



THE RESPONSE

TEXAS GOVERNOR RICK PERRY CALLS FOR REVIVAL

By Albert James Dager

Thousands of Christians from diverse denominational backgrounds gathered in Houston's Reliant Stadium on August 6 in a show of solidarity with Governor Rick Perry of Texas, calling for the nation to repent of its sins and turn back to Jesus Christ. The event, called "The Response: A Call to Prayer for a Nation in Crisis," was attended by over 30,000 Christians from some 1,000 churches and Christian ministries, with over 80,000 others joining via live Web broadcast streaming into their homes and churches.

Sponsored by American Family Association (AFA) at the behest of Governor Perry, The Response blended music, prayer, inspirational preaching and calls for renewed faith that would redeem America from the evils that threaten her existence as a free nation under God.

Perry had invited people of all faiths to come to The Response, but it was obvious that only in the name of Jesus was anything going to be presented from the stage. There is no report of anyone from other religions attending.

Although the rally was convened by Governor Perry, he kept mainly in the background, appearing only a few times to deliver short messages of encouragement to the attendees. In his first appearance, punctuated by several moments of loud applause.

Perry read from Joel 2:12-17, Isaiah, 40:28-31, and Ephesians 3:14-21. He then prayed for America, its government leaders, including the president, and for the military and their families.

Perry invited the governors from all the states to participate, but only Rick Scott of Florida (via video) and Sam Brownback of Kansas made appearances. Both were unabashedly affirmative of their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Rick Scott appealed to the people to "pray that the leaders of our nation and our states have wisdom in all their decisions. Join me in praying for job opportunities for those who need work, for the economic wellbeing of our nation, and for the safety and security of our communities, and our men and women in uniform."

After one of the many, many musical interludes, Sam Brownback took the stage and quoted from 2 Chronicles 7:12-15 (the recurring theme of the rally), then iterated the Beatitudes from Matthew. Brownback closed with a prayer.

The primary leader on the platform was the director for the event, Luis Cataldo, a former area director for Young Life and now a leader at International House of Prayer (IHOP). After events got underway with song, Richard Land, one of the

co-chairs of The Response introduced the other co-chairs: Dr. James and Shirley Dobson, Dr. Tony Evans, Bishop Harry Jackson, Tom Minnery, Penny Nance, Dr. Tony Perkins, Dr. and Mrs. Donald Wildmon, Father Frank Pavone, and Dr. Sammy Rodriguez. Pavone (who is not listed on the website for The Response) and Rodriguez were not present. Then Luis Cataldo laid out the itinerary for the event, which included much music and song by various musicians and vocalists on stage, short speeches, and prayer, both corporate and individual in small groups.

Sponsored by American Family Association, which has support from many evangelical, Catholic, and other churches,



TEXAS GOVERNOR RICK PERRY

The Response was able to draw from myriad and diverse religious backgrounds.

American Family Association is a Christian activist organization headed by Donald Wildmon. It has been in the forefront in the struggle against abortion, homosexual rights, pornography, and other evils. It has faced opposition from leftist groups including the ACLU and numerous homosexual-rights organizations.

The rally had its share of detractors who accused Perry of mixing politics and religion, and overstepping his bounds by calling for such a prayer rally. Numerous protestors gathered outside the stadium to voice their concerns. Among them were representatives of liberal churches who accused participants in The Response of "hatred" and of engendering fear. "The brand of Christianity being offered today is one of fear," said Dan

DeLeon, a United Church of Christ pastor, “and we want to let people know that God loves everyone—not to be afraid.”

The week prior to the event more than 50 religious and community leaders in Houston signed a statement drafted by the Anti-Defamation League criticizing Perry. Their complaint was that The Response is “exclusively Christian, thus blurring the line of separation between church and state.” They also took issue with the speakers known for their positions against homosexual marriage and abortion.

Also represented in the protest were members of the Wisconsin-based Freedom From Religion Foundation, an atheist/agnostic organization dedicated to removing any semblance of religious thought from government.

Nine days before The Response took place a federal judge dismissed a lawsuit filed against Governor Perry by Freedom From Religion, whose attorneys argued that his participation in his official capacity as governor of Texas would violate the First Amendment’s so-called “Separation Clause” which has been interpreted by leftists to mean that no government official or entity may take a public stance on, or be publicly associated with, anything even remotely considered religious, particularly Christian.

