacArthur Jr. justification and sanctification are never separate but distinct.

JOHN IMMEL: These are the fundamental conflicts, and we're going to get to the laws [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:41:48].

PAUL DOHSE: I apologize because I read a lot of Reformed things. It's just like Susan yesterday when you were talking and because of what she's studying in the Puritans, you're conjuring up a lot of things that we read separately from this perspective. So it's the same thing.

JOHN IMMEL: I understand. Okay. Cool. Now I do need to actually explain how Aristotle addresses the issue of volition. This is one of the efforts to

devalue or to invalidate the senses, and it goes something like this. Man sees a rainbow, and he sees it from a distance and it physically looks like it touches the ground. And so he goes to try to find where it is, and of course he can't find it. And the more he tries to walk towards the rainbow, the harder it is to see the rainbow. Or a similar example is you take a stick. A stick is straight in the air. You stick it in the water and you look at it, and suddenly, the stick bends. The historic criticism is, see, the senses deceive us. We really can't rely on the senses. And Aristotle says, "Nonsense. You made a crucial fundamental error. The senses actually gave you the correct information. You interpreted the information wrong. You misunderstood what that information was designed to give you." In the stick in the water, of course, you're engineers, so you certainly understand the implications of how water moves and shapes light. The stick didn't bend. The light coming back at the senses is what changed the appearance of the stick. The same thing is true of the rainbow. Rainbow of course is light moving through water mist and it creates and diffuses and refracts the light. And so the illusion that you think you see is really the correct manifestation of the entities light, water, air, you get the idea. You understand the distinction? And this is how Aristotle sets out to validate the senses.

Now Aristotle's next epistemological advance is called concept-formation, and I've talked about this kind of implicitly throughout the entire discussion, but I want to reiterate here. Man starts with perceptions and particulars, man, we have a chair and plates and cups and bottles. These are particulars. And then identifies common denominators, types of chairs, chairs with padding, chairs without padding, chairs with wheels on. You understand? We have types of chairs. Okay, I think it will be easier to understand if do this. How many of you watched Sesame Street? I think you're old enough that most of you probably did. Do you watch Sesame Street? Is it still on?

MAN: Yeah.

JOHN IMMEL: Okay. That's fantastic. Well, I don't know if it's to do with nonsense what Sesame Street - when I watched it, I thought it was actually pretty good. I saw it a couple of years ago, and I thought it was just propaganda. I don't know. Anyway, there was a song on there. What was the song about one of these things is not like the other? One of these things does not belong? On a very rudimentary level, that is the process of concept-formation. Sesame Street put up three circles and a square. And the kid, the three-, four-, five-year-old, fifteen-year-old, I don't know.

MAN: Seventeen-year-old. You don't watch it now.

JOHN IMMEL: He looks at the screen and he sees these circles and he sees the square, and he goes, "Okay, that's not like that." He's making a contrast, and he's identifying the commonalities of circles and the distinctions of rectangle and that's how he begins to form his concepts. This is exactly what Aristotle was pointing to. This is the process of abstraction in rudimentary form. This is how man brings order to his perceptions and begins to classify reality by identifying identities. It is by this method that man goes from circle to wheel to cart to transportation. Do you see how I built the progression? This is how man builds every increasing levels of complexity. He takes the very small, the particular, and he begins to form and shape that, and he understands that each conceptualization goes on each conceptualization, re-conceptualization until he gets to the broadest abstraction, transportation. Perception, the order goes this way, perception to conception to abstraction to universal. And I'm going to keep saying this because this is central to the world that we inhabit. And until you understand how this functions, it is very easy to get wrapped up in the Augustinian ideas and their specific effort to divorce, the followers of these ideas, their specific effort to divorce the world from reality and the world from man's mind. This is a central attack that we will see over and over again as we progress through my discussion.

Now this leads to Aristotle's Law of Identity. The behavior of a particular is defined by its nature. The essential characteristics of a particular are what define its identity. The essence of each thing is unique to that thing. This is what all science is based on. You will now understand the axiom of human existence in three laws. Here are the three laws: the Law of Identity, the Law of the Non-Contradiction, the Law of the Excluded Middle. The Law of Identity is the axiom. The next two laws are the subsequent corollaries. It is from this foundation that every cognitive human success originates. The Law of Identity says that man can't be man and not man, that a horse can't be a horse and not horse, that A cannot be A and non A. In Aristotle's words, "If, however, a definition, for example, man, horse, A, were not limited but one were to say that the word is an infinite number of meanings, obviously, reasoning would be impossible. For not to have one meaning is to have no meaning. If words have no meaning, our reasoning with one another and ourselves has been annihilated." Think of the conversations that we've had, how frustrating it is then to land on how we're going to discuss these things, how often the Neo-Calvinists change definitions, and they place mutually exclusive ideas together. This is what they are doing. They are annihilating reason. For it is impossible to think if anything we do not think of but one thing.

Paul is very fond of talking about the grammatical approach. This is actually one or two levels too high on the philosophical scale. Words are really a description of entities, and it is our means by which we communicate the nature of our perceptual experience. And words hold abstractions and concepts. So when somebody says to you, the clear meaning of scripture, what you first must say is clear by what context? Because unless you have the Law of Identity in action, you will find that they don't have a context. It is usually a free-floating abstraction, and they are treating the abstraction as if it is the only thing that matters. The Neo-Calvinists are masters of wrecking the Law of Identity.

The Law of Non-Contradiction says it is impossible then that being a man should mean precisely not being a man. And it is not possible to be and not be at the same time. But the point in question is not this. Whether the same thing can at the same time be and not be in name, but whether it can be in fact. This is the important part. Can it actually exist as two mutually exclusive things? The answer is no, never.

The Law of the Excluded Middle says this. "But on the other hand, there can be no intermediate between contradictories, but if one subject we must either affirm or deny on any one predicate. This is clear, in the first place, if we define what the true and the false are." He is basically saying you can't punt. You can't go, "You know what? I can't figure out how to reconcile these things, so poof!" Yes.

ZACH: This goes to what Ayn Rand so succinctly put in the book *Atlas Shrugged* that contradictions cannot exist. If you find yourself contradictions exist, check your premises. One of them is wrong.

JOHN IMMEL: Check your premises. Something is wrong. Correct. And without this - the problem within the Medieval world was they can never check their premise. They always had an explanation for what it was, and so they can never identify an error. You see this dramatically within churches. I think one of the - it's stunning to watch them rationalize one of two directions, either why God is for them or God is with them. The church's roof falls on everybody; God is against them. The church's roof falls on everybody; God is with them. And in each instance, you have mutually exclusive ideas here. Is it God's judgment or is it God's blessing? And they will do herculean reasoning efforts to try to justify why are they both and the same - the exact same event is basically two separate outcomes. You are ultimately looking at a violation of the Law of Excluded Middle. You cannot punt. If you find an inconsistency in your thinking, you have something fundamentally wrong with your thinking. I

understand how that impacts a vast percentage of Christian doctrine. I get it. But that doesn't change the flaw. Just because you don't have the - and this is me going back to the implications of the primacy of consciousness. If your consciousness is first, then you can rewrite reality however you like. But if you're going to go with the primacy of existence, you cannot do that. You must first identify reality, then figure out how you fit into that. That is how we get to objective knowledge.

ZACH: And that's why my objection when people say, "Well, we have sort of have free will, but we don't really," because what you're trying to do is you're trying to take two mutually exclusive concepts--free will and determinism--and merge them, integrate them into singularity itself. So what you're really trying to do at the end of the day is you're trying to say that the human self, that man being man is somehow man and not man at the same time. What you're doing is you're trying to parse the metaphysics of man. You're trying to make man a function of two mutually exclusive forces. That's what I'm saying. Either man is free or he is determined. The Law of the Excluded Middle says he can't be a little bit of both because the next question when somebody says, "Well, man has some free will, but in other things he doesn't have free will," you say, "Well, where is the distinction in man's self between his freedom and his determination? Where exactly does the free man begin and the determined man end?" Nobody can answer that question. And the reason is because man, the reality, is absolute. And what you're trying to do is you're trying to take two mutually exclusive determinist forces and sort of integrate them into man. And it never works. Again, that's why I always ask the question, "Okay, if that's your premise, where does one begin and the other start?" And the answer is I don't know.

JOHN IMMEL: You're exactly right. This is one of the fundamental problems within - determinism has been in the philosophical framework long before Calvin's got wound of it. Actually, Augustine was a soft determinist. He allowed

man some freedom, some action of choice, and others before him did the same thing. But you don't see hard determinism actually show up until - hard determinism shows up because some of the philosophical expectations of mechanistic world decided that because man was in a world of causality, man really didn't have a choice, and so you end up with hard determinism. But John Calvin actually took it from Luther, Augustine's soft determinism and turned it into hard determinism, that man actually has no choice. But to actually get into - from my perspective, to get into the discussion of determinism and causality, at this stage in the game, I really can't do it. But I think your point is well made. It is holding two mutually exclusive ideas and trying to figure out how to reconcile it. And with stunning consistency, the real answer is punt. I don't know. We have a mystery. God is a mystery. Let me continue.

PAUL DOHSE: Well, let me interject one thing. This is all good as long as you define it. I say that man has free will, that in God's sovereignty, he determines a good end. You're saying, "We don't know how it's going to end." Right? So let's be fair. And it's okay. It's okay. But let's define it. Because that's what we're about, defining these thoughts and in effect letting people come to their own conclusions. So it's a mystery to me how God is sovereign and says man has free will, but I'm going to predetermine a good end to the world. You're saying we don't know.

ZACH: Right. I would say check your premises. And I would say if God has a determined outcome already, then any [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:57:26] free will becomes ultimately irrelevant. You can say I have freedom to do this and that, and I said this to Wade Burleson on my blog. We had a discussion about this, because he made the same argument as you did. And I said, "Okay, you put a man in a box and you shoot him to the moon..."

PAUL DOHSE: No, no, Wade didn't make the same argument that I made. Wade Burleson and I didn't make the same argument.

ZACH: My example was you put a man in an enclosed space, you say if within this enclosed space, you have freedom to do whatever you want to do, but I'm going to shoot you to the sun and in two days you're hidden right in the middle of the sun. Well, whatever man does in the box is ultimately irrelevant to the only real outcome, which is he burns up in the sun. So to make the argument that man has free will in context is ultimately to make an already hardened man [SOUNDS LIKE 0:58:15] and say, well, the outcome has already been determined. Therefore, what you do now is ultimately meaningless. Which is in other words, if it's irrelevant, then you can't identify it's free because irrelevancy can't have any kind of definitive - meaning you can't have free will if that free will has [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:58:32] outcome.

PAUL DOHSE: I understand that we also agreed on ultimate conclusion that's irrefutable, okay? You're saying we don't know how it's going to end. I'm saying, yes, we do know how it's going to end. So that's fair, right?

ZACH: I'm saying you can't know what does not exist and neither can God. If it doesn't exist, then you can't know it, by definition. If it does exist, then you don't have any free choice, by definition. So, yeah, that would [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:59:04].

PAUL DOHSE: Okay. All right.

JOHN IMMEL: All right. Let me persist with this. In summation, the identity of A is in fact the identity of A. The particulars of A must never contradict. For A to maintain its identity, there can be no middle compromise on something not A. This is the foundation of causality. It is because man can identify A and hold no contradiction on the identity of A, it empowers man to successfully make a

distinction and see the relationship on how the particulars interact. This is causality. Without causality, everything in reality remains a totally unprecedented event. Man can't tell why one thing happens versus another. This is crucial to understanding reality. The foundations of causality, the laws that govern causality, is a corollary to the correct judgment of reality. The inability to identify cause and effect is man's central and greatest failing. And insanity is directly tied to the inability to act to identify causality. Our reality testers are directly related to our ability to identify cause and effect between objects in space. And abstractions and action and motion. Here's a great example. If you ever want a laugh or maybe cry, it's hard to tell, Google woman radio show deer crossing. Have you heard this?

MAN: Yes, I have.

JOHN IMMEL: How many of you have heard this?

MAN: I have.

JOHN IMMEL: Okay. A woman calls into a radio show. It is a five-minute segment, and she calls in and she's like, "I have tried to talk to my legislators about this. I've gotten to the state about this. And I'm really trying to get the message out about this. And I'm talking about all of these deer crossing signs. I do not understand why the government put these deer crossing signs right beside interstates. Because when they do that, the deer cross right to the interstate. Why don't they take the deer crossing signs and put them like say near schools? Because if they went to your schools, they will cross with the children and be safe, but they're cross right over the interstate." And listening to this you're thinking, "Certainly, this is a joke." But you keep listening and the host on the radio keep telling well, you know, this doesn't go together, right? There is no causality here. The deer crossing signs don't make the deer cross there. And either she was an A, a great actor or exactly what we all think,

nutty. Because at the end of the day, what she was failing to do was understand causality. And this is central to human, rational health. The inability to identify causality correctly is largely the source of almost all psychological and individual woes.

So now you can begin to grasp why it is from Aristotle that all effective human cognition flows, all laws of logic, all of man's conceptual capacity, all of man's reason, and most importantly, man's capacity to grasp the world in which he lives. Question: And why is this a threat to despots the world over? Second question: Why has every oppressive ideology sought to unseat Aristotle? Third question: Why do tyrants cling to Aristotle's shoulders while trying to cut off his head? Here is the answer. Because Aristotelian thought means that existence is knowable, understandable and practiceable, that all men have the means to arrive at the truth, that knowledge is available for all who would use the laws and the rules of logic to obtain it. This foundational concept was revolutionary. It was the original Copernican shift from the transcendent world of Plato's Forms. Indeed, without Aristotle's foundation, Copernicus was not possible, and neither is any other advance in human knowledge.

And here is Aristotle's impact on Western thought. When using the laws of thought, the mind of man is effective to understand man's existence. An existence that is identifiable is an existence that is understandable. An existence that is understandable is an existence that is explorable. An existence that is explorable is an existence that is controllable. An existence that is controllable is an existence that man can master. And this is exactly what happened. Thomas Aquinas introduced Aristotle into the horror story that was the Augustinian Dark Ages where crime was a starving serf eating the king's deer, where punishment was an iron maiden or the rack or the stocks, where civil liberties meant the government could do no wrong because the king had a divine right to any action, where child labor law was mandatory 16-hour days scratching in the fields of the lord's [UNINTELLIGIBLE 1:04:51] with a

stick to plant the lord's crops so that the father can pay the lord's taxes, where plagues were heaped on the heads of sinners, where the princes and kings waged yet another war against the Lollards or the Catholics or the Protestants and teenagers pledged their oath of loyalty to fight in religious wars.

Aristotle's ideas soon inspired the Renaissance. Now we got into a conversation about art in one of my last sessions, but I want you to notice now a contrast between Medieval art and say, the art of the Renaissance. Compare Medieval art with say, the Sistine Chapel. Notice now the impact of Aristotle. Now man is no longer this cringing, horrified, tormented beast, writhing in the flames in the pit of hell. Now man is portrayed as almost in the very image of his own Maker. It is a powerful contrast. This is how ideas, the entire progression that I talked about yesterday, how ideas impact as the metaphysical statement rolls out to people, how they begin to roll back to themselves through art the images and the pictures that affirm their metaphysical, epistemological and ethical assumptions.

For the next hundred years, philosophy moves in fits and starts. It travels down blind alleys, intellectual cul-de-sacs. By the time we get to the 17th century, philosophers are exceedingly aware that they need a new start. A new start equated throwing off the Augustinian metaphysical and epistemological framework. Mysticism and dogmatism continued to wreck everything it touched. Something was very obviously wrong. The thinkers in the 17th century merely had to observe that the human history was dominated by ignorance, superstition, poverty, and despotism. Revelations did not work. Faith was merely government-enforced superstition. Dogmatism was really despotism. Despotism led to oppression and poverty. Philosophers needed a new method. This new method was reason. And this is called the Age of Reason. The Age of Reason gave way to the Enlightenment. The Age of Reason, this is the 16th century, right? Help me out, guys. This is 16th century...

MAN: Yeah.

JOHN IMMEL: This is the 17th century. Somehow I always have to rethink this every time I talk about it.

PAUL DOHSE: It confuses me.

JOHN IMMEL: This is where the thinkers started to advocate reason. This is where reason became the standard. This is where it was advocated by a relatively small group. This is how we see the ideas start expanding into the broader world. You want to know why - actually, I'm going to take a little bit of side trip here. You want to know why state governments, tyrannical governments, always wanted their kids in their schools? Actually, we'll start back here. Do you see how long it took for Aristotle's ideas to gain ascendancy? Well, how about if you don't have to do this? How about if you don't have to persuade men? How about if you're a good Neo-Calvinist preacher and all you gotta say is, "You know what? Submit to my authority. I'm going to tell you what to think." How about if you don't have any of that? If you don't have a state school, you got a way to persuade man for them to understand these ideas. But you know what? If all we ever have to do is say, "You know what, parents? You gotta give your kids up to us, and we're going to tell your kids what to think. And I'm going to teach them some of this common core math. And we're going to compel your kids to believe what we want them to believe." You don't have to worry about the evolution of thought. You don't have to worry about people being persuaded. You have them at the first generation. That was my side trip.

MAN: Rabbit track [SOUNDS LIKE 1:08:59]

JOHN IMMEL: Huh?

MAN: Rabbit track.

JOHN IMMEL: Yeah. So here we see the world beginning to accept the concepts of the Enlightenment, the superiority, the efficacy of reason, the ability of reason to actually understand the world which man lives. Now we still have some problems. Philosophy has not really - like I told you earlier, there were some problems with Aristotle's thoughts, the inconsistencies require that men start to try to figure out what those inconsistencies arrived at, which led to a rationalist discussion and eventually to the empiricist discussion here. I'm not going to talk to you about the rationalists. But what I want you to notice the explosion - you should recognize most of these names--Bacon, Galileo, Newton. Here's Descartes [UNINTELLIGIBLE 1:09:51], but these men here--Bacon, Galileo, Newton, and Locke--these represent the core, the explosion of the power of human reasoning and what it ultimately produces. Here is where man finally gains freedom. This is the one thing that was not yet figured out, political thought. Remember, we started out yesterday - I started at the top, metaphysics and I went to epistemology, then I went to ethics, and the last one is politics. The power of Aristotle's metaphysics and epistemology ultimately worked out into this area here, and we finally get to an ethic that says man is able and the nature of his ability empowers him towards self-governance. These ideas have little seeds back in here, and man continues to argue for the nature of his own self-governance because why? Because man has ability.

