

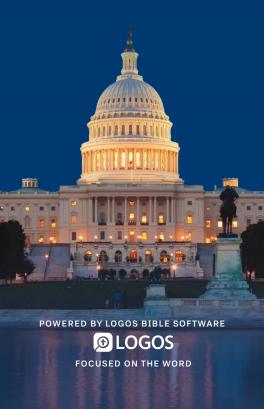
**OCTOBER 6, 2025** 

MINISTRY UPDATE.....2 "It Lifted the Veil from My Eyes": Capitol Ministries Training Conference in Zambia

VERSE OF THE WEEK......3 *Luke 3:8* 

MINISTRY LEADER PROFILE .......6 Hilton Albert, State Ministry Leader, Saint Martin

ABOUT CAPITOL MINISTRIES ....... 8



### O O PART 2 OF 3

# Societal Deterioration and the Epochal Analysis of a **Bungling Church**



ast week we examined the first in a three-part series →of Bible studies that evaluates evangelism and discipleship as the primary calling of the institution of the Church and its obedience to that primary calling relative to each epoch of American Church history.

The second key word in the title of this study is *epoch*, which *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines as "a period of time in history or a person's life, typically one marked by notable events or particular characteristics."

Continued next page

### **WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES**

White House Cabinet and Governors: Wednesdays 8am (EST), light breakfast served Senate Members: Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served House Members: Thursdays 8am, Natural Resources, Longworth 1334, hot breakfast served

WHITE HOUSE CABINET AMBASSADORS AND GOVERNORS Alex Acosta DC Mike Braun IN Phil Bryant MS Dr. Ben Carson DC Mike Dunleavy AK Greg Gianforte MT Mark Gordon WY Pete Hegseth DC Mike Huckabee DC Sarah Huckabee Sanders AR Mike Kehoe MO David Perdue DC Sonny Perdue GA Rick Perry TX Jim Pillen NE Tate Reeves MS Kim Reynolds IA Brooke Rollins DC Kevin Stitt OK Scott Turner DC

#### SENATORS John Thune

Russell Vought DC Scott Walker WI Glenn Youngkin VA

Senate Majority Leader Marsha Blackburn TN Katie Britt AL Ted Rudd NC Bill Cassidy LA Kevin Cramer ND Steven Daines MT Joni Ernst IA William Hagerty TN Cindy Hyde-Smith MS James Lankford OK

#### REPRESENTATIVES

Markwayne Mullin OK

Mike Rounds SD

Tim Scott SC Mike Johnson Speaker of the House Mark Alford MO Robert Aderholt AL Rick Allen GA Brian Babin TX Don Bacon NE Nick Begich AK Michael Bost IL Josh Brecheen OK Tim Burchett TN John Carter TX Juan Ciscomani AZ Rick Crawford AR Jake Ellzey TX Ron Estes KS Glenn Grothman WI Pat Harrigan NC Kevin Hern OK Richard Hudson NC Bill Huizenga MI Dusty Johnson SD Jim Jordan OH Doug LaMalfa CA Nathaniel Moran TX Gary Palmer AL August Pfluger TX David Rouzer NC John Rutherford FL Marlin Stutzman IN Glenn Thompson PA Tim Walberg MI Randy Weber TX Daniel Webster FL Bruce Westerman AR Roger Williams TX

The views expressed in each Bible Study are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible Study sponsor.

Rob Wittman VA

Steve Womack AR Rudy Yakym IN



MINISTRY UPDATE

"It Lifted the Veil from My Eyes": Capitol Ministries Training Conference in Zambia



Capitol Ministries held one of its largest Regional Training Conferences in Lusaka, Zambia, on September 9–12, 2025. Steve Flandorp, Global Director for Africa, together with his predecessor Jon Cassel, Assistant International Director, and Emmanuel Makolo, the Africa Director for Local Government Ministry, devoted prayer, energy, and effort to recruiting and vetting men called to make disciples among political leaders across Africa.

With more than 40 men in attendance—including pastors, evangelists, and several public servants—the conference focused on equipping leaders for ministry within the halls of government at both local and national levels.

Brian Solomon, CapMin's Director of Training, presented

Continued on page 4

Last week's study dealt with an introduction to this subject. In Part 2 this week, we will examine the first two of those five epochs. I think you will find what follows most helpful to understand the current spiritual fabric of our nation and stimulate your personal spiritual growth.