The secular media have almost universally criticized Perry for his role in The Response. MSNBC TV’s Rachel Maddow’s website suggested Perry might be a “conduit to radical Christian overthrow of the U.S. government.” On her August 10 telecast Maddow revealed her fears that largely rest on the list of endorsers for The Response. Saying that the political risk for Perry was not about attendance at his event or even seemingly mixing the roles of church and state, Maddow said that the particular stadium event that he held was with Christians who hold radical views. Her list included C. Peter Wagner, apostle of the New Apostolic Reformation, Bryan Fischer of American Family Association, Mike Bickle, formerly of the Kansas City Prophets Movement, John Hagee, John Benefiel, and Cindy Jacobs. Maddow played video clips of these endorsers of The Response which made them appear radical if not teetering on the verge of insanity.

The leftist *Texas Observer* featured a report by Forrest Wilder, who was alarmed that evangelist Don Finto, a board member of Toward Jerusalem Council II, took the stage at The Response to pray for “revival around the world and for Israel to come to their own Messiah.” Finto then introduced Marty Waldman, a messianic Jewish rabbi from Dallas, and stated, “As believers, we have a responsibility to unashamedly take the Gospel to the Jewish people as well as the Gentiles of every nation. As we do, we cooperate with God in fulfilling His great end-time plan for world evangelization before Jesus’ soon return.”

Wilder voiced concern that the mainstream media let such a thing pass without criticism. Said Wilder:

There was probably a time when an evangelist calling for the mass conversion of Jewish people to Christianity at an event "initiated" by a mainstream presidential contender would ruffle some feathers. Apparently not anymore.

The Austin, Texas, *Statesman* reported that several homosexual-rights groups protested outside Reliant Stadium. Yet in spite of the protests, The Response was apolitical. Neither Perry nor any of the other speakers addressed any political issues—not even homosexual rights. They did, however, spend an entire segment calling out to God for forgiveness for the national sin of abortion.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

What were once moral issues have become political issues, primarily because of departure by many from God’s Word as the authority for their lives. There was a time when even atheists and agnostics acknowledged the national mores predicated upon the biblical ethic inherited from the founders of the republic. The Bible may not have been regarded by many as the inspired Word of God, but it was nevertheless the basis upon which society in America was guided. When public figures mentioned “God” they were in their minds referencing the God of the Bible; they were not referencing Allah, Krishna, or any of the myriad pagan deities.

With the emergence of modern humanism, Western culture has steadily devolved into a morass of relativism. The government education system has worked especially hard during the past century, and particularly during the past three generations, to turn society away from moral absolutes toward relativism; truth became whatever one believes truth to be. Thus, issues such as abortion and homosexuality have come under the protection of government as “rights” based on the idea that one’s personal feelings and inclinations are sacrosanct. This has escalated in some minds to include the right to anarchy and destructive behavior with little threat of consequence.

The major goal of the Communist Party USA was, and continues to be, the fomenting of class struggle. The objective has been to pit black against white, rich against poor, labor against management, religious against non-religious, and virtually any other area where differences exist. Those who think communism is dead simply because of its failed experiment in the former Soviet Union and everywhere else it has been tried, are dangerously naïve. The class warfare which communism worked so diligently to inculcate is in full blown evidence today.

It is becoming increasingly evident that the United States of America is a house divided, and there is little hope that the strong divisions that exist will ever be mended. The issues that separate the people are not merely political. They are primarily spiritual; they strike at the hearts and souls of American citizenry. In that regard, Rick Perry and those associated with The Response are correct that God is the only solution to our problems. Because unless He intervenes there is no way that America will ever be a nation that enjoys the same degree of unity of mind and purpose that it once did.

At The Response it was evident that the vast majority of people in attendance were sincere in their desire to see God move in America and to bring revival to both the nation and its churches. But were they representative of American citizenry, or even of Christianity as a whole? Can The Response truly speak for all Christians—even the average Evangelical Christian?

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL?

Throughout the day the manner of worship, praise and ministry in general was most reflective of charismatic Christianity. There was plenty of emotion, and much loud crying out to God, which isn't a bad idea, particularly in view of the difficult and dangerous condition in which we find the nation and the churches in general. The music was of the contemporary Christian version with much repetition that can induce a mind-altering state that might be experienced at a Vineyard church.

The Tabernacle of David

Music plays a large, almost inordinate, part in the dominion theology movement—particularly of the charismatic persuasion. It is considered a means to move God called “The Tabernacle of David.” IHOP’s description of The Tabernacle of David was written by Mike Bickle who says that he came across the “secret” to a vital prayer life when he was studying the tabernacle of David, the perfect model of a 24-hour-a-day prayer and worship ministry.

Acts 15:16-17 references Amos 9:11, which speaks of the Millennial Kingdom when Jesus returns; it has nothing to do with charismatic dominionists taking it upon themselves to move God through ritual. Isaiah 16:5 speaks of the tabernacle of David where the Lord will sit upon the throne “judging, and seeking judgment, and being diligent in righteousness.”

