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Is the Kingdom Metaphor Broken? Is the reformational vision quixotic?: A Review Essay



by Chris Gousmett¹

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Introduction

In his article in *Pro Rege*, June 2021,² Donald Roth argues that the “kingdom” metaphor is tainted in so many ways that it should be discarded as the principal way of describing our human work in this age in obedience to God.³ He argues that Biblical illiteracy among Christians today and lack of familiarity with actual “kingdoms” allow this metaphor to be read in terms of contemporary political activities and systems, thus subverting the Biblical message through the ease with which it can be understood in terms of our own agendas and under the influence of the secular culture all around us (21).

He proposes instead that we should speak of “temple,” as this lacks the cultural baggage besetting the metaphor of “kingdom.”⁴ Nor can “temple” be so easily misunderstood as the term “kingdom,” since this metaphor “can be adopted by students in a sense more closely connected to its biblical intention, especially given their relative biblical illiteracy. As a result, ‘building the temple’ provides a superior way of phrasing our aspiration to Christian scholarship” (15).

I find this suggestion somewhat odd. If the metaphor of “kingdom” is liable to be misunderstood due to biblical illiteracy and the lack of familiarity with the biblical sense of “kingdom,” then surely “temple” suffers from the same risk of misunderstanding. How many students are suffi-

ciently familiar with the temple in Jerusalem and what went on there to make sense of this as a metaphor for guiding them in their discipleship? Surely the Biblical illiteracy complained of by Roth would mean that they need to be taught the meaning of both metaphors. One could argue that **any** and **every** metaphor drawn from Scripture is liable to be problematic due to this biblical illiteracy.⁵

While Roth suggests that changing from “kingdom” to “temple” seems a simple substitution, in fact it is not just a terminological switch within the same conceptual framework, but a change to a completely different conceptual framework altogether.⁶ It is not just a “superior way of phrasing our aspiration to Christian scholarship” (15) but a fundamental challenge to the foundations of the reformational project, leading to its being abandoned as futile and unachievable and, in fact, offensive to God.⁷

How does a simple change of metaphor from “kingdom” to “temple” have such a dire result? It is because the metaphor of “temple” as advocated by Roth carries with it extensive “cultural baggage,” which if not understood will inhibit, if not prohibit, the reformational vision.

Rather oddly, Roth says, “I will demonstrate that ‘temple’ speaks to Christian identity, calling, and the cosmic *telos* with a largely synonymous semantic import to ‘kingdom,’ a fact that then recommends it as an alternative metaphor” (15), one which mirrors the *kingdom* motif (16). But surely if these two metaphors have a “largely synonymous semantic import” so that they mirror each other, what gain is made in changing from “kingdom” to “temple”? Similarly, Roth concludes his article with the clarification that “I am not urging us to remove [kingdom] from our vocabulary. Rather, I am urging that we add ‘temple’ to the way we articulate our calling, and, further, that we give it a more central role” (21). But this is not possible given the meaning assigned to “temple” by Roth.

We should note that Jesus never spoke of the “temple” when teaching about what it means to be a disciple, while he frequently used the metaphor of the “kingdom.” Would a focus on “temple” lead to a neglect of the teachings of Jesus about the “kingdom”? It can be seen, from the argument made by Roth, that they are definitely **not** synonymous. It

would be necessary to ascertain the contexts within which such a substitution could take place. As I argue here, simply switching from “kingdom” to “temple” is not a change of terminology, but a change of perspective with wide-reaching ramifications. We need to examine those ramifications with care.

This is an extensive task, since the principal sources for Roth’s proposal are G. K. Beale’s book on the “Temple” in Scripture,⁸ and the “two kingdoms” approach fostered by VanDrunen.⁹ Beale’s work is not without its critics,¹⁰ as is also the case for “two kingdoms” theology.¹¹ Beale gives an extensive and detailed discussion of the nature of the temple in the O.T. and how this is related to the work and mission of the church, culminating in a specific vision of the eschaton. Either of those sources on its own would require an extensive essay to engage adequately, so here I can only focus on some of the pivotal claims, to see whether these suffice to bring Roth’s proposal into question.

What is meant by the temple?