Read on, my friend.

Ralph Drollinger

## I. 1776: THE PURITAN PULPIT SHAPES AMERICAN CULTURE

Postmillennialism was the prevailing eschatological point of view of the American Church from the Puritan era all the way through to the Civil War. Postmillennialism is the Christian view that Christ will return at the end of the millennial period that is described in the book of Revelation in this case, after which time believers would have Christianized the world and prepared the way for Him. It was the dominant singular motivation for Evangelical involvement in society during this earliest period of American Church history. Postmillennialism was promoted through this period of the Great Awakening by such preachers as Jonathan Edwards.

In this context, the
Church was largely
motivated by a prophetic
determinism as it
pertained to societal
change; accordingly,
the Postmillennialdriven Church directly
attached itself to culture
and politics.

Such involvement was essential to ushering in the Kingdom. This is only logical in that, per the tenets of Post-millennialism, Christ will only return when believers have prepared the way by Christianizing all the nations of the world. In Postmillennial thought, Christianizing the world is what be-

lievers must achieve in order to precipitate Christ's Second Coming. To illustrate the tangential fervor of this American Postmillennial belief in early America, Church historian George Marsden summarizes what was widely believed at that time:

America has a special place in God's plans and will be the center for the great spiritual and moral reform that will lead to the golden age or 'millennium' of Christian civilization. Moral reform accordingly is crucial for hastening this spiritual millennium.<sup>1</sup>

The Puritans believed that Christ's Kingdom will grow out of the spiritual and moral progress gained by and through the believer's efforts at reforming politics and culture in the present age. That belief is held today by Postmillennialists who are also known as Dominion Theologians or Theonomists or Christian Reconstructionists and also by the latest media title, "Christian Nationalism." (See my Bible study at capmin. org, "Better Understanding the Fallacy of Christian Nationalism.") But importantly, notice that reform is not necessarily equated with soul winning, i.e., the simple formula and result of Luke, chapter 3, evangelism. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, a leading Postmillennialist who stated, "The kingdom of God is not a kingdom lying in another world beyond the skies but established here and now," illustrates further the summation of this belief.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, missionary progress was measured during the Puritan period not only in terms of evangelistic crusades, revival, and church planting, but in terms of cultural advancement. The abolition of slavery and alcohol as well as compounding technological achievement were as much measurements of the Christianization of America as they were of cultural success.

The point is that before Theological Modernism intruded into the Church after the Civil War, (the next epoch we will examine) most Christians actively engaged in the culture and in politics to prepare the world for Christ's second coming. This thinking characterized Postmillennialism and was the singular prevailing theological thought that motivated, wedded, and justified the Church's emphasis and direct involvement in the politics and culture of the country. Whether this is a model that today's Evangelical Church should employ for similar success depends upon a careful exegetical examination to determine whether Postmillennialism eschatology is scriptural.

In fact, Postmillennialism is not exegetically popular today; it has been roundly discounted by leading conservative Evangelical theologians. In the late 20th and now 21st century the dominant eschatology in the American Church is Premillennialism. In vast contrast to Postmillennialism, this predominant eschatological camp believes that Christ's Second Coming will occur at the start of the millennial period in order to save the world from its own demise and tragedy. Most of the leading national Evangelical expository preachers that you hear on the radio today are Premillennialists. This argument is bib-





Continued from page 2

dynamic and captivating teaching. As one participant said, "The men were drinking from a fire hose!" Brian and the rest of the CapMin team were deeply impressed with the caliber of the men in attendance. Steve Flandorp dug into sharing on Discipleship and the Essentials of Communication segments of the training.



Pastor Jude Fred shared his appreciation for the exceptional quality of the training materials: "One of the strongest takeaways for me was the recognition of the 'missing mandate'—the absence of God's Word in governance and decision-making structures. The conference helped me realize that political systems are not beyond God's reach but are, in fact, a vital mission field where His truth must be firmly established. The training was both insightful and revelatory, giving me an eye-opening perspective on the importance of engaging political leaders with the Word of God."