Dominion theology consistently usurps Millennium promises and tries to apply it to the present age in order to justify its agenda to transform society into the Kingdom of God on earth.

The Tabernacle of David teaching places the Body of Christ back under the Law. The temple has been destroyed and the Ark of the (Old) Covenant is no longer available. God’s presence dwells within the true believer in Jesus, not in temples made by hands (Acts 7:48). Our heavenly Father is not moved by ritual. Nor does He submit His eternal plan to the whims of man.

The Response was not a 24-hour prayer and worship ministry, but the repetitive and almost continual music that took up the majority of time fits the Tabernacle of David teaching.

One aspect of spiritual warfare a la dominion theology is the blowing of the shofar (the ram’s horn)—a call for God’s glory to descend. It is believed by some that blowing the shofar causes confusion in the spirit realm, scattering demonic powers and opening Heaven for the glory, power and presence of God to fall upon the congregation. Thus, many charismatic dominion events begin with the blowing of the shofar, just as was done at start of The Response.

I don’t say these things as a judgment of the people’s hearts. I have no doubt that many of those on stage and most in the audience were sincere in their desire to approach God. But corporate ritual is not the way to God’s heart. It may be fine symbolism to move the hearts of the people, but to think that it must be done to move God’s heart places it in the category of works for the sake of righteousness—what God required of Israel for a time until the Holy Spirit was given to all believers.

There are many Christians who would not fit in at such a function simply because they do not lean toward charismatism. But at the least we can agree that for charismatics and

Pentecostals, The Response provided a catharsis and an opportunity to feel as if something was taking place that would move God to respond. At the same time, however, The Response represented very little of the Body of Christ in America as a whole.

Yet there was great optimism expressed from the stage. Luis Cataldo, program coordinator for The Response, said, “Something has transpired not only in the spiritual realm, but in the temporal realm as well, as a result of this gathering.”

Identificational Repentance

If anything of consequence transpired in the spirit realm it is not evident at this point. People came, they cried out to God, they wept, they sang, they danced, they made a joyful noise. They also pointed out the sins of the nation—particularly abortion—and repented for allowing it to exist. But in the thinking of the leaders, personal repentance isn’t enough; it was necessary for the people to repent for the nation, as if that carries any weight with our heavenly Father.

This is called identificational repentance—the identification of individuals with a corporate group of people to confess that group’s social sins (e.g., White men are guilty of stealing the land from the Indians; I am a white man; ergo, I am guilty of stealing the land from the Indians). The idea is to “stand in the gap” as a substitute for a corporate people in order to nullify so-called “generational curses.” It is the basis for the Reconciliation Movement which purports to address the foundational sins that have hindered the Gospel from reaching indigenous people.

No man can repent for any other man or group of men—certainly not for an entire nation. I carry no guilt for the sin of abortion or any other of the national sins lamented from the stage. I can repent only for my personal sins.

The idea that Christians can repent for the sins of the nation is based on a teaching prevalent within the World-Christian Movement and the New Apostolic Reformation—that a Christian presence sanctifies a nation or a people group, regardless if the vast majority of the nation or people group ever repents and turns to Christ for salvation.

And this is where we must part on an ideological basis with The Response. It’s not that we don’t agree that America is spiraling downward to destruction spiritually and temporally. It’s not that we don’t agree that God is the only solution. It’s not that we don’t agree that personal repentance and ministry to the lost is of utmost importance. Nor do we question the love most of the people attending have for the Lord.

No, our parting is on the philosophical basis upon which The Response rested: the desire and attempt to work toward Christianity taking over the world through gradual attainment of control over various aspects of human society—the “Seven Kingdoms,” or “Seven Mountains,” or “Seven Spheres” of society: family, religion, government, the media, arts and entertainment, education and business.

This is the objective of all forms of dominion theology, predicated on the belief that Jesus cannot return to the earth until “the Church” has taken dominion over the nations and subdued all mankind to a godly, worldwide governmental structure.

I would not question the love for the Lord held by the vast majority of rank-and-file Christians who have come to believe this deception, nor even for many of its proponents. It is because they lack proper understanding of the distinction between the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world that they work themselves into a frenzy in the hope of moving God to transform society. Also, if society could be transformed it would make being a Christian so much easier. Think how wonderful it would be if all our government leaders worked to eradicate the evils of abortion, homosexuality, prostitution, etc. Why, we could lead such comfortable lives not having those evil sinners hanging around.

ABERRANT ELEMENTS

Although much of the secular media's criticism of The Response has been predicated more on pre-judgment of motives and intentions, we cannot dismiss all they have had to say. Rachel Maddow also recognized that some of the endorsers of The Response adhere to the belief that Christianity is destined to gain control over the various aspects of society through the New Apostolic Reformation. In particular she named C. Peter Wagner, Bryan Fischer, Mike Bickle, John Benefiel and Cindy Jacobs, as well as Christian Zionist John Hagee. To illustrate, she played video clips of each of them in their worst form, saying some pretty outlandish things.