Beale posits the view that the creation was formed in order for it to become a temple for God. He sees the Scriptures as relating “a movement from the Garden of Eden as a temple within Creation to the new heavens and earth, where the entire Creation is a temple.”¹² According to Beale [Roth, 15-16], the creation was established with the Garden of Eden as a temple within the creation.¹³

A core claim by Beale is that the biblical teaching about the creation, and the temple within it, is shaped by Babylonian and Egyptian themes (Roth, 15-16), principally that the creation was ordered from an earlier chaotic condition, and this ordering is completed by establishing a temple, within which is placed a priest-king to guard and keep it. The Creation account is a settling of cosmic order against the forces of chaos, which settling is completed by establishing an earthly temple—the garden of Eden. The temple practices of pagan societies provide the context for Israel’s interpretation of Genesis, although the pagans reflect a corrupted understanding of the true concept of the temple.

Roth then makes a rather startling claim, which is dependent on the acceptability of Beale’s interpretation of Scripture: “This familiarity with

[Ancient Near East] temple practices means that the original audience of Moses' book would **likely** have read the Creation account in Genesis in terms of "temple" (15, my emphasis). Roth calls this a "possibility" (15), drawing on the proposal that the tabernacle in the wilderness and the Jerusalem temples which followed it represent in their structure, ornamentation, and furnishings the cosmos as a whole. I am concerned that such a fundamental change in the interpretation of Scripture is supported by something that is only "likely." Beale frequently uses terms such as *probably*, *likely*, *may*

kingdoms. The cultural commonality among believers and unbelievers ordained in the Noahic covenant was suspended for Israel within the border of the Promised Land."¹⁶ But if they went outside the borders of the Promised Land, they were again engaged in the common kingdom in their dealings with others.¹⁷ Hence, when they were exiled to Babylon, they were again engaged in the "two kingdoms."¹⁸

To me this fracturing of the Biblical revelation destroys any possibility of a redemptive-historical interpretation, which forms the foundations of

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have been, *plausibly*, *perhaps*, *seems to*, *intimates*, *suggests* and *can be considered*. He comments, after a lengthy discussion using many such tentative terms, that "Therefore, the cumulative effect of these observations is that Israel's temple served as a little earthly model of God's temple in heaven that would eventually encompass the whole earth."¹⁴ Unfortunately, I remain unconvinced that so many tentative statements result in such a "cumulative effect." A chain, even an exegetical one, is only as strong as its weakest link. Multiple weak links do not make a stronger chain. An argument which has ramifications for our whole understanding of Christian discipleship needs more substantial argumentation.

The suggestion that the Scriptures in general, and Genesis 1 in particular, are shaped by pagan (Babylonian and Egyptian) concepts is untenable.¹⁵ In fact, the hermeneutical approach adopted by Roth, VanDrunen, and Beale is dubious. For instance, I was astounded to read, in VanDrunen's *Living in God's Two Kingdoms*, that the Biblical narrative of the period between Abraham's nomadic existence and the exile of the Jews to Babylon has apparently little to say to us about our lives here in this world. He writes, "For present purposes it is also crucial to note that Israel's experience under the law of Moses in the Promised Land of Canaan was not meant to exemplify life under the two

a reformational perspective. I would suggest that this interpretation is a consequence of imposing an extra-biblical framework on the teachings of Scripture, and it indicates to me that this aspect of the two-kingdoms approach to interpreting Scripture with respect to our everyday life in the world is seriously distorted, in that the part covering the life of Israel in Canaan prior to the exile is discarded in a semi-Marcionite manner.

What was Adam's role in the garden?

The focus of Roth's discussion, and that of VanDrunen (but less so for Beale, who barely mentions it except in terms of Adam's "priesthood") is what is termed the "cultural mandate." This is the mandate recorded in Genesis 1:26-28, by which humans, made as God's image, were to rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the animals on the land. The male and female were to reproduce and extend their dominion over all the earth through their numerous descendants. In Genesis 2:15 they were placed in the Garden of Eden with the charge "to work it and take care of it." In the reformational tradition, the "cultural mandate" is interpreted as the commission from God to all of humanity to take care of, explore, develop, and unfold the riches of the creation so as to demonstrate the glory of God and his wisdom, and to use all things wisely and in a stewardly fashion for the

benefit of other creatures, human and non-human. It is the motivation for human history to bring ever new features of the creation to light through human discovery and invention. Humans were to propagate and spread out across the earth and to carry out this commission everywhere they went.