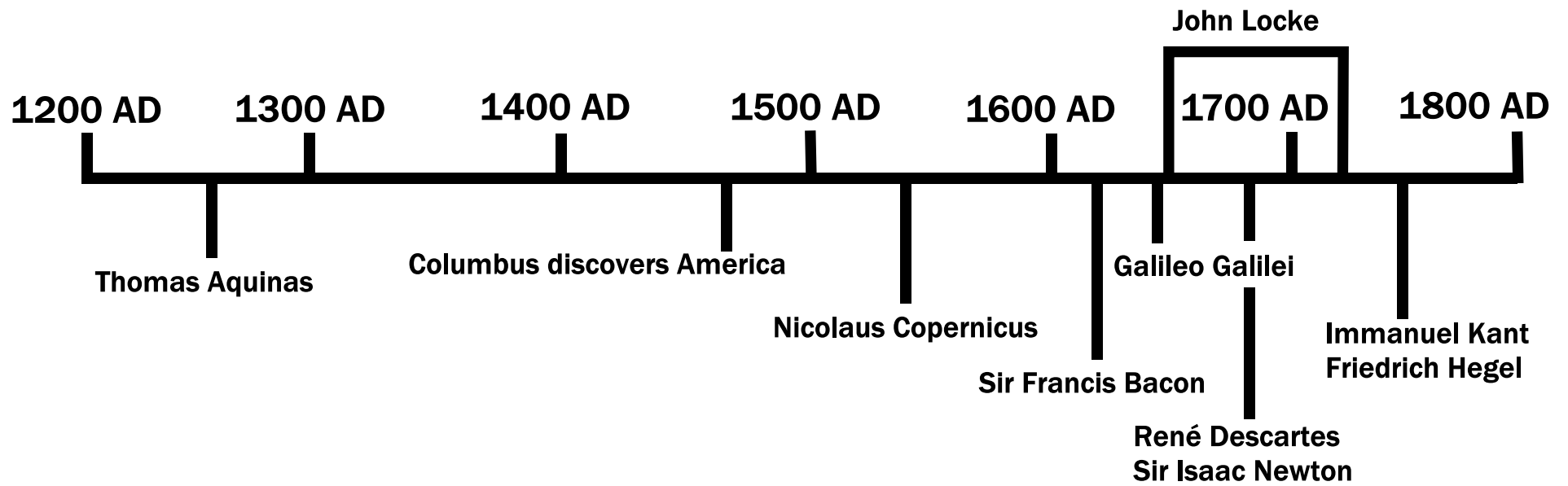
On my blog, I consistently ask this question. Who owns man? At its root, all governments presume - there's only been two options in the whole history of the human race: either the state owns man or man owns himself. And in political action, this is where we finally get this. This is how man came out from underneath the horror story that was the Middle Ages, the horror story that was the Augustinian doctrine, the horror story that was made after Calvin. Here's where man finally gets free. Now here's the challenge that I have. This brings me to the emergence of John Locke. And, Paul, I'm going to offer this up

for your consideration. I told you that all of this, what I'm talking about, until you understand what you're about ready to lose, you really will understand my objections to the overarching construct that we're resisting.

I think John Locke is essential, but I have 17 pages of John Locke notes. And I think for me to successfully - and I've been debating whether to get rid of this, but I think I've decided that I don't really have a choice because it is the central, one of the central, actually, I do want to say the central issue of the National Socialist Germany and how it ultimately impacts the United States. And that is the issue in the addressing of capitalism. I have four pages of notes on capitalism, which means my next session would be long and I still wouldn't be done. So I will let you ponder. But like I said 17 - fortunately, for most of this, I think I can read what was here, but I will let you decide how you want to handle this.

PAUL DOHSE: Well, the way the schedule has been designed, there is lots of [UNINTELLIGIBLE 1:12:44]. Okay? So obviously, we need to break for lunch. Let me bring the schedule up real quick. That shouldn't be too difficult to ascertain.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]



Categories, Section I, Part I

Things are said to be named 'equivocally' when, though they have a common name, the definition corresponding with the name differs for each. Thus, a real man and a figure in a picture can both lay claim to the name 'animal'; yet these are equivocally so named, for, though they have a common name, the definition corresponding with the name differs for each. For should any one define in what sense each is an animal, his definition in the one case will be appropriate to that case only.

On the other hand, things are said to be named 'univocally' which have both the name and the definition answering to the name in common. A man and an ox are both 'animal', and these are univocally so named, inasmuch as not only the name, but also the definition, is the same in both cases: for if a man should state in what sense each is an animal, the statement in the one case would be identical with that in the other.

Law of Identity

“If, however, [a definition .e.g. Man, Horse, A] were not limited but one were to say that the word has an infinite number of meanings, obviously reasoning would be impossible; for not to have one meaning is to have no meaning, and if words have no meaning our reasoning with one another, and indeed with ourselves, has been annihilated; for it is impossible to think of anything if we do not think of one thing; . . .”

The Law of Non-Contradiction:

"It is impossible, then, that 'being a man' should mean precisely not being a man, [. . .] And it will not be possible to be and not to be the same thing, [. . .] but the point in question is not this, whether the same thing can at the same time be and not be a man in name, but whether it can be in fact."

The Law of the Excluded Middle:

“But on the other hand there cannot be an intermediate between contradictories, but of one subject we must either affirm or deny any one predicate. This is clear, in the first place, if we define what the true and the false are.”

JOHN IMMEL 2014 SESSION 4

Okay, for those of you who don't know, we had a time warp. We're not someplace else. We had some technical difficulties and we decided to move to a different location. So now I'm going to pick up where I ended last session. I brought us up to the re-institutionalization of Aristotle into the Western thought. And then I said that we had fast forwarded through - basically, we're going to pick up at John Locke. Now I need to say something very brief. Reason has become effective and successful. Man's life on earth is effective and successful, and we're trending towards where the seeds of political liberty are finally starting to emerge. The continental rationalists basically started with Descartes. Descartes started with doubt. He said to himself, "I think. Therefore, I am."

So Descartes says, "I think. Therefore, I am." This is an unfortunate formulation. It is effectively a primacy of consciousness formulation. It starts with consciousness first and then presumes being. It presumes existence. This, of course, causes all sorts of problems. The subsequent thinkers, we have Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz. They take these concepts. They run with them. It produces some real conflicts in philosophy. And we finally arrive at John Locke. John Locke is an empiricist. He says exactly the opposite. He says, "Wait a minute. It's not reason that is first. It's actually experience, and the nature of human experience, by the nature of our perceptions we encounter the world."

So that sends you on the right track. It sounds very similar to Aristotle, but it is not Aristotle. I will summarize the mess that Locke starts. I'm going to actually introduce that briefly when we talk about Bishop Berkeley and David Hume. But the brilliant thing about John Locke was his political philosophy. Now, when I was debating on organizing this conference, I really went back and

forth about how much I should talk about John Locke, and about three or four weeks before the conference, I wrote an article on SpiritualTyranny.com, which by the way, is not a discernment blog. And I detailed Locke's contribution to the progression of Western thought and in particular to the concept of rights that we enjoy in the United States. And I was struck by how many people said, "Thank you for explaining that to me."

Now as people who have inherited the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, a country founded on Locke's concepts, I was struck by how little understanding there was of the logic behind what created those documents. And then I realized I really couldn't skip Locke. I really need to explain this. And I said this in the last session, and I know people who are still thinking, "Is he ever going to get to Hitler? Oh my gosh. I want to hear what he'll do with Hitler." I cannot emphasize this enough. Until you understand what you are about ready to lose, it is almost impossible to grasp the significance of what National Socialist Germany represents. So here, I'm going to dive in. I'm going to actually make the effort to lay out Locke, and I decided to go ahead and spend some time. I ask your indulgence. I really am going to dig into this pretty hard.

Locke wrote a few books. And when I say books, they're not really all that heavy, probably a few hours' worth of investment, and you can read them for yourself. But his most influential, of course, is the *Second Treatise of Government*. I do also recommend you pick up *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. It is not really so much philosophical, but is the beginnings of his rejection - now, mind you, we are far enough into the Enlightenment that we are starting - people are becoming more and more bold in their rejection of church tyranny. And you must grasp there are no options in Christianity. You have Catholicism, and you have effectively Lutheran orthodoxy, Lutheran-Calvinist orthodoxy. There are other variants of Christianity out there, but for the most part, they are so politically and socially insignificant as to really not

be an option. And we're still within the framework where being an atheist is punishable by death, and that prevails even well up to, depending on the country, well into the 19th century. So you really don't have a genuine secular alternative, meaning a state not wrapped around religious orthodoxy. Well, people are finally starting to become bold. They can tell that there must be a dramatic shift, and the fundamental problems, the conflicts that they're identifying, are directly tied to church tyranny and political freedom. Locke is the philosophical apogee of the Enlightenment and the advocacy of reason, and as we will see shortly, the assault against reason starts almost immediately after Locke. Fortunately for us, by the time of the American Revolution John Locke was a household name and the concept of natural rights was spreading - had spread throughout the colonies.

Now, let me go ahead and talk about this briefly. From *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, I'm going to read a couple of excerpts because it will give a sense of how he is arguing against church statist control.

"Since you are pleased to inquire what are my thoughts about the mutual toleration of Christians in their different professions of religion, I must need answer you freely that I esteem the toleration to be the chief characteristic of the mark of the true church. For whatsoever some people boast of the antiquity of places and names, or the pomp of their outward worship; others, of the reformation of their discipline; all, of the orthodoxy of their faith for everyone is orthodox to himself. These things and all others of this nature are much rather marks of men striving for power and empire over one another than the Church of Christ."

I really like that quote because of "For everyone is orthodox to himself." There could be no greater truer aphorism. Everybody assumes that their definition of Christianity is right. Everybody assumes that. And I find it fascinating that he

points out that we cannot make orthodoxy the premise by which we have religious toleration. I want to read you another excerpt.

"In the second place, the care of souls cannot belong to the civil magistrate because his power consists only in outward force, but true and saving religion consists in the inward persuasion of the mind, without which nothing can be acceptable to God. And such is the nature of the understanding that it cannot be compelled to the belief of anything by outward force. Confiscation of estate, imprisonment, torments, nothing of that nature can have any such efficacy as to make men change the inward judgment that they have framed of things. It may indeed be alleged that the magistrate may make use of arguments, and thereby, draw the heterodox into the way of truth and procure their salvation. I grant it, but this is common to him with other men. In teaching, instructing, and redressing the erroneous by reason, he may certainly do what becomes any good man to do. Magistracy does not oblige him to put off either humanity or Christianity, but it is one thing to persuade and another to command, one thing to press with arguments, another with penalties. This civil power alone has a right to do; to the other, goodwill is authority enough."

And I want you to notice he is correctly making the distinction that authority and force are the same thing. Governments are tools of compulsion. One of the things that I hammer away on my blog is the specific and direct relationship between authority and force. When you hear men making the argument that they have the right to ask you to submit to their authority, they are really declaring the right to use force against you to compel you to a given outcome. You remember that I discussed dogmatism as a foundation of Augustinian doctrine, the moral expectation that select men have the right to compel intellectual conclusion.

Now Locke is making the correct assessment that the nature of government compulsion should not be mixed in with religious conviction. Now this is an

evolution of thought. You have lived with this for so long in your lives that you honestly have a hard time conceptualizing it not being true. One of the things that I've noticed in all of our subsequent discussions, whenever we disagreed, whenever we've come at these things at different ways and from different frameworks, one of the things that I noticed that I find so impressive is how genuinely indignant you are that you shouldn't be entitled to your own opinion. You are absolutely daughters and sons of the Enlightenment. Until the Enlightenment, this notion did not exist. It was nowhere. The notion that you have the right to be independently thinking creatures in your own behalf is absolutely the product of the Enlightenment and more particularly of John Locke's arguments.

Here's another quote from *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. "The care and salvation of men's souls cannot belong to the magistrate because though the rigor of laws and the force of penalties were capable to convince and to change men's minds, yet would not that help at all to the salvation of their souls. For there being but one truth, one way to heaven, what hope is there that more men would be led into if they had no rule but the religion of the court and were put under necessity to quit the light of their own reason, and oppose the dictates of their own conscience, and blindly to resign themselves upon the will of their governors and to the religion which either ignorance, ambition or superstition had chanced to establish in the countries where they were born?"

That's a wordy way of saying men should be entitled to the rights of their own lives, and the nature of their religious convictions should be determined by conscience. You take that for granted. In the United States of America, we have a hard time conceptualizing religious wars because our Founding Fathers were brilliant. They approached the nature of government with the expectation of the separation between Church and State. As a result, the sum of our religious disagreements for the most part in the United States are church splits. Everybody gets in an uproar. We want the color of the carpet to be pink.

Somebody else says they want it to be blue. They get fussed, and they decide, "You know what? I'll start my own church. Doctrinally blue is better."

Well, that's the sum, and it frankly doesn't matter how egregious the doctrinal fight. At whatever point of disagreement, everybody goes, "Well, I'm just going to start my own church." And they do, which is why in America, effectively, religion has exploded with flavors of denomination, and you can see on church corners in almost any given city in the country where first church became second church that became third church became fourth church on all four corners - it was effectively the same people. And this is directly tied to the fact that the American Church has never had access to genuine civil power. I made this point before. A secular government is a free government because a secular government should be agnostic. Its interests have no interest in religious orthodoxy it. It is not interested in a doctrinal standard, and I understand why Christians find that truly scandalous, but you must hear me here. Your freedom is directly tied to a secular, agnostic government. Now, that is different than a government who professes atheism and chooses to oppress alternate positions. That is actually the reverse form of political tyranny. I am talking about a government that gives no advantage and gives no penalty based on religious conviction. Do you see the distinction I'm making? Yes? No? Tell me I'm crazy?

MAN: It's neutral.

JOHN IMMEL: Yes, they are neutral. This next comment is actually long. I thought this was hilarious. It's actually all one comment but it's broken up on slides because I couldn't fit it all into one. "Let us suppose two churches, the one of Arminians and the other Calvinists..." This is Locke. This isn't me. This is Locke. I think this is funny. "...in the city of Constantinople. Will anyone say that either of these churches has the right to deprive the members of the other of their estates and liberty because of their differing from the same doctrines

and ceremonies... (while the Muslims laugh to see what the inhuman cruelty Christians thus rage against Christianity?) One of these churches has the power to treat the other ill. To which of them does this power belong and by what right?" Fantastic question. "It will be answered, undoubtedly, that it is the orthodox church which has the right of authority over the erroneous or heretical. This is, in great and specious words, to say just nothing at all." That's hilarious. "Every church is orthodox to itself; to others, erroneous and heretical. So the controversy between these churches about the truth of their doctrines and the purity of their worship is on both sides equal; nor is there any judge, either at Constantinople or elsewhere upon earth, by whose sentence it can be determined. If it could be manifest which of these two dissenting churches were right, they would not accrue thereby unto the orthodox any right of destroying the other. For churches have neither any jurisdiction in worldly matters, nor are fire and sword any proper instruments wherewith one convince men's minds of error and inform them of the truth."

Now last year, Susan Dohse did a fantastic job of explaining Augustine and his use of violence as a doctrinal standard to compel men to the Church. I invite you to go back and review what she said. What Locke is saying here is in direct defiance of Augustinian ideology. It is in direct defiance of Calvinist ideology. Both men presumed the right of the Church to compel rational compliance.

Okay, that is what I wanted to discuss with Locke on *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. Now these arguments become foundational for what becomes ultimately the secular government of the United States, the belief in the expectation of the division between religious conviction and political power. And now we must turn to Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*. Now here's what I did. Of course I just read a few excerpts from Locke, and his 17th, 18th century English is a little cumbersome to our ears, so I took the liberty of rewriting what he said and condensing it. Now I have not rewritten the entirety of the *Second Treatise of Government*, but what I did do is I took sections, what

parts of his sections I thought actually had relevance to us directly to hear, to see, to know, to understand. I decided to go ahead and rewrite those. I'll tell you when it's actually something he said, but for the most part you're going to hear my words. Actually, I got this off the Gutenberg Project. You can actually go find this version off gutenberg.com or [.org](http://gutenberg.org), whatever.

Okay. Locke opens his work with a definition of terms. He summarizes his initial thoughts, and this is Locke talking. "Political power, then, I take to be a right of making laws with penalties of death, and consequently all less penalties, for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community, in the execution of such laws, and in the defense of the commonwealth from foreign injury; and all this only for the public good."

Now he is defining his terms about the nature of what political force is, what government is for, and it is specifically for the defense of the property and the common good. But I want to make this distinction. When I say common good today, most people hear a collectivist assertion. They hear for the good of the people, for the good of the community. Locke doesn't mean this. When Locke says for the public good, he means the public good of individuals. Do you see the distinction I just made?

Okay. Chapter two, the state of nature. Now the state of nature becomes a common phrase in the Enlightenment. Thomas Hobbes uses it. Jean Jacques Rousseau uses, and so it is ambiguous. It is not consistent. State of nature for Hobbes meant basically man is a barbarian and that the nature of his barbarity needs restraint. And the nature of the restraint, government's function is designed to handcuff man in his most base passions. You remember the Edmund Burke quote that I pointed out way back in the beginning, that it is government that man forges his fetters by virtue of the fact that he really doesn't have self-control. This a very Hobbesian position. Rousseau has a very similar concept of the state of nature, but he doesn't

think man is a barbarian as such. He thinks that the state of nature is man's highest ideal. Man in his natural form is the height of the perfect predator in nature. He still thinks that the function of government restricts man and therefore man gives something up when he enters society, but his definition of the state of nature is very different.

Here's Locke's definition. To understand political power correctly, man must first understand his natural state. Locke calls this state, the state of nature. Man is perfect, so he's free, meaning man is at liberty to act as he pleases. He acts to dispose of his own possessions, and he acts to dispose of his own person. Think of it this way. You live on a desert island by yourself. You are at liberty to organize your desert island to your own benefit, and it would require of you your highest and best reason to do so. Your very survival would be dependent upon your ability to organize your environment to your advantage, and you're perfectly free to dispose of everything that you create and your entire person to that end. That is his definition of liberty or state of nature. He says the state of nature is a state of equality. All the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal. All the men are born to the same advantages of nature. Now expand the example I gave, so now we have a desert island, and now we have two people. The exact same state exists between both men. They both have the ability to act and to dispose of themselves in the exact same fashion. That is their natural right.

Locke goes on to say this means that God would not and could appoint some men to subjugate others, and he says that the law that governs the state of nature is reason. Reason teaches all men that all men are equal and independent. Now notice how this goes. Man's existence requires his survival, and his survival requires that he successfully manage his own environment, that he specifically sets out to organize that environment such that he dispose all of his work product in service to that survival. All men exist in this state, and the reason they do so, the reason they are successful in this state is

because the only way they can survive is by reason. So notice how Locke is making the equation. Existence, survival, liberty, work and reason are all integrated. Do you see what he did?

The state of nature is a state of liberty, but it is not a state of license. The law of reason says that since men may harm no other man's life, health, liberty or possessions, there is no subordination among men that authorizes one to destroy another, and inasmuch as man preserves his life, he must also seek to aid the preservation of another's liberty, health, limb and property. Notice that Locke's state of nature requires man to respect exactly the same thing in another man. Reason, the law of nature, wills peace and the preservation of man. Therefore, the law of nature puts in everyone's hand the right to punish the transgressor of reason and to hinder the violation of reason with violence. Without the power of retribution, the law of nature would be in vain. In other words, without the ability to recompense the irrational, to give retribution to the irrational, reason could never thrive and survive. The law must have power to preserve the innocent and restrain offenders. If any one may punish evil, then everyone must be qualified. What any may do in prosecution of the law, everyone must be able to prosecute the law of reason.

Man's power over another is not arbitrary or absolute. Individuals cannot vent their passions against a criminal without limitation. Retribution must be in proportion to criminal action. Violence can only be used to obtain reparation and restraint. But if a criminal abandons restraint and reason declares themselves outside of the law of reason, these criminals become dangerous to men of reason and peace. So the dividing line of violence is when, though unreasonable, the irrational initiates violence against reasonable and peaceful men. They trespass against the peace and safety of the whole of humanity. This abandonment grants mankind the right to destroy the men who abandon the law of reason and make him repent of his actions to deter him in continued action and to make an example of those who would follow in his footsteps.

Every man has the right to punish the offender and executioner of the law of nature. The man who has been injured by a man who abandons the rule of reason not only has the right of punishment but also the right to obtain reparations, and all people who seek justice may join the injured party to assist in recovering his restitution. The man who murders or commits unjust violence and slaughter has declared war against all mankind and may be destroyed just like you would kill a lion, a tiger with whom man cannot have society or security.

Notice that Locke is standing the historic philosophical perspective on its ear. He is centralizing the entire right of man to exist for the sake of himself, and he is arguing directly that the nature of man's existence demands that he be able to resist with violence all who wage war against his peaceability. Is peaceability a word, or did I just make it up? It sounds good.