We see C. Peter Wagner saying that Japan is one of the nations that have "consciously, openly invited national demonization." He claims that the Sun goddess visits the emperor of Japan in person and they engage in sexual intercourse. Thereby they become one flesh—an invitation to the Sun goddess to demonize the whole nation.

A clip of Bryan Fischer reveals that in his judgment "permits should not be granted to build even one more mosque in the United States of America—not one." He believes that "alternate religions to Christianity have no First Amendment right to the free exercise of religion."

Mike Bickle accuses Oprah Winfrey of having a spirit of deception and being one of the main pastors of the harlot movement.

John Hagee attributes the Holocaust to God's purpose of returning the Jews to Israel.

John Benefiel indicts the Statue of Liberty as a false goddess—a demonic idol given to the U.S. by French Freemasonry.

Cindy Jacobs prattles about drum fish dying and birds falling out of the air in Beebe, Arkansas because the governor of Arkansas' name is Beebe, and former Arkansas governor Bill Clinton introduced the "Don't Ask; Don't Tell" policy for the military.

I believe Hagee is correct in his assessment of the Holocaust, and, yes, the Statue of Liberty is a goddess adopted by Freemasonry. I've written of these things myself. As far as the others go, they are out to lunch. But to the world even the true statements are just plain silly if not perverse.

Of course Maddow would present the worst possible connection to Rick Perry, but the fact remains that several endorsers and participants in The Response are proponents of aberrant teachings.

As much as it may pain believers to admit it, Maddow's assessment of these people hits close to the mark. To be truthful, there are far worse things that could be attributed to not only these, but others associated with The Response.

New Apostolic Reformation

The connection of several leaders of The Response to the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) is a matter of record. Briefly, the NAR posits that God is restoring the offices of apostles and prophets for a coming revival of Christianity (see our 2006 special report, *Apostolic Reformation: a New Move or an Old Deception?*). Under the NAR, C. Peter Wagner is considered the chief apostle for "the Church" today.

Although not stated at its inception, the NAR has adopted the dominion theology teaching that its leaders believe will spearhead the transformation of society by attaining control over the "Seven Mountains." Once society is transformed to godliness, the Lord can then return. This has been the objective of the World-Christian Movement and most forms of dominion theology for decades (see my two books, *Vengeance is Ours: The Church in Dominion* and *The World Christian Movement* [Sword Publishers]).

Connections to The Response

Many if not most in the audience and on the platform of The Response likely have little or no knowledge or understanding of the New Apostolic Reformation. But The Response was heavily influenced by those associated with that movement, as well as other aberrant teachings. We will look at a number of these and consider their philosophies. Most of those listed as "Leaders" of The Response are connected to two organizations in particular: the International House of Prayer (IHOP) and American Family Association (AFA).

International House of Prayer

The International House of Prayer played a large part in The Response. The two primary leaders on stage were IHOP's founder in Kansas City, Mike Bickle (of Kansas City Prophets infamy) and Luis Cataldo who is on staff at IHOP. Three other IHOP officials listed as "Leaders" were Randy & Kelsey Bohlender and Dave Sliker. The website for IHOP states this:

The International House of Prayer of Kansas City is an evangelical missions organization that is committed to praying for the release of the fullness of God's power and purpose, as we actively win the lost, heal the sick, feed the poor, make disciples, and impact the seven spheres of society—family, education, government, economy, arts, media, and religion. Our vision is to work in relationship with the larger Body of Christ to serve the Great Commission, as we seek to walk out the two great commandments to love God and people.

Although IHOP doesn't openly stress dominion theology (dominioists have learned that most Christians don't necessarily agree with that philosophy), its goals fit perfectly into the dominionist strategy. Being largely charismatic in its functioning, IHOP leans toward the Latter-Rain brand of dominionism.

American Family Association

The American Family Association was the host for The Response, footing the lion's share of the costs. Founded in 1977 by Donald Wildmon, AFA is "one of the largest and most effective pro-family organizations in the country with over two million online supporters and approximately 180,000 paid subscribers to the AFA Journal, the ministry's monthly magazine. In addition, AFA owns and operates nearly 200 radio stations across the country under the American Family Radio (AFR) banner."

According to the AFA website, AFA maintains activist websites that rally Christian activists to contact companies asking them to drop their advertising from objectionable TV shows. AFA websites average over 40 million hits and five million visitors each month.