The training conference left a deep impact on Pastor Tagbino Saa Élie of Guinea: "The love, motivation, and quality of the

Continued next page

lically defensible but arguing for this viewpoint herein is beyond the scope of this study.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly,

Postmillennialism is in no position to be the tour de force that it once was so as to be a leading impetus and motivation for cultural change today.

From an interpretive/exegetical standpoint requiring biblical accuracy, that is a good thing because there is no Scripture to support the idea that Christ's Second Coming depends on the Church's "Christianizing" culture beforehand. Postmillennialism, also known as "prophetic determinism," is a convenient, pragmatic motivational way to engage believers in culture, but it is woefully lacking in terms of exegetical/biblical underpinnings.

In other words, any basis for the Church's social involvement must depend upon it being biblically substantiated. (A theological discussion pertaining to the strengths and weaknesses of Postmillennialism warrants its own Bible study at another time.) To be clear, if the premise of Postmillennialism is built on faulty eschatology—and by the way, it was rejected by the American Church by the conclusion of WWII—then it stands to reason that what motivated Puritan cultural involvement is non-sustainable and incapable of being the vehicle to involve the Church in politics and culture today.

To summarize this first epoch of American Church history as it pertains to the preeminence of saving faith to societal change (the emphasis of Luke, chapter 3, Ephesians 2 and 5, and the four parallel passages listed in the endnotes in Part 1), the stimulus and formula that served to engage the early American Church in a mission to change society was motivated by Postmillennial eschatology more than simple evangelism.

The Puritan motivation to change culture was based on a very pragmatic, but exegetically faulty eschatology more than the simple evangelism formula contained in this week's passage of Luke, chapter 3.

It follows that for the Church today to be motivated in ways similar, it would have to re-adopt a faulty eschatology that it already rejected.<sup>4</sup>

### II. 1877: THE ENCROACHMENT OF THEOLOGICAL LIBERALISM

The period in American Church history that immediately followed Puritanism was the rise of Modernism, or better, Theological Liberalism. This changing of the guard was a dominant (but not entire) metamorphosis that occurred over a period of time from approximately 1865 to 1915. It predominantly transformed Postmillennial-driven Puritanism into liberal Protestantism and ushered in what is commonly referred to as the



emergence of a Social Gospel form of "Christianity." During this period of American Church history, there can be no doubt as to the accelerating involvement of the American Church into the political and social arena as depicted by the synonymous name "the Social Gospel." The more pertinent question, however, is this: Was the Social Gospel form of Christianity a biblical Christianity as well—or for that matter, was it Christianity at all? J. Gresham Machaen said resoundingly, "No it is not." After his book Christianity and Liberalism was published in 1923, Machen became the chief spokesmen against what had become a thoroughly established liberal Protestantism. Machen (from whose primer I learned the Greek language) had been a New Testament professor at Princeton Theological Seminary before the liberal Presbyterians wrested control of the institution. Machen and his theologically conservative cohorts then left the school to found Westminster Seminary. Importantly and accurately, he insisted that liberal Protestantism was "another religion, since it proposed an entirely new view of Jesus and a scheme of salvation other than Christianity had ever taught before."5 Accordingly, Machen was accurate, and I summarize his thinking here:

Liberal Protestantism had escaped the confines of Christianity's irreducible minimums. The core heresy of Liberal Theology continues to be this: Jesus is not our Savior; He is merely a humble, humanitarian role model worthy of personal imitation—as if that is all that Jesus is about! Herein is a satanic stripping away, a denuding of the power of the cross of Christ. Theological liberals do not believe Christ is a savior, or that man's soul is in need of saving.

Modernism represented a not-so-subtle convergence of four concussive influences on Puritan Christianity. Briefly, Naturalism or Darwinism, which raised doubt as to the supernatural and scientific accuracy of Scripture, represents the first influence. Secondly,

Modernism contained within it the presupposition of human rationalism. That is to say that man's reasoning was deemed superior to God's revelation in Scripture.

Modernist Christianity
possessed no scriptural
basis for political or social
involvement because
it was not a legitimate
depiction of Christianity
to begin with!

Therefore, whatever in Scripture could not be understood through man's reasoning (which is finite and fallen, I might add) was viewed with suspicion. Thirdly, Historical Criticism was imported from the Tubingen School in Germany. This criticism had many forms with the intellectual intent of casting doubt on,

trainers and their teaching are beyond description. The Bible-based teaching on serving political leaders lifted the veil from my eyes and stirred me to take seriously the ministry of making disciples of Jesus Christ in the political arena. It has become a burning fire in my heart."