Locke says that punishment must be proportional to the crime, and I find this line fantastic, but the punishment must be sufficient to make continuing in the same action an ill bargain. This leads to Locke's next point which he calls the state of war. This is chapter 3. The state of war is a state of enmity and destruction intended by one man against another by word or action. Notice, by word or action. The state of war is a deliberate intentional design to take a man's life or property. When a state of war is initiated, the innocent has the right to destroy that which threatens destruction just like you would kill a wild beast because they have no commitment to common law or reason. The man who seeks to place another man in his absolute power has initiated a state of war. The man who seeks to place another man in his absolute control seeks to make him a slave. Slavery is merely the same as a state of war.

I want to make this point here. This was revolutionary. You will remember the determinism of Augustinian and Calvinist doctrine placed men in a specific relationship to their Creator. Their Creator basically appoints them their

position. The justification for slavery was it was your ordained place. Locke's argument here says this is not true. Slavery is really an act of war. It is the possession of another man's life that is not yours to possess. The nature of reason and the nature of peace eliminates slavery. Of course, most of you who have done any work at all with American history knows that slavery was one of the hardest things that we fought against. The justification for slavery was universally church doctrine. Modern Calvinists like to pretend that they have always been on the side of peace and prosperity and the brotherhood of all men. It's all nonsense. For centuries slavery was considered orthodoxy. The right to enslave was considered an orthodox position. And the argument, the same argument that everybody uses when they talk about Bible, "It clearly says in the Bible," and then they point to the fact that Paul, with Philemon, consecrated the state of slavery, the institution of slavery, and told Philemon to go back to his slave master. And it frankly doesn't matter that he ultimately told the slave master to take it easy. Ultimately, what Paul did is confirm that slavery was, in fact, something ordained by God. That's one among many of the arguments.

Locke says no. And it was John Locke - remember I told you by the time of the American Revolution, Locke was a household name, and that meant he was a household name in slave houses. The argument that inspired the Methodists and the Unitarians was this argument: natural rights. And this argument from John Locke was the inspiring force that started the Church to rethink the idea behind slavery. And, of course, it was the Calvinist churches and Calvinist denominations - like I said, there were no other options in the 1700s. We have many different denominations now in 2014, but back then if you weren't Calvinist orthodox, some variation of Calvinist orthodox, there were very few options, and the Methodists and the Unitarians happen to be one of them, and they rejected the fundamental translation making this argument. It took about 30 years to persuade the bulk of the colonies that slavery was in fact immoral.

I want to continue with chapter 4 of slavery. The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth and not to be under the will or legislative authority of men. In society, the liberty of man is not under any legislative power except what is established by consent. Freedom from absolute arbitrary power is so fundamental to man's life that he may not part with it, not even by consent. Did you hear what I said? Man cannot give up. It is so fundamental, this thing that he is, that man is, these natural rights and this reason is so fundamental to who he is he can't even give it up by consent. Man may not enslave himself to anyone because no man can give more power than what he has. This is a brilliant argument. Slavery is a little more than a state of war sustained by legislative means. It is merely the relationship between conquered and captured.

Now I want to move to private property. Of private property, chapter 5, Locke's definition of private property is an essential evolution of thought. He correctly establishes the roots of private property. Private property is the product of labor. Individuals employ their industry to create the substance of their lives. Man in the state of nature must work to survive. Man's survival is directly tied to his labor. This makes man's work a direct function of his life. Do you see the progression? Survival, work, sustain life. This makes what he works at his property, and it must be private. Seizing man's property then is the same thing as seizing his life.. In an evolution of thought where it has always been assumed that the state is the political and social primary where man is disposed at the will of the state, to correctly identify the location for the nature of work product, life and property was a profound advance.

I want you to remember - I have talked about this repeatedly - the soul-body dichotomy, the mind-body dichotomy, the ability to take man and divide him in half and distribute those halves across whatever world you want to distribute them. Say, for instance, John Calvin. John Calvin basically says you have no right to complain about the nature of your existence. Who cares if you're

persecuted? Who cares if the government comes and takes whatever they come and take? Ultimately, your treasures, your life, your values are all stored away in some other place, but here on earth you've just got to suck it up, and that is your specific Christian responsibility. That is Calvin's argument. But notice he succeeds in doing this based on the soul-body dichotomy. He can say that your physical self is actually immoral and irrelevant. Your spiritual self is this thing that gets magically transported someplace else. By dividing man, he can make the moral justification that tyranny is morally acceptable. Locke says no. Locke is one of the first philosophers to successfully make the mind-body integration, the soul-body integration.

You will remember that the historic philosophical position held that man was a mind-body dichotomy. The Dark Ages was rooted in this dichotomy. This was the justification for the church to see its earthly production. Man's focus should be in the afterlife. Man's material existence is morally inferior which means man's industry is morally questionable. Locke, on the other hand, correctly identifies that man is indivisible from his work. He correctly integrates human existence by identifying reason as the root of man's production and production as the root of man's life. Thus, man's life and man's property are corollaries of the same existence. This is profound and powerful. I want to dance every time I read this. This is an amazing philosophical achievement. The standard objection to private property has always been that private property prevents some men from actually getting resources. In tribal cultures this had some validity because tribes did not have the concept of private use, but in fact they held everything in common. This social dynamic historically produces lack. But Locke applies reason to the process of wealth creation. He correctly identifies that men creates his level of prosperity. Wealth is not static because wealth is the product of labor, and labor is expansive.

I want to read you a prolonged section. Here's Locke. "This is certain, that in the beginning, before the desire of having more than man needed had altered

the intrinsic value of things, which depends only on their usefulness to man's life, or had agreed that a little piece of yellow metal, which would keep without wasting or decay, should be worth a great piece of flesh, or a whole heap of corn, though men had a right to appropriate, by their labor, each one unto himself, as much of the things of nature, as he could use, yet this could not be much, nor to the prejudice of others, where the same plenty was still left to those who would use the same industry. To which let me add, that he who appropriates land to himself by his labor does not lessen, but increases the common stock of mankind. For the provisions serving to the support of human life produced by one acre of enclosed and cultivated land are ten times more than those which are yielded by an acre of land of an equal richness lying waste in common. And therefore, he that encloses land and has a greater plenty of the conveniences of life from ten acres, than he could have from a hundred left to nature, may truly be said to give ninety acres to mankind for his labor now supplies him with provisions out of ten acres, which were but the product of an hundred lying in common.

Notice his reason, that the nature of labor expands human prosperity, and he is exactly right. Man must successfully use his resources as effectively as possible. Private property demands of the man his highest and best reasoning capacity, his greatest efficiency. This is what has always elevated the rise of man's natural material wealth. Private property is at the heart of increasing and never-ending prosperity. Locke correctly identifies that things laying in common actually do not have the optimal uses, but private property expands human resources because of labor and ownership.

Chapter 6, paternal power. Locke correctly identifies that men do not give up rights when they join social contracts. They do not give up liberty to gain security, and this is actually a very important concept. It was very common for people to say that men needed to give up something to join society. Like I said, this was Hobbes and this is effectively Rousseau and pretty much every other

philosopher on the other side of this argument. The presumption is that I am only in restraint because there is no government compelling me to some given action and that for me to enter society, to enter political agreements, what I'm really giving up is the nature of my own liberty. Locke says, "No. This is wrong." You will remember the Augustinian and Calvinist doctrine of subordination. Government's function is to restrain men. Government is compulsion to moral action, but Locke says not so. So that, however it may be mistaken, the end of law is not to abolish or restrain but to preserve and enlarge freedom. For in all states of created beings capable of laws, where there is no law, there is no freedom, for liberty is to be free from restraint and from violence of others, which cannot be where there is no law.

I want you to notice that what I bolded here. The nature of liberty is to be freed from restraint or violence. The reason I enter into political agreements is because I want to secure for myself security. I want to emphasize this point. Locke is brilliant here. The function of government is to defend the individual from all encroachments. The function of government is to secure man's freedom. Man's freedom is expressed in his action to dispose his life and property. Government's limited function is to defend man in that freedom or pursue restitution or retribution for those men who enter a state of war. Notice how does progression works. Man is the sovereign political unit. Man creates private property. Man needs a means to defend himself from the irrational, so he voluntarily enters into agreements with other men with the exact same premise. They consent to government to gain liberty, not to lose it. Government's function is no longer fetters. Government's function is defense. It is the defense of the individual who is living his life in the pursuit of life and prosperity and happiness. Now you can begin to understand where the framers of the constitution got the substance of their arguments. Now you can think back to the Declaration of Independence and start to go, "Oh, this is what they were driving at."

Chapter 8, "Of the Beginnings of Political Societies." It is here that Locke identifies the correct order of social relationship. Historically, it was assumed that state was the social primary. Men were born into the state, and their lives were disposed of at state will. Locke says this is backwards. "Men being by nature all free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of this estate and subjected to the political power of another without consent. A man can only divest himself of natural liberty and put on bonds of civil society by agreeing with other men to join and unite for their comfortable, safe and peaceable living among another in secure enjoyment of their properties. This any number of men may do because it injures no freedom for the rest. They're left as they were in the state of nature. When any number of men have so consented to make one community or government, they are thereby presently incorporated to make one body politic wherein the majority have a right to act and conclude the rest." Here is his progression. Man is first free and sovereign agent. Man labors to create property to satisfy his survival and enjoyment. He seeks social relationships to expand his freedom. His consent is to social contacts, and government is by consent of the governed for the express purpose of defending his life, peace and property.

Now Locke goes into a discussion of the extent of legislative power, chapter 11. Legislative power cannot take from any man any part of his property without his own consent. The reason man enters into political agreement is to sustain and enjoy his property, so he can't then enter society and then society then expropriates his property. Thomas Paine echoed this concept. "It is a perversion of terms to say that a charter gives rights. It operates by contrary effect--that of taking rights away. Rights are inherently in all the inhabitants, but charters by annulling those rights in the majority leave the right by exclusion in the hands of a few. They consequently are instruments of injustice. In fact, therefore, must be that the individuals themselves, each in his own personal and sovereign right, enter into contract with each other to produce a government, and this is the only mode in which governments had a

right to arise and only on this principle with they have a right to exist." And, of course, Thomas Paine was one of the leading thinkers, one of the leading men making the argument for the American colonies' independence.

And last I want to address Locke's argument for the dissolution of government. Since government is by consent, Locke addresses the dissolution of government. The government is dissolved when the legislature takes it upon the power to make laws that people do not appoint them to make. This is very important. A legislature does not become autonomous and sovereign by the fact that it was created. The people sustain their political sovereignty. When a legislator acts in this fashion, the people have no obligation to obey the laws. They can refuse to obey as an act of refusing to be subjugated. And the logical outworking is everyone returns to the state of nature, at the pleasure of his will as he was before contract. So rejecting the legislature, an unjust legislature, is not chaos. It's not anarchy. It merely means that man reverts to his original state of nature. Note this would also be the answer to a runaway bureaucracy that is neither elected nor subject to the people like when Congress decided to start giving legislative power to bureaus in the United States. Just an observation.

Governments are dissolved when a single person sets up his own arbitrary will in place of laws, like presidents who pass endless executive orders. Governments are dissolved when a single person hinders the legislature. When this person suspends legislature, he is in effect putting an end to the government the people instituted. Governments are dissolved when one man seeks to alter elections and thereby change legislature to which the people consented. Governments are dissolved if the prince, his word, or the legislature deliberately delivers the people into the subjugation of a foreign power. The people entered into political agreement to be governed by its own laws. They cannot be transferred into a government that was not authorized by its own consent. Americans, hear me. It is treason for any member of the American

government to act to deliver the American people into the hands of the United Nations. We did not authorize the existence of them to govern us. Our constitution is unique and proprietary. We have the right to define our own body of laws.

Here is Locke's summary. When legislators and agents of the government act against the trust of the people by invading their property, they, the government agents are the ones who are initiating force, and they are the ones who are the rebels. They are the ones committing treason against the people. Never lose sight of the fact that men enter into civil government to exclude force from social interaction and to preserve their individual property and peace and unity. So those representatives of government who use force in opposition to the laws are the rebels against the state of nature. They are hiding behind the pretense. They have authority to justify their actions, but they are the ones who bring back and initiate the state of war. They are the ones who have overthrown the government.

This is a profound and important distinction. The government of the United States is for the people and by the people. The fact that we elected legislators does not make them the political sovereign unit. The state in the United States is not sovereign. The people are sovereign, and they grant limited function to the legislators, the state governments, the federal government and the judiciary. We have catastrophically lost this concept in the United States, and I want to draw your attention because this point is specifically and expressly made in the Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they that are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." This is Locke. Notice what I made in bold here. Actually, I'm going to go ahead and put this up. "That whenever any form of government becomes

destructive to those ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it and to institute new government, laying its foundations on such principles and organizing the powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness." This is actually contained in our Declaration of Independence. This is at the root of our government. The United States government is not the political sovereign. The people are the political sovereign, a people committed to reason, peace, life and prosperity and property. When governments use force in direct violation of the express social contract, the government is committing treason.

Now you can have some sense of scope. Now you've seen the evolution from the disaster that was Augustinian ideology to the evolution of thought that began to inspire men to believe and commit themselves to trust in reason and for man to begin to solve his own problems. Then comes John Locke, and he successfully identifies the core elements of political liberty. Without political liberty, and specifically private property, the divorce of government from being able to command and continue to seize private assets. This was huge, and it was this event that created the sense of life in the Enlightenment. Generations of European Christians accept the premise of human depravity as self-evident, as have all sociopolitical organizations founded on the metaphysical premise that man is a sinner who inhabits a fallen world.

By the late 18th century and early 19th century, this social assumption had been dealt a mortal blow. People were living through the greatest expansion of liberty and knowledge and prosperity the world has ever seen. Men had the proof that life was filled with opportunities, that the future could be bright because the future could be built. Every technological advance, every disease, every pain, every new level of mass prosperity was one more example of the fraud the Church had perpetrated on humanity. It was a conclusion born from seeing the world's harsh and brutal environment mastered and ordered and pacified. The Medieval Age had no such contrast. The world of gargoyles and

superstition and brutality was all anyone had ever known. So there was an internal logic to the Church's ban on reason and science. All the world knew was despotism and dogmatism and the poverty that those twin destroyers bring. But the 17th century was the beginning of the Enlightenment and the full immersion of Aristotelian thought into the minds of men, and by the time history arrives in the 19th century, man was without excuse.

The Roaring Twenties roared for a reason. Man was fruitful. Man enjoyed life. And for the first time in world history, man could see a vision of life that held endless possibilities. It seemed that man was on the verge of solving the world's problems. Man woke up seven days a week and saw man's ability to triumph. He went to church one day a week to be told he was a sinner, life was hopeless, and man's highest ethical ideal was death. But man knew there was a disconnect. Something was wrong with this picture. The men of the Enlightenment could see the living contrast between the American form of government and the despotism that had dominated the whole of Europe. Indeed, anywhere medieval doctrines have dominated American life, they could see the manifestations slavery, poverty and war. Church doctrine condemned the whole of man's existence, but man's existence was very obviously not the impotent, ulcerous, cancerous sore described by the preacher. America's founders knew that the Church must be separated from the State, and for only the second time in human history, there was a truly secular state. The state was agnostic, giving no advantage to statements of orthodoxy. Man was free to follow his conscience. Man was free to create and prosper, and the greatest political achievement man had ever known led the world into the greatest expansion of peace and prosperity the world had ever seen. Government's only function was the defense of the individual in pursuit of his life, liberty and happiness. The shining light on the hill, the amazing beacon of hope, the culmination of the Enlightenment thought, and political organization was the United States of America.

Thank you.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]

From *A Letter Concerning Toleration*

Since you are pleased to inquire what are my thoughts about the mutual toleration of Christians in their different professions of religion, I must needs answer you freely that I esteem that toleration to be the chief characteristic mark of the true Church. For whatsoever some people boast of the antiquity of places and names, or of the pomp of their outward worship; others, of the reformation of their discipline; all, of the orthodoxy of their faith — for everyone is orthodox to himself — these things, and all others of this nature, are much rather marks of men striving for power and empire over one another than of the Church of Christ.

From *A Letter Concerning Toleration*

In the second place, the care of souls cannot belong to the civil magistrate, because his power consists only in outward force; but true and saving religion consists in the inward persuasion of the mind, without which nothing can be acceptable to God. And such is the nature of the understanding, that it cannot be compelled to the belief of anything by outward force. Confiscation of estate, imprisonment, torments, nothing of that nature can have any such efficacy as to make men change the inward judgment that they have framed of things.

It may indeed be alleged that the magistrate may make use of arguments, and, thereby; draw the heterodox into the way of truth, and procure their salvation. I grant it; but this is common to him with other men. In teaching, instructing, and redressing the erroneous by reason, he may certainly do what becomes any good man to do. Magistracy does not oblige him to put off either humanity or Christianity; but it is one thing to persuade, another to command; one thing to press with arguments, another with penalties. This civil power alone has a right to do; to the other, goodwill is authority enough.

From *A Letter Concerning Toleration*

The care of the salvation of men's souls cannot belong to the magistrate; because, though the rigor of laws and the force of penalties were capable to convince and change men's minds, yet would not that help at all to the salvation of their souls.

For there being but one truth, one way to heaven, what hope is there that more men would be led into it if they had no rule but the religion of the court and were put under the necessity to quit the light of their own reason, and oppose the dictates of their own consciences, and blindly to resign themselves up to the will of their governors and to the religion which either ignorance, ambition, or superstition had chanced to establish in the countries where they were born?

From *A Letter Concerning Toleration*

Let us suppose two churches — the one of Arminians, the other of Calvinists — in the city of Constantinople.

Will anyone say that either of these churches has right to deprive the members of the other of their estates and liberty because of their differing from it in some doctrines and ceremonies ... (while the Muslims laugh to see with what inhuman cruelty Christians thus rage against Christians?)

If one of these churches has the power to treat the other ill, to which of them does this power belong, and by what right?

(continued)

From *A Letter Concerning Toleration*

It will be answered, undoubtedly, that it is the orthodox church which has the right of authority over the erroneous or heretical. This is, in great and specious words, to say just nothing at all. Every church is orthodox to itself; to others, erroneous or heretical.

So the controversy between these churches about the truth of their doctrines and the purity of their worship is on both sides equal; nor is there any judge, either at Constantinople or elsewhere upon earth, by whose sentence it can be determined.

(continued)

From *A Letter Concerning Toleration*

If it could be manifest which of these two dissenting churches were in the right, there would not accrue thereby unto the orthodox any right of destroying the other. For churches have neither any jurisdiction in worldly matters, nor are fire and sword any proper instruments wherewith to convince men's minds of error, and inform them of the truth.

Sect. 37

This is certain, that in the beginning, before the desire of having more than man needed had altered the intrinsic value of things, which depends only on their usefulness to the life of man; or had agreed, that a little piece of yellow metal, which would keep without wasting or decay, should be worth a great piece of flesh, or a whole heap of corn; though men had a right to appropriate, by their labor, each one of himself, as much of the things of nature, as he could use: yet this could not be much, nor to the prejudice of others, where the same plenty was still left to those who would use the same industry.

To which let me add, that he who appropriates land to himself by his labor, does not lessen, but increase the common stock of mankind: for the provisions serving to the support of human life, produced by one acre of enclosed and cultivated land, are ten times more than those which are yielded by an acre of land of an equal richness lying waste in common. And therefore he that encloses land, and has a greater plenty of the conveniences of life from ten acres, than he could have from an hundred left to nature, may truly be said to give ninety acres to mankind: for his labour now supplies him with provisions out of ten acres, which were but the product of an hundred lying in common.

Sect. 57

So that, however it may be mistaken, the end of law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom: for in all the states of created beings capable of laws, where there is no law, there is no freedom: **for liberty is, to be free from restraint and violence from others; which cannot be, where there is no law:** but freedom is not, as we are told, a liberty for every man to do what he lists: (for who could be free, when every other man's humour might domineer over him?) but a liberty to dispose, and order as he lists, his person, actions, possessions, and his whole property, within the allowance of those laws under which he is, and therein not to be subject to the arbitrary will of another, but freely follow his own.