The philosophical statement for AFA states:

The American Family Association believes that God has communicated absolute truth to mankind, and that all people are subject to the authority of God's Word at all times. Therefore AFA believes that a culture based on biblical truth best serves the well-being of our nation and our families, in accordance with the vision of our founding documents; and that personal transformation through the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the greatest agent of biblical change in any culture.

So the objective of AFA is to change American culture to function on the basis of biblical truth bringing biblical change. This is the dominionist agenda.

AFA does provide a valuable resource for Christians who want to be politically and socially aware. There no evidence that AFA openly espouses dominion theology. But its brand of Christian activism certainly serves the dominionist agenda, and its philosophical statement puts it in the dominionist camp by its working to transform society. The fact that AFA picked up the tab for The Response and was the "host entity," brings into question why AFA would align itself with IHOP and certain other dominionist elements.

We are not unsympathetic to what AFA does in informing Christians of issues that affect them. But there is a pattern of using the faith to promote political activism, and the approach is not always with an attitude of humility. That said, AFA has received a good share of unfair and biased opposition from left wing elements, which is to be expected.

ARE WE TO CHANGE THE WORLD?

On the face of it, who could argue with the goals of IHOP and AFA? The problem is not that they want to "influence" the seven spheres of society, but that their hidden purpose is to prepare Christians to actually take over those seven spheres in order to establish a godly society. That may seem a noble purpose, but it is contrary to the Lord's words that His Kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). It is also contrary to the many Scriptures that reveal a great apostasy and the kingdom of the anti-Christ ruling the earth just prior to the Lord's return. Will Christianity win the world only to lose it again? Then what's the purpose?

Believers in Jesus have not been given the mandate to transform society or to change the world. On the contrary, we are told that we can expect nothing from the world except tribulation and persecution. All attempts by "the Church" to rule the world have been disastrous: Roman Catholicism brought the world the Dark Ages; millions of Jews and non-Catholic Christians were slaughtered in order to force them to conform to the dictates of the papacy. The Church of England persecuted those who refused to bend to its rulership. Calvin in Geneva, Luther in Germany—every attempt to bring society into conformity to one version of the faith or another has succumbed to satanic manipulation. This is because, by the will of the Father, the world (including the realm of religion) is Satan's domain until Jesus returns.

Think about that for a moment. One of the spheres which these entities wish to gain control over (or at least influence) is religion. That means that either all the world's religions will have to submit to the new order of apostles and prophets or face consequences. At the least, in order to influence the world in the realm of religion, Christianity will have to compromise itself, much as it is currently doing with Islam under the move toward "Chrislam"—finding common ground on which to establish and manage a moral society as a whole.

Churches can't manage themselves in a godly way. And they're going to manage the world?

OTHER ABERRATIONS

We will look at just a few of the many leaders and endorsers of The Response where there is reason for concern. The website for The Response lists an impressive slate of leaders, some of whom spoke at the rally in Houston.

Mike Bickle: Mike Bickle addressed The Response, as did several other IHOP leaders. Bickle founded IHOP in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1999. Prior to that he was pastor of the Kansas City Fellowship (now known as Metro Christian Fellowship), infamous for spawning a group of false teachers called the "Kansas City Prophets." Again, the dominionist agenda to take over the seven spheres of society was presented. During his prayer he called upon God to "Transform every sphere of society. Touch the marketplace, the government, the media, the education, with the glory of God."

Luis Cataldo: As director of The Response as well as program coordinator, Luis Cataldo is currently on staff at International House of Prayer in Kansas City. Cataldo called upon the younger generation to step into the mantle of revival from the older generation.

There is a teaching within the Latter-Rain movement that emphasizes passing the "mantle" from one person to another so that the second person may continue the prophetic ministry of the first. It is taken from 1 Kings 19:19 and 2 Kings 2:13 where Elijah passed his mantle to Elisha.

But there is no mantle (cloak) being passed around. It's more a claiming of passing the mantle as if one's will can cause God's anointing to be passed around like candy. The basis for this practice is not scriptural, of course, but is predicated on the Latter-Rain teaching that God is preparing a last generation of

apostles and prophets to bring in the Kingdom of God on earth so that Jesus can return. The teaching has been going on since the 1940s at least, and each generation has failed to accomplish the goal. So it's necessary that each generation pick up the mantle from the previous generation in order to keep the dream alive.

But that dream is futile because Jesus will come at a time when the world is in such utter darkness that He asked, "When the Son of Man comes will he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8).

Lack of belief in revival to usher in the Kingdom of God on earth is deemed pessimistic. So these people exercise themselves into a spiritual frenzy in the same manner as the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel. And it will avail nothing, first of all because their motive is not righteousness for righteousness' sake, but righteousness intended to move God in the direction they want Him to go.