Ministry to political leaders is not always easy. In some African nations, hostility toward Christianity remains strong. Yet, Capitol Ministries is committed to placing men wherever God calls—not only in favorable circumstances, but also in difficult and challenging environments. This truth resonated deeply with Justice Marwisa, who reflected:

"Ministry to politicians is dangerous, and we must be prepared to suffer—but always with the Gospel in mind."

Africa is home to the largest and fastest-growing Christian population in the world, and more nations are establishing Capitol Ministries outposts in their capitals. With this in mind, Ralph Drollinger—who leads the U.S. Governors' Bible Study via Zoom—encouraged the African team to begin praying for the launch of an African Presidents' Weekly Zoom Bible Study.

Steve Flandorp welcomed the idea and confirmed that the team is excited to move forward to establish the infrastructure needed to make this vision a reality.



MINISTRY LEADER PROFILE

### Hilton Albert

State Ministry Leader
Saint Martin



Hilton Albert joins Capitol Ministries as State Ministry Leader of Saint Martin in the French West Indies. With faithful devotion to the Lord, his goal is clear, to share God's Word with every possible local and national political leader.

For more than 40 years, Pastor Albert has faithfully served the Body of Christ at his church. His flock has consisted of everyday men, women, and children. Now, he is expanding his ministry in hopes of making disciples of a less evangelized group of people—government officials.

The pastor's desire to partner with CapMin comes from his willingness to accept new challenges and his deep commitment to building up the Kingdom of God. He

Continued next page

among other things, the accuracy of the Synoptic Gospels, written from similar points of view by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It asked the question, could the believer trust what Matthew, Mark, and Luke wrote? It questioned whether the historical Jesus was different from the "Christian" Jesus that the Gospel writers had portrayed and embellished. In this sense, the Scriptures were tainted with theoretical plausible doubt through both Naturalism and Historical Criticism, which is the science of codifying the ancient manuscript evidence in the manufacture of the Bible.

With the addition of fourth influence of the encroaching Social Gospel as invented by Kant, Schleiermacher, and Beecher, "Christianity" had degenerated into nothing more than a moral code for people to live by. Liberal Protestantism was—and remains—a far cry from biblical Christianity. As an aside, this explains why so many who say they are "Christians" in the Capitol, but who in fact are embedded in the false "Christianity" of Theological Liberalism, reason differently on policy issues. As Machen quipped:

"They may wear the name 'Christian' on their shirtsleeve—but they are part of another religion!"

During this period of what we'll call, "American Church theological transformation" there was very little

defense of the true biblically based Christian faith by traditional theologians. The lionhearted rhetoric of William F. Warren, the president of Boston University, provides insight to the reality that conservative Christian leaders were pridefully asleep at the wheel. Notice this in his words:

Toward the middle of the last century came the fullness of God's time for generating a new Christian nationality. ... [Now] all these threatening surges of Antichristian thought have come to us from European seas; not one arose in our own hemisphere.

Conservative Christian leadership of that time either possessed few apologists of learning, or they made little of the threat until it was too late. They were reluctant to justifiably Be angry (Ephesians 4:26) in the sense of appropriate righteous indignation and mount an aggressive rejection of encroaching false doctrine. This attitude is descriptive of the great evangelist D.L. Moody. He was opposed to controversy itself. Whereas the New Testament writer Jude preempted his soteriological emphasis in order to earnestly defend the faith from apostasy (Jude 3), Moody, who possessed the platform and the influence to make such a defense in the American Church as a leading evangelist, had no part in such activities. He was known as a theological pragmatist and "often tested doctrines relative to their suitability for evangelism." He always sought peace and avoided controversy, seeking a "religion of the heart, versus a religion of the mind."8 He often



dialogued with theological liberals, giving them grace with the hope that they would eventually come around and embrace biblical views. But such was not the case, and in part, as a result, Modernism became well-rooted, the primary theology and cultural force in America at that time.

When all was said and done, the Social Gospel had eclipsed the Puritan pulpit as the major influence in American Culture.