Sect. 95

MEN being, by nature, all free, equal, and independent, no one can be put out of this estate, and subjected to the political power of another, without consent.

A man can only divest himself of his natural liberty, and puts on the bonds of civil society, by agreeing with other men to join and unite for their comfortable, safe, and peaceable living one amongst another, in a secure enjoyment of their properties,

This any number of men may do, because it injures not the freedom of the rest; they are left as they were in the liberty of the state of nature. When any number of men have so consented to make one community or government, they are thereby presently incorporated, and make one body politic, wherein the majority have a right to act and conclude the rest.

Sect. 123

IF man in the state of nature be so free, as has been said; if he be absolute lord of his own person and possessions, equal to the greatest, and subject to no body, why will he part with his freedom? why will he give up this empire, and subject himself to the dominion and control of any other power? To which it is obvious to answer, that though in the state of nature he hath such a right, yet the enjoyment of it is very uncertain, and constantly exposed to the invasion of others: for all being kings as much as he, every man his equal, and the greater part no strict observers of equity and justice, the enjoyment of the property he has in this state is very unsafe, very unsecure. This makes him willing to quit a condition, which, however free, is full of fears and continual dangers: and it is not without reason, that he seeks out, and is willing to join in society with others, who are already united, or have a mind to unite, for the mutual preservation of their lives, liberties and estates, which I call by the general name, property.

Sect. 124

The great and chief end, therefore, of men's uniting into commonwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property. To which in the state of nature there are many things wanting.

“It is a perversion of terms to say that a charter gives rights. It operates by a contrary effect — that of taking rights away. Rights are inherently in all the inhabitants; but charters, by annulling those rights, in the majority, leave the right, by exclusion, in the hands of a few... They ... consequently are instruments of injustice ... The fact, therefore, must be that the individuals, themselves, each, in his own personal and sovereign right, entered into a contract with each other to produce a government: and this is the only mode in which governments have a right to arise, and the only principle on which they have a right to exist.”

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, Chapter 5

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --**That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.**

JOHN IMMEL 2014 SESSION 5

JOHN IMMEL: If you haven't been with us for the whole conference, my name is John Immel. I'd like to introduce myself as no one from nowhere, my point being in direct contrast, I am not here in an effort to present to you a credential. I'm not here approaching you with authority. My goal is to offer you the best rational, reasoned argument I can. I'm going to invite you to engage those ideas and arrive at your own conclusions. If you like what I have to say, of course, I wrote a book. Everybody who's speaks in public, I think, writes books. This book is called *Blight in the Vineyard: Exposing Roots, Myths, and Emotional Torment of Spiritual Tyranny*. You can find this online in amazon.com for \$23.99. Of course, again, my name is John Immel. I am an unrepentant and committed capitalist. Please buy my book.

We just got done hearing Susan Dohse speak, and if you didn't catch her speech, by all means go out and get it. She is my hero. She did a fantastic overview of the Puritans and this - actually, through the entire weekend, and I wanted to actually revisit something she said. She said, "In May 1642, a cooper's wife in Hingham having been long in sad melancholic distemper near... "I'm not even sure I know how to pronounce that word - frenzy?

SUSAN DOHSE: Yeah, I think.

JOHN IMMEL: I guess that's how they spelled it back then.

SUSAN DOHSE: P-H, uh-huh.

JOHN IMMEL: P-H, all right. Near phrensy and having family attempted to drown her child but prevented by God's grace, providence, did now again take an opportunity, but alone to carry her child, aged three, to a creek near her

house, and stripped it of clothes, threw it into the water and mud. But the tide being low, the little child scrambled out, and did take up her clothes and came to its mother who was sat down not far off. She carried the child again, and threw it as far as she could so that it could not get out. But then it pleased God, that a young man, coming that way, saved it. She would give no answer for it, but that she did it to save it from misery, and withal that she was assured, she had sinned against the Holy Ghost, and that she could not repent of any sin.

She, Susan, I think was about ready to apologize for Puritan bashing, and I don't know if you can hear my voice on the tape, but she should be Puritan bashing. This body of ideology is among the most disastrous ever perpetrated on humanity. If you are suffering - and actually this is not my discussion, but I really wanted to segue all through what Susan said because emotional imbalance, neuroses, these are the inevitable ends, the inevitable psychological ends of this body of doctrine taken to its logical conclusion. If you take this doctrine seriously, you try to put it into practice, the human psyche is not designed to endure this kind of emotional, mental and metaphysical abuse. It cannot be done. Human beings are not worker bees. We are not ants. We are created individuals, and human identity, the identity of man, has a very specific definition. It is the endless determination to recreate man into something entirely else that creates these psychic breaks.

I know that there are some of you out there and for the first time you're actually hearing people genuinely, forcibly, unequivocally reject the roots of these ideas, and you honestly almost can't believe it. You're almost afraid. You're almost afraid for us, but inside when you look, you see the terror that is reflected back in your own soul, and you honestly don't know what to do with yourself. Part of me has compassion for you, but the other part of me wants to point out you are getting what you deserve because you are taking and acting on a body of ideology that is designed to destroy you. So looking around and

wondering why you feel destroyed, you're the creator of your own destruction, and it will not be until you genuinely say to yourself, "I have the right to exist for my own sake. I have the right to be an independent individual, and I have a right to my own mind. This is my natural state." Until you can do that, you're going to continue to feel and suffer the kind of neuroses that this woman felt, the need to want to destroy just so she could find some certainty in her life. I have an axiom that I like to tell people. Man abhors chaos like nature abhors a vacuum. You cannot exist in such a state of chaos--emotional, rational, intellectual chaos. It cannot be done. These doctrines drive man to that end, and it will be your undoing. All right. That was my segue. I really wanted to amplify what Susan said. That was fantastic, her last session...

PAUL DOHSE: And you were just [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:05:39]

JOHN IMMEL: I was?

PAUL DOHSE: Yeah.

JOHN IMMEL: Fantastic.

PAUL DOHSE: By me [SOUNDS LIKE 0:05:44].

JOHN IMMEL: Oh. I'm gonna bring it. And it's still fantastic. I'm glad to hear. All right. Now I will segment into exactly what I do want say. We're going to talk about Nazi Germany. I promised we were going to get here. I must confess I have hacked out about three hours' worth of stuff. I decided to just get here. Maybe I'll take up what I was going to say next year. I don't know.

I think we've laid enough background for people to begin to understand what was happening in Nazi Germany. But when I was preparing for this, one of the biggest challenges I had in my mind was, like Susan, I have endless quotes

from historical figures that will point to what they said, what they did and how they thought. And the challenge is always how will that matter to you because you won't know who these people are. They'll be anybody. Just like in 50 years, nobody is going to know who John Piper is. Nobody is going to know who Mark Deaver is. Nobody is going to care who Al Mohler is. In a hundred years, these names will be fundamentally irrelevant. But what will be relevant is how they chose the doctrines and the ideas that they chose to advocate. So I've pretty much decided I am going to give you quotes, but I am not going to try to make the academic case that these people were necessarily important or involved. That actually has already been done. And since in the Neo-Calvinist world, a big library is the measure of masculinity. I'm going to show you mine. I've only got four books or five books, so I'm secure, right?

No, first of all, I do want to say a few things. I did read *Mein Kampf*. Funny story. I think it's hilarious. I like to read and study in restaurants, and so I sit in public and do most of my writing and reading, which means I'm usually very well-known by pretty much the entire wait staff, the entire restaurant, pretty much all over the Dayton, Ohio, Centerville area. So anyway, I'm in a restaurant. Actually, I think I was in Applebee's - or no, I was in TGI Friday's, and I was reading *Mein Kampf*. And, of course, you can see here big black book, some letters on top, not particularly obvious, and it's thick. What does this look like from a distance?

MAN: A Bible.

JOHN IMMEL: A Bible. Right. So I'm sitting and reading, and there's this woman. I must observe that she was a black woman. And she had her Bible open and she was doing the Christian - she had her Bible open and everybody that came by, she was kind of [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:08:45] their direction to see that she was reading a Bible, and she was determined to stop anybody with any - that would pay her any attention at all, to recognize that she was reading

her Bible. And, of course, I'm studying *Mein Kampf*. Now, mind you, as I'm reading this, I never once felt the compulsion to grow a little funny mustache or "Heil Hitler," none of that. None of that happened. Nothing will jump off on you if you actually happen to read on this and compel you to start saying, "Sieg heil, sieg heil." Nothing like that happened. So anyway, I was sitting and reading this book, and she thinks I'm reading a Bible. And so she finally says to me, "So what's your favorite passage?" And I said, "Well, there's one in here about the great lie. It's pretty good." And she looked at me real funny and she goes, "I don't understand." And so I picked it up and I went like this. Okay. Pale face, tall, blue-eyed, I know it's gray now. It used to be blond, *Mein Kampf*. Watching her roll through reaction was fantastic. She just - the longer she looked and the longer it took her to make the equation, she finally - and within, I don't know, maybe about two minutes - she finally goes, "Well, you have a blessed day." She packed up her Bible. Out she went.

MAN: [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:10:07]

JOHN IMMEL: What's that?

MAN: I'm surprised she even knew what *Mein Kampf* was.

JOHN IMMEL: Well, her reaction told me she did because I gave no explanation. Really, truly, this is all I did. That's it. I gave no explanation. So anyway, I did read *Mein Kampf*, and I did it for a reason. I just wanted to see what the man had to say. I told you I started on this quest to understand this dynamic. What was unique about Nazi Germany, or was it unique? How is it the Christians, Lutheran Christians, and the National Socialists got together? What happened? And so I wanted to see actually what Hitler had to say, and the reality is - well, I'll tell you what he had to say here. I do want to move on to a few other books. You've heard me talk endlessly about the evolution of Western philosophy. I know there are people out there that are going to be

interested in this. I'm going to put this out there for everybody to see. Can they see it? Yeah. Okay. *History of Western Philosophy*, this edition actually - there are five here. I'm going to give you all of the titles: *The Classical Mind*, *The Medieval Mind*, *Hobbes to Hume*, *Kant in the 19th Century to the 20th Century*, *Wittgenstein and Sartre*. This is by W.T. Jones. W.T. Jones wrote this series. I find this series very readable. If you are interested in a good introduction to the evolution of Western thought, philosophy in particular, highly recommended. It's the deep end of the pool, but it's accessible to anybody who's interested in engaging the brain. It's work but worth it. I have all five volumes. They're fantastic.

Then in relationship to this topic of conversation, I read *Theologians Under Hitler: Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus and Emanuel Hirsch*. The author of the book is a guy by the name of Robert P. Ericksen, for those of you online. This man lays - well, Ericksen's interest is in trying to show how pretty much well-known, well-respected theologians in National Socialist, Pre-National Socialist Germany were on the forefront of advocating for Adolf Hitler and the theology, the ideology up underneath the Christian Church and specifically the Evangelical Lutheran Church, their commitment to national socialism, why he actually goes on and makes the case. Really and truly, there is no wiggle room in this. The Lutherans were on track. There really was no functional distinction between Lutheran conviction and the rise of National Socialism. He does a pretty good job. His summary in the back of the book, I think, is mostly bogus, but this isn't a book review. I'll let you guys go ahead and make your own decisions.

Then I want to actually draw your attention to this one, *The Holy Reich*. This one is *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919 to 1945*. This is written by a guy by the name of Richard Steigmann-Gall. I think I pronounced that name right. If I didn't, I apologize. Richard, you wrote a fantastic book.

Highly recommend. You can see this is well-loved. I have poured through this thing. He gives probably the most detailed account, the most academically based account of the Christian relationship to the rise of National Socialism. He wrecks pretty much every myth out there about this evolution. I have found no appreciable academic rebuttal to his work. I am going to let it stand on its own merits. And many of the quotes and comments I got about what I'm going to talk about, I got from him. So I am relying on his scholarship, and I think I'm justified in doing so.

And then last and certainly not least, I must give credit where credit is due. This book connected the last of the dots for me. This is *Ominous Parallels*, and it is by Leonard Peikoff. His grasp of the evolution of Western thought and how it specifically associates with the rise National Socialist Germany is really unmatched and unparalleled. Highly recommend. If you want an infinitely more detailed discussion and not least of which how it ultimately applies to our current situation, also highly recommended.

And then did I mention I wrote a book? Buy it.

All right. So let's get the anti-Semitism out of the way. It is my conviction that the anti-Semitism and, of course, the Holocaust directly related to anti-Semitism is what obscures the larger discussion about National Socialism. I know that the eradication of a genetic group of people hits us really where we live. We know that that's the one thing we can never escape, and so when there is an organized, government-driven hostility towards the genetics of our creation, that's hard to get out of your head. But you must also remember the National Socialists wiped out almost an equal number of people who were not - it was not about the Jews. They wiped out pretty much anybody they decided stood in their way of whatever their statist ambitions were.

So, like I said, let's go ahead and get the anti-Semitism out of the way so I think we can actually begin to focus on the roots and sources, the real reasons, and not least of which we're going to start with the champion of all Germans, Martin Luther. Well, I'm going to read, and then I'm going to make my case here in a minute. We'll start with this one. This is out of the introduction of *On the Jews and Their Lies*. This is a little known - well, it's little known to people who don't pay attention. This a little known book that Martin Luther wrote, and here's what he said: "I had made up my mind to write no more about the Jews or against them. But since I learned that those miserable and accursed people do not cease to lure to themselves even us, that is, the Christians, I have published this little book so that I might be found among those who oppose such poisonous activities of the Jews and who warned the Christians to be on their guard against them." Well, further along he says, "We propose to discuss their arguments and boast and prove convincingly before God and the world, not before Jews for, as already said, they would accept this neither from Moses nor from the Messiah himself... To this end, we quote Moses in Genesis 17... When God instituted circumcision, he said, among other things, 'Any uncircumcised male shall be cut off from his people.' [Genesis 17:14]"

Now I want you to notice Luther's stated purpose. He is specifically trying - it's right here. "We propose to discuss their arguments and boast and prove convincingly before God and the world..." He is trying to make a specific intellectual rebuttal. This is a theological treatise, and this is important. There is a common myth, one of many around us, that Luther was somehow just misled, and this is some vague ramblings. No. This is just as important in Luther's mind as the *Heidelberg Disputation*. This is just as central to Lutheran thought as the rest of his doctrinal works. Like I said, it is often said in his defense that Luther was a victim of long-held prejudices. He was merely reacting out of his horrible biases, that it is the unfortunate writing of an ignorant soul, that he can't really be held responsible for the actions of people 300 years in the future. I contend this is all nonsense. Luther wrote this when

he was 60, and this is after a long-considered development. Notice in his first comment he said, "I made up my mind to write no more either about the Jews or against them." He had a long history of dealing with the Jewish people in his mind. So he writes this at last because he ultimately believes he must organize a defense for Christianity against the Jews. So those people who actually insist that Luther is somehow not culpable here are people who are trying to wipe out reality and rewrite history.

And really, it will take you about an hour and a half, two hours to wade through, but on its face *On the Jews and Their Lies* is a theological treatise, like I said, with the same intentions as *Bondage of the Will* and the *Heidelberg Disputation*. Now the notion that he should not be responsible for the actions of people 300 years later, this is nonsense. The fact of the matter is that everybody expects people to conform and act according to Luther in theology. This is a fundamental expectation. You can't pick and choose. You can't tell me his doctrine is what everybody should do because of his orthodoxy and in turn tell me that something he wrote with just as much theological impact is somehow irrelevant to people's actions. Luther was a definer of his time. He was not a victim of his time. Luther is the intellectual plumb line for all things orthodoxy, and it is expected that people conform, and it is nonsense to assume that he should not be directly accountable.

He goes on to say, "Shame on you, you damned Jews, that you dare to apply this earnest, glorious, comforting word of God so despicably on your mortal greedy belly and that you are not ashamed to display your greed so openly. You are not worthy of looking at the outside of the Bible, much less of reading it. You should read only the Bible that is found under the sow's tail, and eat and drink the letters that drop from there." Do I really have to unscramble that? This is the kind of stuff you'd find in an elementary school there. Goopy poop and pee, really? Now, I didn't say it was a great theological treatise, and I didn't say he was a whiz kid of theological defense. I'm only telling you he intends this

to be held this way. But I do want to notice, the pig crap and pee thing actually gets - the thing that gets lost is the other theme. Did you see it? For those of you who can't see me online, I am pointing to the word "greedy belly" and "that you display your greed so openly." Do you see greedy twice in this section? Now I did a brief search in the PDF that I had, and I found the word greed 15 references, Jewish greed 15 times. Put that in your head. Put that in your head and notice the theme of the next quote.

"They curse us Goyim," the Jewish word, the Hebrew word for outsider, right? I don't remember. It's been forever. My Hebrew is entirely 30 years out of date, so I don't remember, but it basically is saying the Jews are - this is a term Jews use for Christians. "They curse us Goyim. In their synagogues and in their prayers, they wish us every misfortune. They rob us of our money and goods through their usury, and they play on us every wicked trick they can. And the worst of it is that they still claim to have done right and well, that is, to have done God a service. And they teach the doing of such things. No pagan ever acted thus. In fact, no one acts thus except the devil himself, or whomever he possesses, as he has possessed the Jews." Now, beyond the entirely paranoid ramblings up here, again what is the theme? What is he really criticizing the Jews for?

MAN: Greed.

JOHN IMMEL: Their money, their wealth, their prosperity. He calls it greed. That's designed to condemn it. But what he's really upset about is that they have prosperity and he does not. We'll get there. The word that was shouted out from the peanut gallery was "capitalism." We'll get there.

Now, I want you to notice the theme of one more quote. Oh, that's almost off the page. This is still Luther speaking. "So we, the German Christians, are even at fault in not avenging all the innocent blood of our Lord and of the Christians

which they shed for 300 years after the destruction of Jerusalem. We, German Christians, are at fault for not slaying them. Rather, we allow them to live freely in our midst despite their murdering, cursing, blaspheming, lying and defaming. We protect and shield their synagogues, houses, life and property. In this way we make them lazy and secure and encourage them to fleece us bodily of our money and goods, as well as to mock and deride us, with a view to finally overcoming us, killing us all for such great sin and robbing us all of our property. Now tell me whether they do not have every reason to be the enemies of us accursed Goyim, to curse us and to strive for our final complete and eternal ruin."

Now I've spent a little bit of time searching through history, and I can't remember any Jewish incursion to oppress the German people. I can't think of one. It might be out there, so I don't - and particularly not when Luther was alive, so we're talking about circa 1550 somewhere, 1635, I guess, maybe. So I don't know. In the 14th century and the 15th century, I can't think of no place in history where the Jews were just pillaging and plundering their way to wealth, which they weren't. I'm being a little facetious here, but the point is I don't know where he gets all this. But I do want you to notice again the fundamental theme, and that he thinks it's a problem, that the nature of government should be to have made people secure in their property. And I missed a quote. I had a good one, and it is not in here. Yeah, I missed a quote.

Anyway, I'll just go on. With this in mind, it makes abundant sense why Adolf Hitler could say this: "Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew I am fighting for the work of the Lord." This is from *Mein Kampf*, or at least my copy of *Mein Kampf*, page 65. Now, it is important to note that Adolf Hitler, even though in his original inception he was not really widely accepted when he first published *Mein Kampf* and through the subsequent years - I guess he published it in 1926. Certainly, it has remained in print since. At least during

that period of time, no one objected to his thought. No one in the Christian Church thought this was a strange thing to say. There was no appreciable theological objection to Hitler equating the defending himself against the Jews being the work of the Lord and it necessarily being a Christian ideal. So what you're actually seeing here is as we roll from Luther to Hitler, we are seeing a theologically founded anti-Semitism was, in fact, considered Christian orthodoxy for most of Church history. The Christian orthodox position is what shaped how the Germans created their legislation, and this is well-documented. Here is a guy by the name of *Kirche Bischof* Rust. Now, I believe *kirche bischof* is church bishop. I think that's the translation. My German is nonexistent, but I think I'm pretty close. He makes this comment in June 1933: "If anyone can lay claim to God's help, then it is Hitler, for without God's benevolent fatherly hand, without his blessing, the nation would not be where it stands today. It is an unbelievable miracle that God has bestowed on our people," the unbelievable miracle being Adolf Hitler.