I'm not speaking of the participants who follow the leaders ignorantly and out of good faith as much as I am the adherents to the Latter-Rain heresy who use psychological tactics to move the masses as they wish.

Buddy Smith: In charge of Accounting and Legal for The Response - Currently the Executive Vice President of American Family Association and American Family Radio. He is well known for spearheading a boycott against Home Depot for sponsoring and participating in numerous gay-pride parades.

David Lane: National Finance Chairman for The Response - Lane is a political activist for the Christian right, and is largely funded by Wildmon's American Family Association. Lane has stated, "What we're doing is the mobilization of pastors and pews to restore America to her Judeo-Christian heritage. That's our goal."

Randy & Kelsey Bohlender: Program Coordinators - Prayer missionaries with the International House of Prayer on the leadership team of TheCall, rallies promoting revival and change in America and around the world. They are also the founders and directors of the Zoe Foundation, which promotes adoption as a positive alternative to abortion.

Doug Stringer: National Church and Ministry Mobilization Coordinator - Founder and President of Turning Point Ministries International and Somebody Cares America/International. He is considered an apostle for these last days.

Alice Patterson: Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma Church Mobilization - Founder of Justice at the Gate in San Antonio, Texas. Patterson wrote *Bridging the Racial and Political Divide: How Godly Politics Can Transform A Nation*. The website for Justice at the Gate says about her book:

This book will help you to understand how to bring change on the:

- The personal level
- The governmental level
- The strategic spiritual level

Her book is endorsed by C. Peter Wagner, Ed Siloso, and Jay Swallow, the latter two also appearing at The Response.

Governor Perry's website has announced Patterson's endorsement of Perry and lauds Patterson for her "strong moral leadership and commitment to upholding the values that protect life, strengthen families and defend freedom."

Again, it's not that we have any objection to Patterson or anyone else exercising their freedom in Christ to involve themselves in politics, but the objective to transform society is a dominionist strategy for Christians to rule the nations without the Lord present on earth.

John Benefiel: Heartland Apostolic Prayer Network, Oklahoma City, OK

Bryant Fischer: Who among the leaders of The Response reveals the attitude of dominion theology better than Bryant Fischer who stated, "alternate religions to Christianity have no First Amendment right to the free exercise of religion?"

This is the cry of Christian Reconstruction that would see Christianity as the only religion sanctioned by government.

These are merely a few among the many people involved to one degree or another in The Response. The most prominent are involved in the New Apostolic Reformation, which has a dominionist agenda.

Again, however, not everyone involved is aware of, or consciously involved in, the aberrant movements associated with dominion theology and the New Apostolic Reformation. But it would behoove us to refresh what dominion theology proposes.

A BRIEF REVIEW OF DOMINION THEOLOGY

There are two basic elements within Christianity that espouse some form of dominion theology. These are charismatic dominionists, who have adopted the Latter-Rain teachings of last-days apostles and prophets, and Christian Reconstructionists, who believe that Christianity will eventually come to dominate the world through the proclaiming of the Gospel. The former are much more mystical in their approach than are the latter, and the latter look down on the former as somewhat addled, but are willing to work with them to achieve their dominionist goals.

In my book, *Vengeance Is Ours: The Church In Dominion*, I quote some dominionists who state strongly how, when Christianity takes over, the Old Testament penal sanctions will be reinstated. I will quote only a few. Keep in mind that this book was published in 1990, and was three years in the writing. It remains the only book still in print on the subject of dominion theology.

Dominion theology is predicated upon three basic beliefs: 1) Satan usurped man's dominion over the earth through the temptation of Adam and Eve; 2) The Church is God's instrument to take dominion back from Satan; 3) Jesus cannot or will not return until the Church has taken dominion by gaining control of the earth's governmental and social institutions.¹

A godly law order will work to disinherit, execute, and supplant the ungodly and to conform the godly in their inheritance. For Christians to work for anything less is to deny God.²

¹ Albert James Dager, *Vengeance Is Ours: The Church In Dominion* (Redmond, WA: Sword Publishers, 1990), p. 87.

² Rouses J. Rushdoony, "Power from Below," *The Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1:2 (winter, 1974), pp. 9-10, quoted in *Vengeance Is Ours.*, p. 174.

Because they perceive sin and its consequent evil as ethical issues, Reconstructionists believe that the Old Testament penal sanctions against certain sins are still in effect, and that it is the responsibility of government to implement those sanctions; because government has been usurped by atheists and humanists, it has perverted the role entrusted to it and is about to experience God's judgment. That judgment will come in the form of destruction upon all human institutions that do not comply with God's Law, and their replacement with Christian-oriented leadership. It is the Church's responsibility to place itself in the forefront of political and social action in order to take the reins of control out of the hands of the ungodly (e.g., the unethical), and implement rule under a theonomic structure (*theo*: God; *nomos*: law). This will establish Jesus Christ as Lord over His creation through the ministry of His Body, "the Church," while He remains in Heaven.