As we know all too well, Adam and Eve disobeyed the command of God not to touch the fruit of a certain tree. As a result, they were cast out of the garden to live in a world which would yield thorns and thistles for their labour, and in which pain and suffering would trouble them and all their descendants until the day they died.

At this point, the reformational vision and that of Roth (and VanDrunen) diverge sharply. That is not to say there is unanimity of view up to this point; there are significant differences, as we shall see. But it is at this point that those differences come into the foreground.

The reformational vision holds that after being cast out of the garden, Adam and Eve and their descendants to the present day continue in their allotted task of being stewards of the world, exploring, inventing, and developing all the riches of creation. This is because that activity, the “cultural mandate,” is given with our creaturely nature and so continues on. However, it is now being done in a way which is contrary to the wisdom and commandments of God, and so human sin contaminates all that we do. The redemptive plan of God, however, is that those who are renewed in Christ are changed from the heart outwards to the whole of life, so that all our work is likewise being renewed and redeemed by grace, to contribute to the breaking in of God’s kingdom in the here and now. Note the important point: our work is **being redeemed by grace**. It is not something we can do; it is something done for us by God. He is the only Redeemer.¹⁹ But his redemption includes “all things,” including the works of our hands and minds, and is at work now. That redemption will not be complete until we awake renewed in the resurrection and enter into the eternal kingdom on the new earth. But that redemption is **real**, since what we actually do is changed through the grace of God working in and through us. Christians, then, do the same things non-Christians do, but through the grace of God new life comes through

our efforts, in spite of our continued sinfulness, while for non-Christians, the good that they do is possible only due to the mercy of God to his hurting creation, who does not abandon us to the full consequences of our disobedience.

Roth’s view, in contrast, draws on Beale’s work and the perspective of the *two kingdoms*. Here we encounter an important contradiction. Beale holds that the cultural mandate given to Adam in Eden was forfeited by his sin and was subsequently repeatedly offered to each of the patriarchs and then Israel, until it was finally fulfilled by Christ as God intended it to be. It is no longer an imperative for human beings. VanDrunen, on the other hand, holds that once the mandate was forfeited by Adam, it was only taken up by Christ as the Second Adam. This fundamental difference means that the *two kingdoms* view espoused by VanDrunen is incompatible with the views of Beale.

Beale says that the task of Adam was to serve as a priest-king in Eden, charged with cultivating and guarding it.²⁰ Drawing on Mesopotamian and Egyptian parallels, Beale sees this temple as having a priest placed in charge, namely Adam, whose job it was to keep and guard the temple, a charge which is linguistically related to the charge given to the Levites to protect the tabernacle,²¹ to keep out that which is unholy and unclean.²² Adam’s task was to work to extend the boundaries of the garden through the whole earth, until at the eschaton the entire creation has become a temple. Both Eden and the New Jerusalem are to be viewed as temples. The eschatological realisation of God’s plan is for the cosmos to become a temple “thoroughly suffused by the presence of God.”²³ But as a result of Adam’s failure, he became unclean himself and was expelled from the garden.

In the Egyptian and Mesopotamian cosmologies, and in particular the latter, cosmic warfare between various gods precedes the creation; in fact, the creation is formed from the splitting of the carcass of the losing party, Tiamat.²⁴ There are, therefore, hostile forces within the creation against which perpetual vigilance is required. Is this, then, the basis for Beale’s view that Adam’s charge was to “guard and keep” the garden as a priest-king, protecting it from unclean things?

Some who interpret the Garden of Eden in

terms of a temple, and humans as priests serving in the temple, are influenced by the source-critical approach to Scripture, in which Genesis 1 (and other passages) is ascribed to P, the “priestly” writer, while other parts of Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch come from J, E, and D.²⁵ This would also explain how the Mesopotamian influence entered into these Scriptures: they were written by “priestly” writers, reflecting on Israel’s history during (or after) their Babylonian exile. Thus, the interests of a “priestly” author might explain the focus on temple and priesthood and cult. If this

fill the earth with even more worshippers,”²⁹ hence the view that the purpose of the Garden of Eden was to be a temple served by priests.