Germany's population was roughly 65 million people in 1930. I want you to notice this next quote. This next quote is from a pastor just - he is named within my documentation, a guy by the name of Mathias K. But he was a pastor, and this was an interview after the war. And I want you to notice how he describes his mindset and the mindset of the German people. "Part of my childhood memories is how the cattle were driven past my parents' home to the cattle market. Those who had control of the cattle were the Jews. In every village it was the Jews who had the trade and traffic in their hands, and they had the cattle business, the grain train, and they had the general store where you could buy everything. The farmers had simply become slaves of the Jews, and they never got anywhere. The Jewish question ate away at those in the countryside." He goes on to say - oh, wait. Is that the whole - I got it here. Hang on. "All that hatred sat deeply within the people. Strong anti-Semitic concerns were already there. It's not at all the case that Herr Goebbels invented all of it. Rather the entire ideology and also the rhetoric were there. The Nazis had only

to take it and carry it to its conclusion. So one can't overlook the fact that when 1933 came and there were not a few good Christians who had no objection at all if the Jews got pushed back a bit. They didn't start with concentration camps; it began with propaganda. But people said, "Oh, the cheeky Jews, let them get what is coming." Again, I want you to notice the theme. The Lutherans equated their poverty with Jewish prosperity. They specifically resented Jewish prosperity. Jew meant prosperous. It meant upper class. This is the root of their hatred.

Here is another quote from a guy by the name of Erich Koch. He was the president of the provincial Protestant Church - actually, the president of the provincial Protestant Church synod which means he was actually pretty important. I'm trying to think of an American variation, maybe like being the head of the Moral Majority or the Southern Baptist Convention. There will be somebody of that stature within the church. "Externally, much has changed. But in our church the world of Christ according to the doctrine of Luther remains. Righteousness, truth and love should guide us."

This is what I get when I don't have somebody edit my stuff. I told you if I wrote, you would think I was illiterate, and it's because I don't see those problems until later. Sorry, Lani, I know you're gritting your teeth right now. It's okay. Lani is my editor. She's great.

"Righteousness, truth and love should guide us, but not only at the level of charity but also in the joyful and active struggles for our Protestant confession of faith." He also said, and this is after the war in court records, "I held the view that the Nazi idea had to develop from basic Prussian Protestant attitude and from Luther's unfinished reformation." Now here's the punch line. Erich Koch ultimately decides he resigns his position as president of the synod and became one of the leading men to kill thousands of Jews, political dissidents, and enslaved the remaining Slavic population.

This is the cover from something called - this is the pamphlet created - let's see. What's this called again? *The Cross and the Swastika*. This is the cover for a pamphlet created. This is created by a small church group in some Prussian province, and I think those - Hanover, Easter 1943, Gerhard Hahn, president of the provincial church council. Here's what he said: "The cross of Christ and the swastika do not need to oppose each other." And, by the way, the bold is his. I didn't put this in. "They must not do so, but rather they could and should stand together. One should not dominate the other, but rather each should maintain its own meaning and significance. The cross of Christ points towards heaven and admonishes us. Remember that you are Christian people carried by the eternal love of the heavenly Father, free through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, sanctified by the power of God's Spirit. The swastika, however, points to the world as a divine creation and admonishes us. Remember that you are German, born in German territory to parents of German blood, filled with the German spirit and essence formed according to German nature."

He goes on to say later in the pamphlet: "The cross of Christ and the swastika must have a positive relationship. The church must affirm without reservation Adolf Hitler's total state, the last bulwark against the Satan of Bolshevism. It should not be forgotten that had it not been for Hitler, we would have long since sunk into Bolshevism and probably would no longer have churches and ministers. The church must affirm without reservation the Fuehrer of the National Socialists, Adolf Hitler, the Chancellor of the German Reich. He expects the church to help build the Third Reich. It is the task of the Church to create and provide this foundation."

There is no question in the Lutheran church's mind, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, that it is a synonymous action. The National Socialists and the church are only divisions in name. They are not divisions in fact. And this is very important for me to point out. The presumption is that somehow the Church

was set apart and all this was done to them. This is historical error of the first order. The Evangelical Lutheran Church, and when I say Evangelical Lutheran Church, if you look at the Evangelical Church here in the United States, we are talking about a denomination - doctrinal distinctions of virtually no difference. The rudiments of Lutheran orthodoxy are the rudiments of Lutheran orthodoxy today and the same Lutheran orthodoxy back then.

So let's ask the question. What causes this kind of devotion? Let us briefly explore the idea that Christians are led astray. There are three variations of this: Hitler was possessed. It was the devil. It was satanic delusion. I have heard this objection a few times, and this is one of those objections that I - I'll be blunt. You shouldn't utter this in public. And here's why. If there are Christians that would like to advance this excuse, I'm going to suggest that you should be quiet. You must understand what you're really saying.

PAUL DOHSE: Hey, John.

JOHN IMMEL: Yes.

PAUL DOHSE: Could you repeat the argument that you said before, what they thought the cause was, the one you...

JOHN IMMEL: Oh, the three points?

PAUL DOHSE: Yeah.

JOHN IMMEL: I said here is one of the standard objections that comes in three forms why the church is somehow not responsible, somehow not a part, and there are three points: that Hitler was possessed and he did some masterful job at the deception. That was easy. Is that what you just did? I'm sorry. That it was the devil. I'm going to hit it again. That was easy. That it was satanic

deception. That was easy. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. This is one that was called - very famous Easy Button from Staples.

Don't utter this in public. Let me make my argument here. Of the 65 million people in the Germany, 40 million people name themselves Lutheran, so if Christians can be deceived by the devil on so massive a scale, Christians should be banned from all political action because their judgment is nonexistent. Do I need to say that again? If you're going to blame this on the devil, delusion, mass delusion, mass hysteria and it's confined specifically to Lutheran Christians, then the logical assumption is that Lutheran Christians have no business around anything important. Blaming mass action on demonic forces makes the governing force of man's mind malevolent ghosts. If the devil can corrupt Christian epistemology, then the solution is to make sure the Christians are kept far away from all the important decisions. There should be no Christian in the White House near the atomic nuclear button. And I guarantee you, if you want to offer this up, you want to continue to advocate this as something that should be genuinely accepted in public, you want to reasonably make this case, what will happen offering this argument in public is going to guarantee that this means eventually legislation will be passed to prevent Christianity from being part of any public discussion.

Now here's a variation on the same argument. It's kind of the Stephen Spielberg defense. You can remember the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and the maniacal Nazi who wants to find Ark of the Covenant, and he wants to gain absolute power, all that nonsense. And it was that the Nazis led the world astray because they were - they advanced cultic doctrines. And if they hadn't had a failure of this cultic doctrines and they had real Christian doctrines, they wouldn't have done these things. Their obsession with the Nordic gods corrupted political truths. Well, first of all, this still means that Christians were incompetent to grasp the truth. In other words, they saw what was happening, they saw what Adolf Hitler said, and they still could not grasp what the man

was saying. This, of course, still speaks to Christian epistemological incompetence.

But I want to make a secondary point, and it has to do with the source of moral action. And I know that this gets people because as of right now most Christians are under the expectation that the last best hope for human morality is Christianity, and the Neo-Calvinist movement has set themselves up as the last great hope. Without them, the United States is doomed to total moral chaos. And the reason they say this, and, of course, we've heard this theme creep up in some of the conversations in and around some of the discussions that because the Bible says thou shalt not whatever, that that is the actual source of morality. And I know why people say that. But what you're really saying is that the source of morality is located in a metaphysical otherworld.

Now here's the problem. The moment you open the door to the source of morality being in otherworld, you have severed morality from this earth, and you have opened the door, and you have no control of what walks back through. If the Christian God is the source of morality, then why can't it be the Muslim god or the Hindu god? If morality is merely the product of a transcendent religious world, then the entire transcendent religious world is available. And this is where Christians - they think that by saying, "The Bible says, the Bible says, the Bible says," that they are going to somehow gain traction. The easiest way to defeat this argument is to say, "So what?" It is ultimately no argument, and at its root, it ultimately severs man from morality. If there is no reason to be moral, then man has no means to be moral. And this is, of course, exactly what the historic Calvinist teaching is, that because there is this transcendent world, this heavenly realm, man is corrupt, man is morally, man is metaphysically corrupt, he can't do good anyhow. So at the end of the day, the Christian doctrine ultimately condemns man to the exact same place as antinomianism does. It's the exact same position.

Antinomianism ultimately says that there are no laws with which man is morally obligated to keep so, whatever. Well, the doctrine of pervasive depravity is effectively the same thing. The nature of man's depravity is so vast he can't keep the law. He can't be moral. We're exactly the same place. So at the end of the day, Christianity is actually not advancing morality. And, of course, we see the prime example in National Socialist Germany.

PAUL DOHSE: Let me chime in that this is the mantra that we hear constantly in New Calvinist Church, dissing [SOUNDS LIKE 0:46:28] of imperatives, moralism.

JOHN IMMEL: And what do they mean by moralism?

PAUL DOHSE: Do's and don't's. So basically, what you're saying is this is where it comes back round to, antinomianism.

JOHN IMMEL: Correct.

PAUL DOHSE: Because that's their take.

JOHN IMMEL: Yes. Correct. Now I would like to actually address the assumption that the people just didn't know what Hitler and the Nazis were going to do. First of all, I wanted to reiterate there really was no practical distinction between the Church and the National Socialist Party, that inasmuch as they were Christians, they considered themselves National Socialists, and National Socialists pretty much considered themselves - they're Christians. Now, it doesn't specifically matter whether Hitler or Goebbels or any of the rest of those guys actually had a statement of orthodoxy in and of themselves. It's irrelevant. The point is that what the people heard from the leadership they saw no conflict with in their Christianity. This is crucial.

But now I want to dispel the myth that they just didn't know. In 1925, the social malcontent, out-of-work painter and a ham-fisted scribbler wrote a book about his struggles while cooling his heels in the clink. The miles and miles of rambling prose revealed a mind filled with logical conundrums, philosophical plagiarism and dead-end German phrases. The book correctly received a cool reception, and from the few that waited through the tedious, often bellicose rants, the Fuehrer of the Beer Hall Putsch--I think that's how it's pronounced--was a joke rat in an Austrian Jewish punch line. This, of course, was *Mein Kampf* and Adolf Hitler. The book is not well-written. Having read it, I can tell you, it's not compelling. Between bouts of sleeping, and on occasion you'll run across something that's kind of cool, but for the most part, he plagiarizes ideas and thinkers and puts things together that don't go together. And there are some sections - and since I don't read German, I have read some comments that there are some sections in German they can't translate because it makes no sense even in German so it has no ability to be translated in any other language. There are many historically inaccurate details. Hitler was fond of quoting contemporary thinkers but often quotes them inaccurately or draws erroneous conclusions and given to long passages that are devoid of reality. There are quite a few of those. However, it sold roughly 240,000 copies by 1933, about the time he was voted chancellor.

Now about this for a minute. Two hundred and thirty thousand copies in 1933 - they're a half an inch from the original Gutenberg printing press. We haven't really advanced to modern printing methods, and so he sold quite a few copies by 1933. After he was elected chancellor, *Mein Kampf* was a wedding gift to every newlywed couple and every soldier. By 1942, 10 million copies were in print, of a total population of people of an excess of 65 million people. His ideas were not a secret. There's no way you could have honestly said, "I don't know what this man's about." He was not a master communicator. He did not have some massive Svengali hypnosis Criss Angel ability to compel you to think things. Like I said, I read the book and never once went, "Sieg heil," not once.

This error and the error behind this - this is what I'm going to highlight. The error behind assuming that it was his force of personality that did this leads people to ignore the ideology. It leads people to equate tyranny with the flamboyant and the charismatic. Political action is not sustained by personality. It is always ideology. Ideology is philosophy turned into political action. But there was nothing unclear about Hitler's program. Adolf was a shrewd judge of political actions and adversaries. He told everyone what he thought and how the political program should progress. He detailed re-armament in spite of the Treaty of Versailles, territorial expansion in spite of the Treaty of Versailles, the abolition of democracy, which at that time would have been, I think, the Weimar Republic, which was a joke of a government and a commitment to socialism, the means of production distribution and exchange controlled by the community, his commitment to statism. He believed in the German state. He believed that the people born of the German blood were property of the German State. He believed in eugenics, the elimination of the Jewish threat. Now, mind you, he believes in eugenics, and the bulk of Germany believed in eugenics. Now the specific application to Jews hadn't quite manifested yet. The Final Solution, well, it still hung out there. No one really objected, and certainly, no one objected to the root of genocide, which is eugenics, the assumption that the state has the right to end somebody's life for whatever reason. And ultimately, he detailed his contempt for the Catholic Church, and reason he had contempt for the Catholic Church is because he knew German Catholics were not German first. He knew they were Catholics first, and he knew he could never impact Rome, so he knew he could never dominate them. Since he couldn't dominate Rome, he never had access to their minds. And he thought they were rich, and he had a whole list of objections.

But for all of its failure, what *Mein Kampf* revealed was threefold. It was a crystal clear picture. It was a detailed blueprint for National Socialism. It showed a man who had an amazing capacity to size up his political adversaries

and allies. Hitler was not stupid. I don't know if he was necessarily a genius, but he was not a stupid man. And above all, it showed that he was a man who believed it was moral to build the first and exploit the second with impunity. And this is the bottom line. The political ideal, the social ideal, the government ideal was no secret. It was available for anyone paying attention. And the people did pay attention, and they agreed. And that is the point. The people of Germany voted to put Hitler in power. And that's because they saw no fundamental distinction between what they believed as Christians and his specific policies. There was no mass delusion. There were no demonic forces. There was no fiendishly clever super secret plot. The German people willingly, openly, purposely took action in accord with National Socialism. From the least to the greatest, they voted for a man who pledged lies in service to despotism, and the Lutheran Church insisted that Hitler was God's man to protect the people.

So what was the appeal of the National Socialist Party? And before I can explain the answer to that question, I have to lay one more foundation. I have to talk to you about a dirty word in America. I have to talk to you about capitalism. Capitalism has become a byword in the United States, actually a byword globally. Rarely do you hear anyone speak openly about being a capitalist, and that is because there is an all-out assault to destroy capitalism. And that assault is largely led by the fact that most people have no clue what it is. No one has ever explained it to them. And capitalism is not specifically economics. Most people are sort of vaguely aware of what economics are. Capitalism precedes economics because until you understand capitalism, your nature of your economics - there are plenty of economic theories, but capitalism is unique. So now I'm going to actually talk to you about that.

There is a common assumption that there are forms of capitalism and that governments practice various forms of capitalism. This is actually not true. There is actually only one form of capitalism. In the 18th century, a group of

French economists called the Physiocrats identified that wealth was the product of individual production. Now you will remember from our discussion on John Locke this is also the conclusion that he arrived at, that the nature of human work, individual property, was the product of physical labor, his labor - well, the product of his labor and the product of his labor is broken down between his reasoning power and his action to organize whatever his substance is. And the Physiocrats were exactly right. This is a profound contrast. The Physiocrats said that the nature of production is the source of wealth, and they came up with the term laissez-faire capitalism. Laissez-faire means hands off or don't touch or leave it alone. They identified correctly that individuals will solve their own problems with their own production and that the nature of that production, the government shouldn't be anywhere close to it. And this was a profound contrast to the traditional explanation of a nation's wealth, e.g., it was either the wealth of kings, the country's gold reserves, the country's arable land. They were the first to formulate that government should keep their hands off of economic transactions.

Now here is where the issue of forms of capitalism come into play. Capitalism is like the definition of water. The definition of water is H₂O. Now you can add a lot of things to H₂O, and you can add some tasty things to H₂O. You can add some sugar and some Kool-Aid, and you still have water, but you also have now Kool-Aid. And you can drink it. But if you are in the Jim Jones cult and you add something else, suddenly water becomes poison. And my metaphor is apt with capitalism. As John Locke correctly identified, it is a man's labor that produces prosperity. A man produces to advance and sustain his life, and that production is his. There is no distinction between the man and that which he produces.

MAN: John, can I interject something?

JOHN IMMEL: Yes, go ahead.

MAN: I say this to people [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:58:35], and this is what infuriates me to know and when people talk - I was talking about jobs and big business [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:58:44] big business, and I look them straight in the face and they say, "The purpose of a business is not to give you a job."

JOHN IMMEL: Correct.

MAN: The purpose of that business is for the business to make money.

JOHN IMMEL: Correct, to make a profit.

MAN: The job is a necessary by-product.

JOHN IMMEL: Correct. Exactly right. Now here is why there are no other forms of capitalism. Humans must exchange values. Let me put it this way. When you start out and you're a farmer in a basic economy, you have a seed of corn, you plant a seed of corn, and you have to wait 12 weeks for that seed of corn to come up and actually have a harvest. Now if you're only planting one seed and getting one ear of corn out of your cornstalk, you're going to be hungry. But let's assume you have the ability to produce thousands of seeds of corn and then have a specific harvest. Now you spend all of your time planting that corn and then specifically getting that harvest, but corn isn't shoes, and it isn't shirts, and it isn't beef. So you have to have a means by which to ultimately get these other things. The only peaceable way, the only way to get those other things is to trade. And the nature of trade means without force. There is no compulsion in a free economic transaction. The parties are willing, and the parties decide on the values that they want to trade. That's it. This concept is only possible in a politically free environment. Capitalism is the product of liberty, and this is crucial to understand. Without John Locke and his definition of the separation of government from the people, that it is the

people who enter into social contract and it is the government that's given the limited permission to act, it is only within that environment that people are free to trade. They're free to trade whatever they choose. There is no compulsion, and when I say compulsion, I mean force. I mean violence. Just because you want to eat, your necessity is not the guy who has food. It's not his compulsion that you have to work to get the food. If you were by yourself out in the middle of nowhere and you were hungry, you would still have to work to feed yourself. The fact that you'd go to a guy who already has the food doesn't mean he compels you to give food. The responsibility of your survival, of individual survival, is the responsibility of the individual. And the peaceable way to make that happen is to exchange values for values. In a social context, there are many people offering values into this environment, and you have the ability to pick whatever you want or not. The absence of compulsion, the absence of violence, is the central theme.

So now here's what we have. There are only two kinds of markets: compulsory or free. A compulsory market, you have no choice about what can be bought or sold. There is no choice about the disposal of property, and there is no recognition of private property. We are actually in the United States. We do not have a capitalism economy. We have a mixed economy because we have compulsion. We have to ask the government permission to take action to exchange our goods and services. This is not a capitalist economy.

Now the other kind of market is a free market. This presumes private property. The definition of private property is the right to an action, the right to dispose of that property, the right to retain that property. A free market then is merely two people willingly exchanging values. A free market is never present, and I say never when there is fraud, which is a misrepresentation of reality, you have specifically deceived the other party about the nature of reality. A free market is never present when there is force or implied force, which is basically extortion. They are elements of the exact same thing. So a free market requires private

property and free individuals. Actually, it goes the other way. Free individuals produce values, and they must be entitled to their private property, and private property by definition means they can dispose of it as they see fit.