David Chilton, a major voice within Christian Reconstruction (the movement to reconstruct society based on God's Law) has this to say about Matthew 5:13-16:

This is nothing less than a mandate for the complete social transformation of the entire world. And what Jesus condemns is *ineffectiveness*, failing to change the society around us. We are commanded to live in such a way that someday all men will glorify God—that they will become converted to the Christian faith. The point is that if the Church is obedient, the people and nations of the world will be disciplined to Christianity. We all know that everyone *should* be a Christian, that the laws and institutions of all nations *should* follow the Bible's blueprints. But the Bible tells us more than that. The Bible tells us that these commands are the shape of the future. We must change the world; and what is more we *shall* change the world. (Chilton's emphasis)³

Matthew 5:13-16 is not a "mandate for the complete social transformation of the entire world." It is a mandate for *personal* holiness that will manifest itself as salt and light to the world.

But for dominionists witnessing about Jesus is not enough:

The Great Commission to the Church does not end with simply witnessing to the nations. Christ's command is that we disciple the nations—all the nations. The kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of Christ. They are to be disciplined, made obedient to the faith. This means that every aspect of life throughout the world is to be brought under the lordship of Jesus Christ: families, individuals, business, science, agriculture, the arts, law, education, economics, psychology, philosophy, and every other sphere of human activity. Nothing may be left out. Christ "must reign, until He has put all enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. 15:25). We have been given the responsibility of converting the entire world.⁴

³ David Chilton, *Paradise Restored* (Forth Worth: Dominion Press, 1985), p. 339, quoted in *Vengeance Is Ours.*, p. 183.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 213, quoted in *Vengeance Is Ours.*, p. 184.

Here we see the "spheres" of society laid out in a slightly different form from that enumerated by the major players at The Response. This is where the concept originated, whether or not today's proponents realize it or agree with the ultimate idea of world conquest by "the Church" instead of by Jesus at His return.

But how are the kingdoms of the world to be "made obedient to the faith"? Another major voice within Christian Reconstruction, Ray Sutton, tells us it will be through implementation of the Old Testament penal sanctions:

First, Paul's Romans 1:18-32 language indicates that New Testament penal sanctions are *similar to the Old Testament*. The vast majority of Old Testament should still be instituted...This would apply to the penal sanctions of the Old Testament. The death penalty offenses that should be extended into the New Testament are witchcraft..., idolatry..., murder..., blasphemy..., homosexuality..., bestiality..., rape..., adultery..., incest..., incorrigibility of teenagers..., kidnapping..., and some instances of perjury.

...not every convicted homosexual would have to be put to death according to I Corinthians 6. In the New Covenant Age, only the "unreformable" element would be put to death.(Sutton's emphasis)⁵

I'd hate to see how many of today's prominent Christian leaders would be put to death for adultery, or how many would have been put to death when they were incorrigible teenagers.

As far as dealing with the "unreformable" elements, isn't that what every religious society—including Christian societies—have done historically? If someone "repents" and conforms to the religious authorities they are spared. If not, off with their heads! Where is the grace of God and love for our enemies in that?

Jesus taught us how to address sin as sinful people when he said to the accusers of the woman caught in adultery, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone."

And who among today's Christian leaders could be trusted to administer these penal sanctions without error?

It's been twenty-one years since we published *Vengeance Is Ours*. That generation of dominionists are still in the background, working to see their agenda achieved. Today's dominionist teachers are more low-key, realizing that the vast majority of Christians would back off from their agenda if they knew its true nature.

GOVERNOR PERRY'S DILEMMA

After sending e-mails and making phone calls to Governor Perry's office with no response as of the publishing of this issue, we don't know exactly how the governor is reacting to the criticism from the leftist media. Nor do we know if he fully understands or agrees with the dominionist agenda of the leaders of The Response. My suspicion is that he may be a victim of their stealth approach to achieving their goals.

⁵ Ray Sutton, *That You May Prosper: dominion by Covenant* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics [ICE], 1987), p. 189, quoted in *Vengeance Is Ours.*, p. 188.

WHAT IS THE CHANCE OF SUCCESS?

The dominionists will never achieve their agenda because it is contrary to God's Word and the prophecies of the last days. They are the proverbial mouse-that-roared—a fringe element within Christianity that has a sense of self-importance and strength greater than what matches reality.