The Church was now—for certain—engaged in societal change but was far from being the true Church of the New Testament. The above four concussive influences now had similar weight to if not greater prominence than singular, simple biblical exegesis. Now with the emergence of Theological Liberalism, the Bible was not the only source that informed Christian belief.

It, therefore, follows that the Modernists' justification for social action by citing Scripture is largely illegitimate. This is because they truncate the basic doctrines of biblical Christianity in order to achieve their Social Gospel ends. The historic doctrines of the faith were reworked and modified into a counterfeit foundation for social aims. Theological liberals are Scripture twisters. Make no mistake: Scripture does not justify the Social Gospel, as much of it is the replacement of Scripture. There-

fore, Scripture does not validate the political/social direction of Modernism because the Social Gospel is not a substantiated manifestation of biblical Christianity to begin with! More importantly, it is antithetical to it! Eisegetical means "to read one's opinions into." Modernism was founded upon a self-styled eisegetical epistemology which seeks to morph and twist Scripture in order to use it to support preconceived liberal social views. This contrasts greatly with the objective use of Scripture which is motivated by a desire to extract from it and apply its timeless, immutable precepts.

Accordingly, this period of Church history does not have a legitimate, extracted-from-Scripture, theological treatise to biblically justify its social expression. Therefore, Christian involvement in the political arena through this epoch of American Church history is found wanting of an accurate biblically and theological underpinning. The formula for cultural change as presented in Luke, chapter 3, was far from its agenda because Theological Liberalism was about social moralism, not personal evangelism. In fact,

The "church" of the Social Gospel changes Scripture with a goal of changing culture.

For example, nowhere in the New Testament is there a command for the

wants to reach political leaders with hopes of creating change not just in the hearts of public servants, but also in society as a whole. He shares CapMin's vision of grounding political leaders in Scripture.

"God's Word impacts leaders," the pastor explains. "I believe that in-depth Bible studies are relevant to building relationships and assisting leaders in decision making on a God-fearing basis."

Pastor Albert is married to Geraldine Albert. The two have an adult son and daughter, an adopted son, and four grandchildren.

Ultimately, he joyfully wants to build up the kingdom of God at home, the local church, across Saint Martin, and God willing, across the world.





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institution of the State to take care of the poor. In a careful study of Scripture relative to this politically divisive issue, the responsibility lies at the feet of the individual, the family, and the institution of the Church in that order of priority. (See "God's Institutions and Their Roles on Earth," April 7, 2024, at capmin.org) Social Gospellers would have you think otherwise. Based on Scripture, this is faulty theology.

What about the coming Fundamentalist period? Would it be characterized by the primacy of saving faith to create societal change? We'll look at that next in Part 3.

- 1. George M. Marsden, Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).
- 2. Arthur Cushman McGiffert quoted in G. Marsden, Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism 1870–1925 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 50.
- 3. For two of the best exegetical defenses of Premillennialism see: (1) Michael Vlach, *Premillennialism: Why There Must Be a Future Earthly Kingdom of Jesus* (Sun Valley, Calif.: Theological Studies Press, 2015) and (2) Matt Waymeyer, *Revelation 20 and the Millennial Debate* (Woodlands, Tex.; Kress Publications, 2004).
- 4. See Brian Stanley, editor, *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment* (Nashville: Abingdon, Routledge Press, 2015) In this excellent series that traces world missions, it is evident that postmillennial eschatology as exported by missionaries did not work as a compelling force for evangelization of nations that were not inherently European/Christian based already. Postmillennial eschatology was not a tour de force for evangelistic endeavor because the objective of creating a Christian nation in a nation that is inherently otherwise is unrealistic. In an Islamic- or Hindu-based country (examples among many), a postmillennial eschatological motivation would make no sense as a means of compelling individual conversions.
- 5. J. Gresham Machen, Christianity and Liberalism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1923), 156.
- 6. "What is today a matter of academic speculation begins tomorrow to move armies and pull down empires." (J. Gresham Machen, Christianity and Culture, Princeton Theological Review 11 [1913], 7). The Religious Right movement emphasized policy change to such a heightened degree that evangelism of souls in the Capitol community was eclipsed.
- 7. Stanley Gundry, Love Them in: The Life and Theology of D.L. Moody (Chicago: Northfield Publishers, 1999).
- 8. Ibid.

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