Now I have to give you a root discussion of money. In the Christian world, people are going to get a little buggy. It can't be helped. You've got to understand what money is and what money is not. You don't work to get money. You work to create money. Let me go back to my seed planting comment. You get done, you harvest your field, and now you have a big sack of corn. Now I've got to figure how to get that sack of corn to somebody who has cows. The guy who has cows has to figure out how to get his cow to me. But the problem is, is that half a cow is not worth a whole cow. A whole cow is a lot. A half a cow is not. So we get a loss. We don't have an easy means by which we can exchange these values. Well, this is actually exactly what happened way back. This conflict was actually - they figured out way back in Dark Ages. In the medieval economy the unit was built around the lord's holdings. It was a self-contained and self-sustaining unit. Rents and services were rendered in military service or in kind. The local lord was obligated to his overlord with obligations who had obligations to his overlord, and the way they pay for that military service was called fiefs or fees.

There was little need for money because what was - the exchanges, what you needed was either local as a serf or as a lord, as a knight, all you had to do was show up in your shining armor and kill people. So the result was that money, coins, there's very limited need for a coin and mostly just sat in a strongbox. Now you might at some point in a mad dash need to take that coin and do something with it, but for the most part, all that coin did was sit and do nothing. So this ultimately changed the attitude about the nature of money. It was not particularly practical. There was an exacerbated medieval hatred for Jews which - the relationship between Jews and money had prevailed for the bulk of the Middle Ages. Jews were the ones who murdered Jesus, and the

Jews were bankers. And the Church condemned usury, which is effectively interest. But this economic organization does not work at a distance. To trade in the Orient required the ability to transport wealth over vast distances. Barter is an inefficient means of exchange. Payment in kind is impractical at a distance. This requires the creation of a medium of exchange, and this was the emergence of money, a means by which we could represent a bag of corn and a half a cow, the change in the means of financing commercial transactions.

Now here's what ended up happening. Interest or usury is the incentive of those with capital, your excess production. You actually get done planting your corn. You planted a thousand seeds and now you have tens of thousands of seeds. What you don't eat between the end of harvest and the next day is your excess. This is work that is now stagnant. It's not doing anything. It's not producing anything. This excess prosperity is your capital. You need that excess prosperity to continue through time and then to plan for your next action of prosperity, your work to produce more. Well, in an agricultural environment, your line of production, the distance on your production is your growing cycles, maybe a year. But the more industrialized you get, the longer your production cycle, your sight line, has to be, so you need larger and larger holds of production held in store. This is the root of capital. This is what capital is. It is merely production held in a static state that you have the ability to then distribute down through time so you can produce your next action. Do you understand what I mean? All right. Fantastic.

Well, of course, for lots of reasons, gold and silver became the standard means by which you could actually take a half a cow and exchange it for corn, and that coin then began to hold value. No longer do we have the medieval organization. No longer is it just sitting in a strongbox. Now the guy with the gold needs an incentive to invest himself in this process. He has no reason to give it up unless he has some incentive to put his gold, this medium of exchange, at risk. And this is the fundamental underlying need of a capitalist

society, the ability to take static production and then give it the opportunity to be put into production by people who want to take the risk.

Now in a free market, in a capitalist culture, you have no guarantee. The government is not there to penalize you, and it's not there to advantage you. This is why I said there is only one definition of capitalism. If at any point the government enters in and compels or restrains economic action, we're no longer talking about capitalism. And this is very important because I very often hear when I - on the occasion that I happen to actually listen to talk radio, I am stunned at how often I hear them talking about crony capitalism. This is actually error. I wish they would stop because it is inaccurate. You put crony in front of capitalism, and you no longer have capitalism. When the government is in the business of buying favors by vote, getting money from people who need their legislative benevolence, this isn't capitalism. I don't know what to call it off the top of my head, but it is not capitalism. Capitalism is defined very specifically and very narrowly.

MAN: It's called bribery.

JOHN IMMEL: Yeah. Bribery, yeah, that will work. All right. With that in mind, now I think we can begin to grasp exactly what the National Socialists - oh, I didn't put that up there. All right. The single greatest expansion of prosperity occurred between the 18th century and the 19th century. And the reason the greatest expansion of prosperity occurred is precisely because John Locke correctly defined the exact requirements for government. The United States of America, and for a very brief time Great Britain, put into practice the logical result which was laissez-faire capitalism, the hands-off. This time period is called the Industrial Revolution. Man set out to solve his own problems, and wealth exploded. Man creates his own level of prosperity. He creates it every day he applies his work product. Wealth is not static. Prosperity is not static.

Prosperity grows, and we live in the very country who is the explanation and the anecdote for that reality.

I said in my last conversation about John Locke that he represented the apogee, the highest point of Enlightenment thought. The assault against the Enlightenment and against reason happens almost immediately after him. Now this is actually the part of the conversation, the part of my sessions that I cut out because I begin to talk about that assault, but maybe I'll do that next year. Maybe I won't. I don't know. The fact of the matter is that the assault against liberty started almost immediately, and it specifically started with doctrines that were designed to A, eradicate reason from man and B, place man back in state control. Those two assaults, the philosophical assault against that is what led to the rise of Karl Marx and - well, actually first, Hegel and then Marx. Hegel and Marx crafted an immoral justification for the destruction of capitalism. But here's the thing. You can't destroy capitalism without destroying liberty. You can't destroy liberty without destroying capitalism because capitalism is merely free individuals acting to exchange values willingly. So the moment you put the government in charge of either of those sides of the equation, either production or person, you're ultimately wrecking liberty. And this is exactly what happened right after the 19th century.

The German people, of course, decided to start World War I. That does not go well for them. But what did happen was Germany became an enormously successful industrial nation. Now they had some totally inept leadership. The Weimar Republic was a joke. They were still in their minds still Prussian. They were still sort of under monarchy. They tried to sort of throw that off and not really. They got themselves into World War I. That did not go well. The rest of Europe decides to pile on the German people and really make them pay for it. Over time that really began to wear on them. And so what you really have in Germany is collapse. You have economic collapse right on the horizon. Now you can begin to understand why the German people consistently discussed the

issue of greed. They resented other people's prosperity. And this is central to the rise of National Socialism.

I'm going to read to you from some sections from what became the National Socialist platform. This was originally published in 1920. This is the original version. The later versions, I don't have. But this will give you some sense of what they're after. I'm going to start at point 12. Now, mind you, as I read these, I want you to keep in mind keep in mind John Locke, liberty and the United States of America. That's what I want you to keep in mind. And I want you to hear what they advocated, what these people stood for.

"In view of the tremendous sacrifices in property and blood demanded of the nation by every war, personal gain from the war must be termed a crime against the nation. We therefore demand the total confiscation of all war profits." Now think of what this really means. They're saying sacrifice is an ethical ideal and because some sacrifice, anybody who prospered from their sacrifice, equating their profit with sacrifice, must necessarily have all of what they created confiscated, totally eliminating the reality that the government is what went to war. The government is what caused the death and destruction and the government to fight the war asked businesses to create this product. And now they're saying it's the profit's fault when in actual fact they totally removed the fact that it was the government's fault.

"Number 13. We demand the nationalization of all enterprises converted into corporations." Remember I opened this whole thing saying the issues obscure socialism. The nationalization of enterprise is the nationalization - it is the government stepping in and taking private property.

"We demand profit sharing in large enterprises." Where have you heard that in modern American culture, the endless determination to denounce big business

as if the nation, as if the people who don't work have a moral right to the product of somebody else's work?

"We demand a large-scale development of old age pension schemes. We demand the creation and maintenance of a sound middle class, the immediate communalization of large department stores which are to be leased at low rates to small tradesmen. We demand the most careful consideration for the owners of small businesses in orders placed by national, state, or community authorities." This is the absolute eradication of private property. People who have been successful, the nature of their success necessarily means that the government should somehow penalize them for their success. The communalization of large department stores. The reason that people got large department stores short of government graft, they got there because they were better delivering the best quality products for the best price to the most people. Walmart, how many people when I hammer away at Walmart that Walmart is somehow fundamental evil and yet everybody benefits because Walmart gets you the best products, well, the products you're willing to pay for, at some of the best prices anywhere. Your life is better, and yet somehow because Walmart can't be fleeced every five minutes for its money there's something fundamentally evil about that.

"We demand land reforms in accord with our national needs and a law for expropriation without compensation of land for public purposes, abolition of ground rents and prevention of all speculation in land." We're talking about the seizing of property.

"We demand ruthless battle against those who harm the common good by their activities." Now watch what they define as harm. "Persons committing base crimes against the people, usurers, profiteers, etc." Usurers, in other words, bankers. Bankers were Jews. Jews had capital. Profiteers, people who made

money. "And are punished by death without regard to religion or race." That was their conclusion. Give us your money, and we're going to kill you.

PAUL DOHSE: This was what? What document are you reading?

JOHN IMMEL: I'm reading the foundation, the Platform of the National Socialist party. This is what they were advocating. This is what they put out to the world. This what they...

PAUL DOHSE: What year was that?

JOHN IMMEL: Nineteen twenty. This document is 1920.

PAUL DOHSE: Now how does that connect with World War I?

JOHN IMMEL: I think we're right in the middle. Doesn't World War I end 1919?

PAUL DOHSE: Yeah.

JOHN IMMEL: Nineteen fourteen to nineteen eighteen, somewhere in there? Is my history right? I'm sure you'll get some...

SUSAN DOHSE: Yeah, ballpark.

JOHN IMMEL: Okay. Yeah. This is right after. Now, this group here is - this document - unfortunately, I deleted that part of the document, so I - it actually has another title, but this platform is what became the National Socialist platform.

PAUL DOHSE: So that was we're taking your money, and it's - I don't know if that's where we got the term capital offense?

JOHN IMMEL: That's good.

PAUL DOHSE: But profiteers were, "Listen, give us all your money or we will put you to death" or "We're taking all of your money and putting you to death"?

JOHN IMMEL: "Persons committing base crimes against the people, usurers, profiteers, etc. are to be punished by death without regard to religion or race." I think I read that as if you have made money by usury or you have made profit, you should be put to death. I think that's what that says.

PAUL DOHSE: That's it. So in other words, they could declare anybody they wanted to declare a profiteer.

JOHN IMMEL: I don't know if you heard that online, but Paul basically said they could declare anybody they wanted to to be a profiteer, and that is exactly right. And that is exactly what they did, and that was exactly the real focus of the Jewish hatred. The Jewish hatred centralized their ultimate covetousness. They wanted prosperity, but the way to get prosperity was to seize it from most people who have created it or to kill them. If I might point out, this is exactly the fallacy between Cain and Abel. Cain looks at his brother. He has just been rejected. Whatever the value God was after, I don't care if it was veggies or if it was cows. I don't care. Ultimately, whatever he thinks he's going to get from God he doesn't get. He doesn't get that value from God, but he realizes that Abel did. And his assumption is, erroneously, if he kills his brother, somehow that value will come to him. He totally misunderstood the source of values. And this is exactly what is happening in socialist cultures. It's what happened then, and it's what happens now. The presumption is that because somebody else has it, if I do something to them, I can therefore get it.

I believe personally this is specifically the direct route of the command "Thou shalt not covet." This is the only command that requires self-awareness to that people. It requires them to actually introspect about the nature of their motive. All others are edicts on action, and it was very simple. But the nature of covetousness is the assumption that you should necessarily be able to get the unearned. Now that has been historically taught to mean you shouldn't actually want things in general. You should have no desires. I think that's a misread. I ultimately believe what God was trying to do is to restrain the Cain and Abel fallacy, the assumption that if I go get somebody else's stuff, if I kill them and take it, then I can have what they have. Ultimately, it never works. This never produces prosperity in a culture, ever.

I'm going to read one more here. "The Party as such stands for positive Christianity, without associating itself with any particular denomination. It fights against the Jewish-materialistic spirit within and around us, and is convinced that a permanent revival of our nation can be achieved only from within, on the basis of Public Interest before Private Interest." Hear that last part again, "Public interest before Private interest." Man is first and foremost the property of the state. You have no private interest. Your only interest is your specific responsibility to the collective. These are the founding ideas that actually brought forth Adolf Hitler. He is not the cause. He is merely the extension of a logical body of ideas. And at the root, what causes good men to do nothing? Change the definition of good. I just read you from start to finish how they defined good. And at the root, they said man is not entitled to his own life. He is not entitled to his work product. He must sacrifice his life on behalf of the collective. They changed the definition of good.

PAUL DOHSE: You didn't build that.

JOHN IMMEL: You didn't build that. That's not your property. The government has to give you permission. You want to understand what actually happened in the rise of National Socialism? You want to understand why the Church was so specifically involved in the rise of socialism? Because the Church fundamentally believed the exact same things. They ultimately believed that man had no business with himself. He is...


PAUL DOHSE: Pope Francis.

JOHN IMMEL: Huh?

PAUL DOHSE: Pope Francis.


JOHN IMMEL: Pope Francis. Every socialist on the planet, the reality is that socialism is not a kinder, gentler economic organization, and I frankly don't care how you parse it up. I don't care whether you say it's communism, socialism, fascism. Ultimately, the end result is who owns man? And as long as the state owns man, there is no liberty. And if there is no liberty, there is no production, and if there is no production, there is no prosperity. How did they get there? They changed the definition of good. So I'm going to top. I've got one more set. I've got another hour's worth. I'm going to stop there.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]



I had made up my mind to write no more either about the Jews or against them. But since I learned that those miserable and accursed people do not cease to lure to themselves even us, that is, the Christians, I have published this little book, so that I might be found among those who opposed such poisonous activities of the Jews and who warned the Christians to be on their guard against them.

We propose to discuss their argument and boast and prove convincingly before God and the world not before the Jews, for, as already said, they would accept this neither from Moses nor from their Messiah himself . . . To this end we quote Moses in Genesis 17 . . . When God instituted circumcision, he said, among other things, "Any uncircumcised male shall be cut off from his people" [Gen. 17:14].



Shame on you, . . . you damned Jews, that you dare to apply this earnest, glorious, comforting word of God so despicably to your mortal, greedy belly . . . and that you are not ashamed to display your greed so openly. You are not worthy of looking at the outside of the Bible, much less of reading it. You should read only the bible that is found under the sow's tail, and eat and drink the letters that drop from there.

- They curse us Goyim. In their synagogues and in their prayers they wish us every misfortune. They rob us of our money and goods through their usury, and they play on us every wicked trick they can. And the worst of it is that they still claim to have done right and well, that is, to have done God a service. And they teach the doing of such things. No pagan ever acted thus; in fact, no one acts thus except the devil himself, or whomever he possesses, as he has possessed the Jews.

- So we the [German Christians] are even at fault in not avenging all this innocent blood of our Lord and of the Christians which they shed for three hundred years after the destruction of Jerusalem ... We [German Christians] are at fault in not slaying them. Rather we allow them to live freely in our midst despite their murdering, cursing, blaspheming, lying, and defaming; we protect and shield their synagogues, houses, life, and property. In this way we make them lazy and secure and encourage them to fleece us boldly of our money and goods, as well as to mock and deride us, with a view to finally overcoming us, killing us all for such a great sin, and robbing us of all our property ... Now tell me whether they do not have every reason to be the enemies of us accursed Goyim, to curse us and to strive for our final, complete, and eternal ruin!


- “Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: *by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord*” Mein Kampf pg 65

- "If anyone can lay claim to God's help, then it is Hitler, for without God's benevolent fatherly hand, without his blessing, the nation would not be where it stands today. It is an unbelievable miracle that God has bestowed on our people."
(The German Churches Under Hitler)

Part of my childhood memories is how the cattle were driven past my parents' home to the cattle market. Those who had control of the Cattle were the Jews. . . . In every village it was the Jews who had the trade and traffic in their hands, and they had the cattle business the grain train and they have a general stores where you could buy everything
... the farmers had simply become slaves of the Jews and they never got anywhere the Jewish question ate away at those in the countryside

All that [hatred] sat deeply within the people. . . . Strong anti-Semitic concerns were already there. It is not at all the case that Herr Goebbels invented all of it; rather the entire ideology and also the rhetoric were there. [The Nazis] had only to take it and carry it to its conclusion.

So one can't overlook the fact that when 1933 came they were not a few good Christians who had no objections at all if the Jews got pushed back a bit. That didn't start with concentration camps; it began with propaganda. But people said: "Oh the cheeky Jews, let them get what's coming to them."



“Externally, much has changed. But in our church the word of Christ according to the doctrine of Luther remains ... Righteousness, truth and love should guide us, not only at the level of charity but also in the joyful and active struggles for our protestant confession of faith.”

Also:

After the war in court records Koch said: “I held the view that the Nazi idea had to develop from basic Prussian-Protestant attitude and from Luther’s unfinished Reformation.”

Schriftenreihe der „Deutschen Christen“ Hannovers
Nr. 1 1934




Christuskreuz und Hakenkreuz

Von

Gerhard Hahn

geistl. Vizepräsident im Landeskirchenamt





The cross of Christ and the swastika do not need to **oppose each other**, and must not do so, but rather they can and should stand **together**. One should not dominate the other, but rather each should maintain its own meaning and significance.

The cross of Christ points toward heaven and admonishes us: **Remember that you are Christian people**, carried by the eternal love of the heavenly father, free through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, sanctified by the power of God's spirit.

The swastika, however, points to the world as a divine creation and admonishes us: Remember that you are German, born in German territory to parents of German blood, filled with the German spirit and essence, formed according to German nature.

The cross of Christ and the swastika must have a positive relationship!

...

The church must affirm without reservation

Adolf Hitler's total state, the last bulwark against the Satan of Bolshevism. It should not be forgotten that, had it not been for Hitler, we would long since have sunk into Bolshevism, and probably would no longer have had churches and ministers.

The church must affirm without reservation the Führer of the National Socialists, Adolf Hitler, the Chancellor of the German Reich. He expects the church to help build the Third Reich ... **It is the task of the church to create and provide this foundation.**



The question must be:

What causes good men to do nothing?



Answer:

Change the Definition of GOOD.

JOHN IMMEL 2014 SESSION 6

JOHN IMMEL: There was actually a question in the break. This is going to be my last session. There was a question in the break. There was an observation that, of course, the Founding Fathers were Christians and that a lot of the impetus for the American Revolution came from their Christian perspective and my - I was pretty much asked to comment on that position. And while it is true that many of the Founding Fathers were Christians and considered themselves Christian, certainly any - reading George Washington, it's almost impossible to turn George Washington into a deist. My point was and my answer was yes, it is true they were Christians, but they were primarily sons of the Enlightenment, and they held man as an effective, potent, rational creature. The founders of our country were effective men. They believed in the effectiveness of human existence. This is in absolute defiance of historical orthodoxy. There is no way you can massage historic Augustinian-Lutheran-Calvinist orthodoxy into rational, competent, successful men. It's not possible. The practical outworking is in the United States man's exposure to the Dark Ages was directly centered around the Puritan doctrine, and it was that same Puritan doctrine that the Founding Fathers made an overt effort to separate from government and, in many instances, to defeat.

In philosophy the most consistent formulation wins, and as of right this minute in 21st century America, the only overarching full formulation of Christian thought - and trust me, I've read thousands of pages of lots of different people. The only one that exists is the reformed Lutheran Augustinian Calvinist construct. That's the only one that exists. Maybe I should go into - this is going to be a little bit of a rabbit trail, but I think this will make sense. It will help me illustrate my point.

I actually touched on this in the first session. In the 1930s, a unique event in Christianity happened, and that was Pentecostal - well, it was really just the Pentecostal movement. It was considered the Full Gospel movement. It was a return to the charismatic gifts and the things that you see in the Book of Acts and healing and miracles and so forth that you see that Jesus did. Now that movement, while there were spurts of it throughout the medieval times and so forth, it never had any ability to gain any traction because ultimately, you will be condemned for heresy and penalized by government. But in the United States those types of ministries had the opportunity to rise up. And more specifically, the men who actually carried them were largely - if not uneducated, they were not seminary-educated, which meant they were not Harvard, Yale graduates, which means they were not indoctrinated into the Calvinist construct. Their orthodoxy was not that. They were committed to their own rational understandings of their own individual reading of the Bible. And this is crucial to understand.