There are approximately seven billion people in the world, some two billion of whom are Christians of one persuasion or another. Over half of those are Roman Catholics, 500 million are Protestants, and about 648 million are Evangelicals or Bible believing Christians. There are about 500 million Charismatic Christians, admittedly a relatively large pool from which the New Apostolic Reformation can draw, but about a quarter of them are Roman Catholic. And not all charismatics are disposed toward the agenda of the new “apostles and prophets.” The vast majority would distance themselves from these people if they understood fully the dominionist agenda and what it really means. Granted, a considerable segment of adherents to Reform theology adds to the number of those believing in Christian Reconstruction, but most prefer to distance themselves from the practices of charismatic dominion theology.

So why be concerned? If they can't achieve their goals in the long run, why not just ignore them?

Because they are causing many true believers in Jesus to place their hope where there is no hope, and more importantly, to pray for things contrary to God's will.

Jesus said that the prince of this world is already judged (John 16:11). Yet we know that Satan and his minions continue to work evil. But this world system under Satan's control is judged. There is no hope for it. His domain cannot be saved apart from the return of Jesus. By its nature it exists as an enemy of God, and always will be His enemy. We await a new world governed by the risen Christ Jesus and His resurrected saints. To try to clean up what is filthy by its nature is futile. Even if a modicum of righteousness were to prevail for a season it would only revert to its true nature.

Does this mean Christians should not be concerned about evil in the world? Should we not voice opposition to those evils? Of course we should. We are all concerned, and long for the day when those evils will be dealt with justly by the Lord Himself. And we are free in Christ to work in whatever way we see fit to combat those evils as long as we do not violate the law of love or act contrary to God's will. Because His will does not include the transformation of society by “the Church,” but only by the Lord when He returns, those working for such transformation are at best wasting their time in futility, and at worst warring against God's will. He never commissioned His people to establish a Christian society.

The idea of a Christian society may seem appealing as long as it isn't a reality. But there is nothing worse than religious tyranny, even in the name of Jesus. That is what the Holy Roman Empire was about. It was the first attempt at dominion over the earth without the Lord present.

Thank you, but I'll wait for the Lord to transform society after He returns. ❖

Perry seems to be a devout believer whose faith is substantial if perhaps somewhat traditional (he is a Methodist, but attends an Evangelical church). As a politician—particularly a Christian politician—he knows the base of his support, and at the center of that base in Texas are those in the New Apostolic Reformation.

In September, 2009, Perry was visited by two Texas pastors who claimed to bring him a prophetic word. The two, Tom Schlueter from Prince of Peace Church in Arlington and Bob Long of Rally Call Center in Austin, prayed over Perry, proclaiming that Texas is the “Prophet State,” and Perry would have a special role not only in Texas, but beyond, leading the United States into revival and godly government.

The visit was prompted by Chuck Pierce (son-in-law of C. Peter Wagner), who gave a prophetic message to Schlueter that Schlueter should “pray by lifting the hand of the one I show you that is in the place of civic rule.”⁶ That “one” is Governor Rick Perry, and Schlueter went with Long to fulfill the prophetic word.

Does Governor Perry understand the implications of working with these new “apostles and prophets”? If the criticism from the leftist media has not alerted him or caused him to retract his association with them in terms of public appearances and endorsements, one must wonder what would do so.

I don't believe Perry engaged in *The Response* as a means to enhance his campaign for president of the United States, but it doesn't seem to have hurt him. According to syndicated columnist David Brooks:

There have been a slew of polls showing Gov. Rick Perry of Texas surging to double-digit national leads. He leads across demographic groups — among educated Republicans and less-educated ones, among upscale and downscale. Most impressive, he's winning over the Republican activists who pay the closest attention and wield disproportionate influence with primary voters.

A poll by the conservative political websites *The Daily Caller/Conservative Home* surveys these activists. When asked this week which candidate was most electable, 46 percent named Perry, while only 20 percent named Romney. When asked who would do the best job on the economy, 27 percent said Perry and 14 percent said Romney. When asked who would do the best job controlling Washington spending, 20 percent chose Perry, 17 percent said Rep. Paul Ryan (who isn't running) and only 8 percent chose Romney.⁷

If Rick Perry were to win the White House, the dominionists would surely rejoice, thinking his election is a major step toward their desired Christian World Order. But Perry is smarter than that. He is, after all, a politician, albeit it seems, a decent one (only time will tell). He would still have to work with all the leftist powers that exist as well as more sane elements on the right.

One thing on which we can agree with these alleged apostles and prophets: Governor Perry needs prayer, now more than ever.

⁶ Forrest Wilder, “Rick Perry's Army of God,” *Texas Observer*, August 3, 2011.

⁷ David Brooks, “It's time to take Rick Perry seriously. He could be our next president,” *Seattle Times*, August 27, 2011.