The reason Americans get so fussy about their right to define their own religion is not because they are emulating orthodox Christian doctrines. It's because they are children of the Enlightenment. It is the Enlightenment that told you you had the rational capacity to read the Bible for yourself and understand it for yourself. That is entirely an Enlightenment conclusion. And let me expand this a little further. Actually, even through this conference, Andy has done endless word studies in behalf of the pursuit of sanctification here. And I want to point out that all of what - he is actually engaging in a form of what is called higher critical methodology. And I go into this in great detail in my book, *Blight in the Vineyard*, because it's important to understand the difference between interpretive methodologies and interpretive conclusions and what the Bible says. And one of the best contrasts to do is to go look how Luther reasoned. He would make an assertion, and then he would stick a reference to a Bible quote. At one point in time, systematic theology was called the queen of the sciences, and it was the ability to be able to rattle off every scripture that was supposed

to have been somehow designated to any given body, any of the main disciplines within theology. If you go read Millard Erickson systematic theology book, this was considered to be the pinnacle, the mastery of what Millard Erickson did or - oh, for heaven's sake! What's the current one, the current guy? Is it Grudem that actually did systematic theology? Is he the guy? I don't know. The current Neo-Calvinist rock star, I think, is Wayne Grudem. If I got the guy's name right, it's a yawner, but nonetheless, it's that kind of thing.

Now if you actually look back through Bible interpretation from effectively Augustine forward, the dominant themes, the dominant means by which the Bible was interpreted was by allegory - what's that?

SUSAN DOHSE: Typology.

JOHN IMMEL: Typology, yes, metaphors. It wasn't really rationalized. It was could we find - could we go, "Alakazam! Poof!" and put our finger on a verse and say, "Because it says this, that necessarily means God means this."

PAUL DOHSE: It's a narrative type, so you can take any part of the Bible narrative and say it relates to the narrative you're in.

JOHN IMMEL: Correct. And this is actually why. And, of course, my degree was in systematic theology. This is why I eventually abandoned systematic theology because it is really an interpretive methodology. It is not indicative of what the Bible says. The ability to take passages, verses of scripture and somehow cut and paste them together to arrive at doctrines, that is not reflective of biblical passages. That is not reflective of intent and author and audience and purpose.

Now what I just said, that process of learning to identify audience and context, these are all concepts that actually came out of the Enlightenment. Once the

Church lost control of the universities and men could start going into inquiring about the truth behind the doctrines that had been held for so long in question because the force of government could be brought to bear from descent. Men finally started to go out and do research, and the vast percentage of that research is actually very, very recent. Most biblical scholarship has been done probably within maybe what, the last 80 to 90 years? And in point of fact, one of the - some of you maybe have heard of *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, and that was the determination to go find Jesus in context. Who was he in context? Well, that quest was born of National Socialist Aryanism. The original scholars wanted to go back and be able to justify that Jesus wasn't a Jew. He was, in fact, Aryan. Now, of course, that created all kinds of scholastic debates.

The other one was - and this was actually something that it took - probably really was only settled probably within the last 30 years. I know it was a hot topic when I was in college, and that was whether or not Jesus spoke Hebrew because, of course, if Jesus spoke Hebrew, that meant he was really more Jewish. And what did that really mean? What did that mean for a Greek text? All of these scholastic elements are born from the process of higher critical methodology, and most of the men who held - who advanced these higher critical methods were considered pretty much outcasts by the Orthodox Church. One of the guys who comes to mind is a guy by the name of Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher was the guy who insisted that you have to learn to identify context, audience, speaker, context for the writer of the book. I believe I'm right. If I'm wrong, certainly somebody can send me an e-mail and correct me. And I'm pretty sure he's the person who started that.

Now, certainly, all that Bible science has been subsequently expanded. But now here in 2014, finding some guy on the computer that can actually do a word study and start parsing out Greek verbs in an effort to recover, at least in his mind, an intent or meaning behind the text, this is reflective of Enlightenment thought.

PAUL DOHSE: I agree.

JOHN IMMEL: This is not historic orthodox position, and you will notice in most of the Neo-Calvinist movement, they abhor higher critical methodology with impunity. So anyway, you hear me getting passionate about this subject because I - it is the manipulation of interpretive methodologies that gives them all the power. They demagogue the moral high ground, and then they employ an interpretive methodology, and that is very different - by just being able to cut and paste doctrines together, verses together, it gives them enormous power to create any doctrine they want. And the moment you try to pause them and say, "Wait a minute. How can you just arbitrarily say, 'Oh, Galatians here, Romans here and Genesis here and let's all put this together,'" and the moment you say, "Wait a minute. That's not what I was talking about," they're indignant.

PAUL DOHSE: Yeah. Correct me if I'm wrong. We have had other positive feedback on Andy's thoughts for this very reason, the appreciation of the word study [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:10:53] picking up on something I heard Susan say under her breath, and I think I kind of like it. Tell me if you agree. It's the difference between an interpretation reference versus definition of word, word, word, how to use them, the meaning.

JOHN IMMEL: Well, I think that one of the - of course, parsing, you know, there was an axiom when I was in college or just right after I got out of college. Maybe it's not an axiom. It was an aphorism. It said there are plenty of churches dying on a steady diet of Greek roots.

PAUL DOHSE: A diet of what?

JOHN IMMEL: Of Greek roots.

PAUL DOHSE: Oh.

JOHN IMMEL: It is one methodology, but there are reasons that various interpreters have actually arrived at the word that they chose. And the process, the science of interpretation is vast, and it is a level of expertise all its own. And so while yes, I think there are many things that you can actually glean from that as a practice, I have enough exposure to that to recognize it has profound limitations. But the point is that what Andy is doing is he is employing critical thinking tools. He is taking a broader area of knowledge, and he fundamentally believes he is right to do so. This is Enlightenment. This is not ancient orthodoxy. Ancient orthodoxy is I get to stab my finger at a verse and tell you this is what you must believe because I stabbed my finger at a verse and told you what you must believe, and if you don't, I'm probably going to kill you. And this is precisely the body of doctrine that these men, the current Neo-Calvinists, are actually doing.

Now I will say this. I started out to the talk about the evolution of charismatic movement in the United States. The problem that those movements have always had is they are almost entirely personality-driven movements. You have a guy. I don't care who he is. I don't care if you think he is a fraud or he's real. At the end of the day, whatever it is he's doing charismatic-ish, it stops with him. He is not giving you a full philosophical statement. He finds something within his calling that he brings to the public, and the public enjoys it. It strikes a nerve. He gains some social traction with that information. Whether it's good or bad is irrelevant, but this is the dynamic. The problem is it dies with him. He's not bringing that thing, whatever it was he had. The movement has nowhere to go because it has no intellectual framework. It turns out that that event is exactly like Christianity back in the 1st century. It didn't have a framework. It needed a framework, and it was unfortunately attached to

Platonism, and that's where it got it. Its abiding and enduring capacity is within that overarching philosophical statement.

The problem with the United States, has always been, is that you get these non-academic, non-orthodox people who start their movement or sub-movement. Once they're gone, the second and third generation hop in and say, "Now what?" Is it just all this chaos? In certain instances I've made fun of John F. MacArthur's book, *Charismatic Chaos*, but in some respects I understood what his problem was. When you throw the door wide open to anybody being able to interpret the Bible, you have thrown the door wide open to everybody being able to interpret the Bible. So what is it limited to being and doing? And this is a problem that's plagued Christianity pretty much since its formed canon in probably what, the 6th century? In the United States the only place to go for a full philosophical statement is Neo-Calvinism, well, Calvinism in general. And for generations, certainly like through the '40s and '50s, the Charismatic Pentecostal preacher blow through town. He'd preach his sermon and everybody in town - he would be pointing to a Bible. He's pointing to a Bible. Everybody is sitting in the pews reading their Bible, but their Bible says Scofield. And so they would read the text and then read the commentary underneath the text. And so what the preacher had to say and what the Scofield commentary had to say was entirely two separate things. And for the longest time the Charismatic/Pentecostal side of the world had a terrible time making any inroads into the Calvinist worldview because most people, when the preacher left, were still reading Scofield, and Schofield was a Calvinist.

And so it was not until mass media and until other translations became available absent the Calvinist commentary. That's what happened historically, and, of course, for the most of us like today, we live through either the middle or the tail end of the Charismatic renewal. I have no idea. It's been forever since I've been anywhere close to that part of the world. I don't know what it's doing now. But that's a brief tutorial on what has happened. But the problem

is the reason that there are so many Neo-Calvinist preachers arising is because they ran out of the philosophical framework for Christianity. They find it in Calvin, and that's what they superimpose back on Christianity.

Okay. With that said, I'm not even sure how to segue gracefully from one to the next, so I will just start with this. So let's revisit what inspired my part of this conference. Here is Paul's e-mail. He says to me the idea that freedom of man is practically - sorry, Paul. I should have edited your comment for...

PAUL DOHSE: Practicality.

JOHN IMMEL: I can't read. "The idea that freedom of man is a practicality is a pipe dream because he is enslaved to his own desires spiritually; hence, at the very least, indifference to political freedom on a social level. So will the New Calvinist movement cause political indifference in American society among Christians?" Now I will tell you what my answer to Paul was, and I must confess I did edit this so it reads right.

The pipe dream of freedom for the masses is the political premise of collectivist government. Such governments presume man's nature precludes liberty because man can never control his impulses. Therefore, man's true freedom is in subordination to the state. The state was a definer of morality, and individuals were given their highest and best when looked after by a paternalistic government. Of course, we know where this logic leads because history gives us two absolute examples: the Soviet Union and National Socialist Germany. The fundamental political premise of Augustine-Calvinist doctrine is that Christians are to accept whatever government comes to power. This means that Christians must submit to any thug with a gun. Socially and politically, the most disastrous part of the current New Calvinist movement is the doctrine that demands submission to authority. They do not teach indifference. They teach an intentional servitude. Intentional servitude is far, far worse because it

is a doctrine of deliberate capitulation. Such a doctrine demands that Christians presume that any man claiming authority is ordained of God. This means that it does not matter how bad the oppression gets. People assume that righteous action is submission. Righteous action is non-action. Political indifference can be ignited into political fervor in a blink if social pain becomes too great. But by contrast people choosing to be passive in the name of righteous action is by definition already expressed in passion. He is expressing his passion for doctrinal submission. The Lutheran Church gutted the Christian will to resist the rise of National Socialism. To be sure, the Evangelical Church was on the forefront of ushering in Hitler's rise to power, and this is exactly what the historic doctrine will do here. It will demand that people accept any thug with a gun who acts in behalf of the people, who acts in behalf of righteousness, who acts to establish God's kingdom, to help usher in tyranny here.

And now you know why Paul thought it was a good theme for this year's conference. And now you know the contrast between the philosophical foundations for collectivist tyranny and individual liberty. You have seen the root ideas of Augustine and Calvinist theology. You have seen that this ideology sees no conflict with socialist economic doctrines. This ideology sees no conflict with a totalitarian state. Germany could make no distinction between Hitler's socialism and Luther's Christianity. I'm going to say that again. The German people could make no distinction between Hitler's socialism and Luther's Christianity.

You remember my web chart. Augustine Luther and Calvin said, "Man is nothing. The Church is everything." The Nazis said - see if I can do this in German. *Du bist nichts; Dein Volk ist alles*. You are nothing. The *volk* is everything. I think I pronounced that right. Incompetent masses, universal guilt, same doctrine, utopian prestige, the Church is everything, the *volk* is everything.

Augustine, Luther, Calvin denounced reason. The Third Reich renounced reason. Incompetent masses. Augustine, Luther, Calvin doctrine demanded submission to church authority. Church authority demanded submission to the state. The Nazis demanded submission to the state authority. Dictated good. All in service to the utopian prestige. Augustine, Luther and Calvin said the only real world was the transcendent heavenly world. The Nazis said the only real world was the transcendent world created by the German people's state. Augustine said the material world was immoral. The Nazis fought the Jewish materialistic spirit within and around us. Augustine, Luther, Calvin condemned men's private interest, which meant they condemned private property. The Nazis condemned private interest which means they condemned private property. Augustine demanded sacrifice. The Nazis demanded sacrifice. There was no individual rights during the Dark Ages. There was no individual rights during the rise of National Socialism.

Here's the point. The Church and the National Socialists agreed in the fundamentals of human existence. You will remember my specific explanation of a progression of a philosophy. Those are the fundamentals. I told you learning to think in fundamentals takes real work. Learning to think from metaphysics to epistemology to ethics - I lost my own train of thought. Sorry, guys. Metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, politics, art, that entire framework is exactly what these people believed. They believed in all of the same fundamentals. The Church and the National Socialists agreed in the fundamentals of human existence. Man is corrupt and egoistic. This is incompetent masses. Individualism is evil. Man is universally guilty. Dogmatism is the only acceptable intellectual standard. This is the abolition of ambition. The highest moral virtue is self-sacrifice to the state. This is collective conformity. Government is synonymous with providential divine will, and evil must be banished with force of government. The result is utopian prestige. The method is dictated good.

The Gospel according to John Immel, Chapter 3:1-3: "All people act logically from their assumptions. It does not matter how inconsistent the ideas or insane the rationale. They will act until the logic is fulfilled. Therefore, when you see masses of people taking the same destructive actions, find the assumptions, and you will find the cause."

I have outlaid to you all of the assumptions, and now you can understand why people take the same mass action, why the 40 to 65 million Germans remained complicit with the actions that went on within Nazi Germany. They all accepted the exact same premise. They held the exact same assumptions, and they followed those assumptions to its logical conclusion. When you tell me that the state can dispose of man's property at will, you have conceded the premise that the state owns man totally. So if they can take your money, they can take your life. If they can take your stuff, they can stick you in an oven. The moral justification does not change.

Let me give you this progression from sacrifice because sacrifice is the collectivist mantra. Sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice, sacrifice and then...

PAUL DOHSE: That's an interesting question. If you don't have the right to own anything, do you have a right to live as well?

JOHN IMMEL: You do not. The same argument that says we have the right to take your stuff is the same argument that says they have the right to take your life.

Watch this progression and the element how it starts with sacrifice and ends with tyranny. Once you establish the moral standard of submission to authority, there is no argument to be made for independent action. Once you accept the premise that it is immoral to take self-appointed action, all self-

appointed actions are immoral. Once you accept the premise that personal inclinations are immoral, then all inclinations are immoral, and this includes your inclination to stand against tyranny. The same argument that shuts your mouth when the preacher says something you disagree with is the same argument that keeps your mouth shut when the tyrant starts shooting people in the head. People blithely condemn self-interest as immoral, but if self-interest is immoral, then so is self-preservation. Self-interest and self-preservation are inseparable. So if you morally wipe out self-interest, you will existentially wipe out self-preservation. If you wipe out self-preservation, how then can you justify fighting against a tyrant who seeks your destruction? If you won't fight for your own liberty, how can you live to fight for someone else's liberty? If you don't hold liberty as an ideal for your own existence, how can you advocate liberty for Jews, for African-Americans, for rich white people?

Hear me now. Tyrants know this truth. If they can talk people out of self-interest, they have talked them out of life itself. Tyrants know that if your moral standard is sacrifice, you are already dead. All they have to do is hand you the knife. You will cut your own throat seeking to be moral. National Socialist Germany showed this history. The marriage of church doctrine of self-sacrifice and the Third Reich brought the Western world within a hair's breadth of returning to the Dark Ages. This is no accident. The doctrines at the root are the same.

In 21st century America, we are once again rolling through a philosophical cycle that has been repeated over and over in history. We are intentionally moving towards socialism. We have bought into the lie that socialism is a kinder, gentler economic organization. America's root philosophy is the antithesis of all collectivist ideologies. Communism, socialism, Catholicism and Calvinism, these are all collectivist ideologies. The Founding Fathers believed in the rational, effective, motivated individual man. They organized a government

around the defense of the individual. The defining shape of government was to defend the sovereign individual against all encroachments.

We are sprinting headlong down the path of despotism. The slogans have only changed in name. A century ago, a fundamental transformation was done in behalf of the *volk*. Hope and change were done in behalf of the German people. Now it is the move towards socialism, is done in the name of grandma's healthcare. Christian grandma would never dream of walking next door with a gun and demanding her neighbor pay for her doctor visit, but she will think nothing of electing a politician who will hold a gun for her. Christian grandma insists that her politics are compassion but never mind that compassion and compulsion are mutually exclusive. Never mind that compelling someone to provide an ability or a skill or an expertise at the point of a gun is slavery. Christian grandma, and everyone else who votes with her, handed the keys of the doctor's office to men with guns. And if they can compel doctors to work for free, they can compel people to stay away from doctors for free.

And ladies and gentlemen, there is nothing hidden here. This isn't any different than 1926. The documents have been written, and all you've got to do is read. All you've got to do is listen. There's nothing mysterious happening in modern American politics. History has repeatedly proved that socialist countries will slaughter millions to sustain the power of a select few. The moment you concede that seizing a man's property is a moral government action, you have conceded that man is property of the state. The moment that man is property of the state, man can be disposed of as the state sees fit.

This is, of course, why Christians are with ever-increasing manifestation confronted with abuse and tyrannies that our forefathers tried to resist. People wail about human depravity, moaned that their leaders have the wrong form of church government, mumble feebly that the parishioners should pray more for their pastors and demand that people sacrifice more in behalf of the church.

The church is impotent to stop the problem because the church refuses to diagnose the problem. I tell you the truth that the answer as to why this is happening is as easy to diagnose as the common cold, but the first thing you must do is dare to take responsibility for the content of our own minds. Mystic despots have ruled the world with portents of disaster for anyone with the ambition to challenge the traditions of power. Autocrats rely on being able to compel outcomes because no one opposes their arguments. Tyrants can only succeed when we refuse to think.

Now let me address Paul's question. Will the New Calvinist movement produce political indifference? Huh?

SUSAN DOHSE: I said it already has.

JOHN IMMEL: Yes, it already has. Yes, that is true.

PAUL DOHSE: Throughout history, the masses at some point think [SOUNDS LIKE 0:35:30] the fruits of these ideas start wreaking havoc on humanity. Humanity rises up and pushes that, but for the most part of human history, it's a vicious cycle. The ideas that produce the fruit have never really been dealt with.

JOHN IMMEL: Never really been dealt with at the root, never.

PAUL DOHSE: It's just people start picking up guns because they know it's bad.

JOHN IMMEL: Pretty much, yes. Great.

PAUL DOHSE: And then something a little better rises from the ashes that fixes the immediate problem that started all the shooting, so we need to say

then that the founders of the American congregation were one of the few in history, if not the first ones that said, "Wait a minute here. We're going to deal with the ideas that lead to this tyranny."

JOHN IMMEL: Correct. That's exactly right. And that's why the United States of America is the only country ever founded on philosophy. They actually understood that the ideas behind tyranny were the problem, and they understood that the ideas behind liberty were the source of genuine political liberty. And they went through great pains to try to craft a government that prevented the madness that had washed across the face of the globe for the whole of human history, and they succeeded. And the problem they have had is the same problem that Christians are confronted with every time you see this cycle or the resurgence of the Calvinist movement. After it's all done, they don't have a full philosophical statement. They don't have a means by which to fall back and use as rebuttal to these ancient doctrines, and that's because most people don't know them. They just accepted them. I am confident there are people online right now holding their breaths saying, "How can he possibly reject the whole of Christianity?" And they are scandalized that I have been so bold, but the realities are what they are. And until Christians wrapped their heads around this, Christianity as it is currently taught has always been on the forefront of tyranny. It has always been a competitor in tyranny or the leader in tyranny. This is exactly why...

PAUL DOHSE: At least in Western culture.

JOHN IMMEL: Pretty much everywhere it's been. Everywhere it's been.

SUSAN DOHSE: We should go back to the roots. We're not talking about - well, I'll speak for myself. Because we have define terms here. Christianity is not my personal faith. That is not what I believe personally. Christianity [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:38:31] my relationship as an individual, personal

relationship with the Lord, and my individual relationship is built upon his Word because that's where I learn about him.

JOHN IMMEL: Are they for sure getting this online? Because this is actually - I want to actually comment on this point.

PAUL DOHSE: Yes.

SUSAN DOHSE: And so this is why when somebody asks me at work if I'm a Christian, I say no. I say I'm a believer. I'm a follower of Christ. I even sometimes say I'm a Berean, but I have stepped back from using that term "Christian" because of what I learned when I did all that stuff about the roots of Calvinism going with Plato and Augustine. And then when you read about Puritans and you hear on the radio all these pastors elevating this Calvin, deep Calvin philosophy and then you keep seeing it happen in the two churches that claim not to be Calvinistic where the two churches I was involved with, one for 20 some years and the other for 10 years, the institutional church and that term "Christianity," I'm removing myself from because that's not who I am.

JOHN IMMEL: Well, actually, I want to echo this because this is how most people react to what I said because we take - in America we take our religion very personally, and we're scandalized by the notion that somebody should be able to criticize us and our religion.

PAUL DOHSE: [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:40:32] identify ourselves and our - what we believe and who we are as a group. I mean, you can't get away from the fact that it's an interesting line of thought that relationship with Jesus Christ is a personal relationship and in heaven groups don't get judged. Individuals get judged, okay? And Argo brought it up at our private conversations separate from the conference over the good food and whatnot, and he brought that line

of thought up, identity as individual or identity as group. And so it's an interesting line of thought.

JOHN IMMEL: And this is the happy dance that I think the Christians end up with. They don't want to be held responsible for the comments that I'm making. In their minds, "Well, I don't believe that," and here's the substantive problem. Now let me continue. I'll segue in a minute because I'm headed almost exactly there.

PAUL DOHSE: Okay. But I'll just say this real quick. That's an interesting thought also because they identify with a group but then they take freedom to reject the particulars of what the group holds true.

JOHN IMMEL: Exactly, which is...

PAUL DOHSE: Wow, how convenient.

JOHN IMMEL: How convenient. Which is exactly where I'm headed. Give me one minute here. Will the New Calvinist movement produce political indifference? This is not an issue of political indifference. The issue is that Calvinism advocates self-sacrifice and submission to authority as an ideal. The Dark Ages were dominated by Augustine's dogmatism, the assumption that select men have moral authority to define intellectual content. In the modern version this is the doctrine of submission and authority. The only fundamental difference in the modern age is by contrast, Augustine had the power of the state to use violence to compel intellectual compliance. One of the prime examples of this is his treatment of the Donatists. He decided he didn't like their doctrine, and so he created the just theory of war [SOUNDS LIKE 0:42:59] to go to war against them.

SUSAN DOHSE: [UNINTELLIGIBLE 0:43:03]

JOHN IMMEL: Modern Neo-Calvinists are only barely restrained from claiming the right to violence to enforce church doctrine. I heard one preacher say that they should be able to - they being preachers, should be able to put people in woodchippers. Now I'm not sure how exactly that metaphor passes muster on any level but nonetheless what he's ultimately saying is he believes that the church powers, the church authorities should have the right to violence for disagreement. The pious preacher will object, "But I don't believe that." But neither are you running those preachers out on a rail for saying it. If you won't take action when it is merely talk, how will you take action when it is actually the government-endorsed violence? I suggest, preacher, that you're a fraud. You say your job description is to protect the flock, and yet you do nothing. You take no action. If your job is to protect the flock and you take no action, if your church tolerates your existence, they get what they deserve. All preachers who demand submission for protection are frauds. If they can't intellectually defend their right to exist, they can't hope to defend against tyranny. And here is the central question of this theological shell game. If men cannot correctly judge ideological outcomes after the fact, if they can't see the impact of Lutheran doctrine and its shaping of National Socialist Germany, how can they be defenders of the flock in our time?

Christianity's growing abuse problems are no accident. The truth is before our eyes. This is Christianity in its infancy, the doctrine in action minus real civil power. And the reality is the blogosphere is already reeling from the stories. Today's Christian national leaders are bold and clear about their ultimate goals, yet people reject the doctrine as irrelevant. They wipe out the universe to choose to call that action wisdom. For you, pew-sitters, no matter how the preacher wants to hedge and caveat and smile, when they are asking for your submission to their authority, they are claiming the unique qualification to rational superiority. They are saying it is their moral right to define all

intellectual conclusions. So if you submit to their authority, you cannot make a claim to your own mind. You cannot utter the word "I" before the word "think."

It is important to understand that authority is merely force. So whenever you hear some preacher thumping the Plexiglas podium, no matter how polite his words demanding your submission to his authority, you must realize he is really demanding your submission to his force. It doesn't matter how nice he makes it sound. He is overtly declaring his right to use force against your unrepentant body.

And I want to make one amended comment here. When I say right, I mean prerogative, just like in the divine prerogative of kings. Rights are specifically and delimited exactly as John Locke enumerated them. Individuals have rights. Groups, collective states do not have rights. All states, all just states, all moral states are created at the behest of the individuals and given delimited powers. Pastors don't have rights. They don't have the right to compel. And make no mistake. The modern New Calvinist movement is just as politically motivated as the Evangelical Lutherans were in the 1920s. They are motivated by the exact same themes. They condemn individuality and egoism. They advocate sacrifice and statism. They condemn freedom as license. They advocate socialist economic policies, and above all else, they condemn capitalism. And the condemnation of capitalism is the condemnation of the individual. There is no such thing as liberty without capitalism.

American Christians are under two delusions: first, that they can have Enlightenment reasoning, Enlightenment liberty, Enlightenment property, Enlightenment prosperity, Enlightenment government and Enlightenment freedom with medieval Christianity. It is not possible. These are mutually exclusive philosophical expectations. America, you must pick.

But, John, no one is out there preaching medieval Christianity. Oh yes, they are. It's called orthodoxy. American Christians like the ring of orthodoxy. They like the thing that it sounds good, but only because the average pew-sitter has no clue what orthodoxy really means. But orthodoxy means they must abandon reason, which is the root of all Enlightenment beliefs. There is no such thing under orthodoxy as "but I believe," "but this is what I believe." There is no such thing. So every time you want to object to my broad generalizations about this brand of Christianity, "But that's not what I believe," no. If you're committed to orthodoxy, you do not have the right to say that. You have already abandoned your rational capacity to somebody else's authority.

The American church is, unfortunately, under the delusion they're entitled to make up their own minds. This, unfortunately, is a condition that affects the college crowd quite a bit, the young kids. They think their opinion matters, and it really doesn't. College kids are only allowed to hold their own opinions inasmuch as they pose no challenge to leadership, and the definition of challenge is constantly moving. There is no such thing as a little bit of subordination. It's kind of like being a little bit pregnant. You either are or you're not. Once you concede the premise that you must submit your rational faculties to authority, the only question left is how much subordination, and as far as the Neo-Calvinist leadership is concerned, it's total. The answer is all. You are lying to yourself if you think otherwise.

Here is my challenge. I double dog dare you. Walk into any New Calvinist church and object to their doctrine. And then, you bold man, go tell everybody you did. And then, you really bold man, keep telling everybody you did. Tell everybody that they have the right to make up their own mind about which one is right, the preacher or you. Like I said, I double dog dare you. And after you do and after the cuts and bruises heal and after you finally put your head back on straight, because they will wreck you in the process, come to my blog, and I will tell you how to handle it.

I submit that the current church leadership is eroding the church's intellectual base at the root. This is in direct answer to what Paul asked me. The top tier of the Calvinist leadership are mostly old men. The younger generation are typically young men, and despite their aspirations to leadership, they are picked to be part of the super spiritual crowd because they're intellectually compliant. Intellectual strength in insular communities do not go together. Susan made the observation that the difference between the robust intellectual nature between European Calvinism versus the American version is how insular the colonies were, and because of that their intellectual capacity eroded. Well, this is exactly what happened. Most of the Neo-Calvinist churches are very insular, and the intellectual limitations that are imposed by the leadership on the parishioners can do nothing but erode the intellectual rigor. The more a group isolates itself, the more the intellectual energy stagnate. The leadership is selecting a subsequent generation of church leaders because they are not independent thinkers. They run independent thinkers out on a rail as fast as they can get it done.

Make no mistake. New Calvinist movement is deliberately eroding the foundations of church intellectual base. I predict that within a generation, the church will be intellectually helpless. So we're talking about 30, 40 years. Without independent thought, man has no choice but to turn to the collective for his intellectual content. If you have made a habit of deferring thought to other men under pressure, you will default to what you have practiced. Tyrants create intellectual dependence the same way they create the welfare state. The welfare state erodes self-sufficiency by robbing people of the opportunity to work. By grooming intellectual subordinates and advancing those specific mentalities to leadership, they are creating the same environment of dependency. Tyrants and despots always find ideas threatening, not because they fear ideas specifically. Most of them ignore ideas on principle. Tyrants find

ideas threatening because men who can think are by definition individuals. There is no such thing as collective thinking. Only individuals think.

Achievement is the foundation of self-confidence. So the thinking man grasps his achievement. Rational independence is directly proportional to self-confidence. And you see this in children all this time. The better they do in school, the more happy they are about themselves. The more they demonstrate the ability to reason correctly, the more satisfaction they get in their life and their own happiness. This is a function of human existence. Men are thinking machines. It is the means by which we engage the world on the broadest levels, and our ability to master our own environment and our own minds and our own rational faculties are directly tied to our sense of happiness and well-being.

I give you a challenge for those of you who I know are out there watching. If you are suffering from fear and doubts and unbelief, go put your brain to work. Go to work. Go do something. Go achieve something. Don't worry about what anybody says. Go achieve. And I guarantee you that the day after you achieve, you will wake up happy. And for many of you, you will be scared that you're happy because you've been told you shouldn't be happy with yourself. This is how much this doctrine is wrecking you.

You cannot tyrannize a self-confident man because he will never concede the premise of a tyrant's right to make him a slave. A self-confident man will not crumble under moral assault. A self-confident man will not internalize moral criticism. A self-confident man understands their moral worth. But the rationally subordinate man can never have rational confidence because he must defer all thoughts to someone in authority. This man has no rational success so he is incapable of self-confidence. The rationally subordinate man will always crumble under moral assault. The rationally subordinate man will always internalize moral criticism. The rationally subordinate man will always

abandon his moral worth. This is why ad hominem attacks are so prevalent in the New Calvinist movement against all opponents. The leadership is taking advantage of the moral weakness of those who submit. They're habituated to condemning the man. They do not recognize rational arguments on principle. They don't recognize rational arguments as such. There is no rational appeal. There is only submission to authority. Therefore, the only argument they must win is why the user of reason is morally condemned for his objection. If a New Calvinist cannot win a proof text exchange in the first three minutes, he will immediately switch to a personal attack. They will morally condemn their adversary. The moment they are confronted with ideas with reason and with logic, they quit the field. I see this on my blog with stunning consistency. My blog, by the way, is not a discernment blog. I see the same methodology over and over and over, and I've watched Paul's blog for the better part of the last three years. I see this over and over. They start out with a moral assault. Then they have a few proof texts, and when Paul strikes back with reason, they're gone. That's because that's all they've got. They can only make an ad hominem attack. There must be something morally corrupt about the objector.

So now I have to say this. We must recognize where we are in American history. I told you that the assault against the Enlightenment came almost immediately after Locke. The assault against the Western way of life that was born from the Enlightenment and the liberties that we enjoy, the assault against reason, the assault against the individual have been unrelenting, and if you banish reason from human interaction, the only thing left to deal with men is force. We are at the very tail end of and the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment, and we have a crucial choice to make about what comes next. If you banish reason, the only thing left is the Dark Ages.

Now you look around, and you see the technology. You see the developments, and you have a hard time picturing that. But the farther and farther away we get from reason in our culture, the more the cultural descent into violence

because it will be the only way to deal with your neighbor. So when I say that we are going to lose Western society, I mean a society that upholds the primacy of existence, the effectiveness of reason, the political sovereignty of the individual, man's inviolate right to private property, a secular state founded on delimited government whose sole purpose is to defend the individual in his life, property and liberty. Our generation, my generation, this generation is presiding over the destruction of the single greatest political achievement this world has ever seen. The collectivist long knives have been hacking away at the foundations of the Western society almost from its inception. The collectivist doctrines have finally succeed in uprooting the foundations of political liberty.

I want to give a brief comment about kids. When I have these conversations in public, somebody will say to me, "But, John, we need to get to the next generation. We need to teach these kids." And I have to stop them. It is not the kids' job to save the world. It's your job. If you are my age, I guarantee you, if we lose this battle for reason and liberty, when the history books are finally written about this generation, they will hold us responsible. They will say, "What in the heck did they do? How could they have done this? They had it, and yet they let the collectivists, the socialists, the communists and the Christian orthodox wreck it in the name of brotherly love and kindness and heaven and worker's utopia. How?"

This is not optional. It is not a 15-year-old's job to save the world. It's the 15-year-old's job to be 15. It is the adult's job. We inherited this world from men who had an enormously capable opinion of humanity, and it is our job to live up to their expectations. It's our job to make sure the ideas to defend liberty, the rights of men prevail. And if we don't succeed, it will be our fault and nobody else's. Far too many people are quiet. They hear political leftists, communists, socialists and collectivists speak, and they refuse to raise a challenge. Shaking your head and wringing your hands over the state of the world is not a rebuttal. You had a moral obligation to speak out against the

collectivist ideologies. Collectivist ideologies only win because proponents of liberty quit the arena of ideas. Offer a better argument. At the very least, Christians need to understand that a proof text is not an argument. A proof text is nothing more than an appeal to authority. The easiest way to defeat such an argument is to reject the source of authority. Christians do this to Muslims all the time. A Muslim quotes his Quran, and Christians go, "Well, I don't believe that." Well, the reciprocal is equally valid. You point to your proof text, and your audience goes, "I don't care." I'll never forget I was sitting in sophomore, junior, I guess I did forget, junior history class and I'm popping off scriptures by the pound. And Mr. Wells looked at me and goes, "I don't believe any of that." And I was done because I had nothing else to say, and that is exactly the problem. Proof text really means that you've really got nothing else to say.

You need to gain some self-awareness about the nature of your own arguments. How many things do you have to accept at the base level to arrive at "but the Bible says"? All of that background goes into your conviction that this is something you should believe, but if everybody else doesn't hold that, then the proof text has no rational effectiveness. If your audience does not accept any of those things, then you have not made an argument. Proof text only persuade--I use that word loosely--those who (a) accept the interpretive methods and (b) accept the interpretive conclusion. If at the end of the argument you are left with "I will pray that God reveals it to you," then what you've really said is you had nothing to say.

PAUL DOHSE: Yeah, sounds familiar.


JOHN IMMEL: Neo-Calvinists like to pretend they are the only intellectual and theological game in town. I should hope after the last three years of these conferences that you know that is just flat untrue. I have given you over the last three years the scope of Western thought. They are not the only game in

town. They reflect about this much of the game. And most of them in the modern age, I said it before and I really don't frankly care that they might be offended, most of them are fourth-rate thinkers. They would be lost without the giants with whom they are standing, clinging desperately to their knees. The broader intellectual perspective that I have tried to bring to you is a powerful tool to combat the errors implicit to the Neo-Calvinist movement.

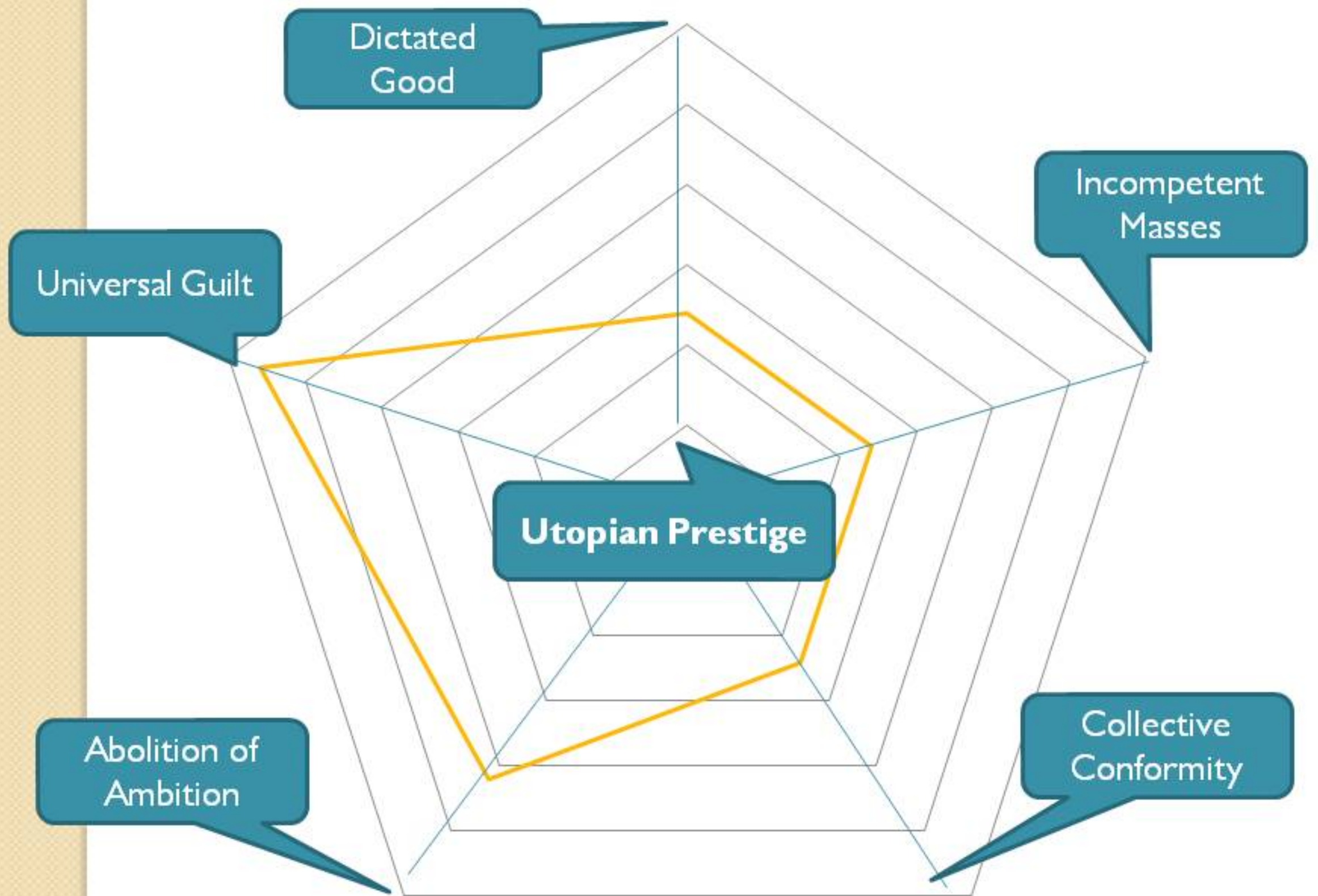
And so here we have it, ladies and gentlemen. The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for men to change the definition of good. Until you can defend that it is good for men to exist for his own sake, evil will always triumph. Ladies and gentlemen, I have given you the basics. Now go forth and defend Man.

Thank you. Any questions comments?

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]




“The idea that the freedom of man as a practicality is a pipe dream because he is enslaved to his own desires spiritually. Hence, at the very least indifference to political freedom on a social level. So, will the New Calvinist movement cause a political indifference in American society among Christians?”



Gospel according to John **Immel** Chapter 3: 1-3

- 1) All people act logically from their assumptions.
- 2) It does not matter how inconsistent the ideas or insane the rationale. They will act until the logic is fulfilled.
- 3) Therefore, when you see masses of people taking the same destructive actions, find the assumptions and you will find the cause.



The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for men to change the definition of GOOD.

Until it is GOOD for man to exist for his own sake, Evil will always triumph.

~John Immel