Thus, Roth’s claim, following VanDrunen, is that since they had been expelled from the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve forfeited the “cultural mandate,” which had as its purpose the keeping and guarding of the Garden Temple of God. Since they had failed to keep out that which was unclean (the serpent), they were cast out, and the mandate was revoked until it was fulfilled by Christ.³⁰ (Beale suggests that the mandate was repeatedly offered to

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view is indeed rooted (even if only unknowingly) in this thoroughly liberal method of interpretation, then it is imperative that this is exposed as a trojan horse, rooted in an understanding of Scripture that is anything but Reformed, or reformational.

The Scriptures do not speak of a chaos which was combatted by God to achieve an ordered creation. Genesis 1:2 is often read in that way, but the text does not support it. A detailed examination is not possible here; suffice it to say that the earth and its enveloping waters were themselves created by God as the beginning of his work.²⁶ God does not create chaos; thus, the assumption must be that the earth and its waters were from the outset ordered by God, as the initial step towards a completed creation.²⁷ Nor does God have any need to overcome hostile or recalcitrant forces arrayed against him; he is sovereign and besides him there is nothing that exists which he has not made.²⁸

There is also no place in Beale’s work for anything remotely resembling a “cultural mandate,” a charge to Adam and Eve to care for the creation and to develop, unfold, and disclose the possibilities within it so as to show forth the glory of God. What, then, is the human task? It would seem that the sole focus is worship: “Our mission is to be used in God’s hand to bring about more worshippers in the image of God who might multiply and

others until finally fulfilled by Christ.)

Is the interpretation of “guarding” an assumption fostered by the idea that Adam was a priest whose job it was to keep out the unclean, that is, Satan? But would we not then be entitled to say that the fall happened not when Adam and Eve ate the fruit, but prior to that in Genesis 3:1, when the serpent entered the garden and spoke to Eve, sowing doubt in her mind? So having failed to “guard” the garden by preventing the entrance of the serpent, Adam had already failed his mandate.³¹ But no blame is attached to Adam and Eve for allowing the serpent into the garden: their fault is surely that they ate from the tree which had been prohibited to them (beguiled by the serpent, but their fault lay in eating what was forbidden).

Beale sees the cherubim who guard the garden following the fall into sin as exercising a priestly role, which is taken away from Adam: the “keeping” part of the mandate originally given to Adam was transferred to the cherubim (Genesis 3:24),³² a view I do not find in Scripture. Note that Eve is not spoken of as sharing this priestly role – that would be difficult to reconcile with the male priesthood, which was to come in the future and is another reason why this interpretation of Adam as a priest is implausible. Both were created as God’s image and share the same commission concerning

the garden. However, there is nothing in Genesis 3 to suggest that this intrusion of Satan is the problem: the prohibition was against eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That was the prohibition that was broken. While we can argue that “guarding” the garden may well be a legitimate translation, we need to ask, “guard it against what?” Is this not an assumption brought into the text from the comparison between Adam’s task and that of the priests, keeping out that which is “unclean,” and dependent on the view that the garden is a “temple,” which Adam must protect as a “priest”? The term translated as “guard” is used in a pastoral context as much as in temple contexts, and the pastoral sense is a closer connection with the explicit text of Genesis, which speaks of the requirement to care for animals, while the “temple” connection is an argument from alleged similarities with other cultures. Why is it priestly work, when we could interpret these terms just as well with reference to Adam’s “horticultural” task?³³

We should also note that there is nothing in Genesis which indicates that the garden was somehow demarcated from the rest of the country around it. There was no fence, no wall, no boundary. After Adam and Eve were expelled, there was a guard placed, cherubim with flaming swords, on the East side to “guard the way to the tree of life” (Genesis 3:24). They were not placed there to guard access to the garden as a whole.³⁴ Adam and Eve were not permitted to remain in it or presumably to return to it (this is unstated in Genesis), but the cherubim had a more limited task. It is a stretch to see their role as “priestly.” This would be the only place in Scripture where angels exercised a priestly task – a task which is given to humans alone, and it is therefore improbable.³⁵

The kingship of Christ

Roth complains that the metaphor of “kingdom” revolves around human beings and their activities. The “temple” metaphor, on the other hand, he sees as intrinsically focused on God, as a temple is always built in honour of a deity. Hence it calls to mind the priesthood of all believers, worship, and the divine presence. Nor does it lead to speculative questions about continuity between this age and the age to come, since the continuity is found in

worship rather than in cultural artefacts (17). He also claims that the kingdom of heaven is breaking into this world, rather than the reformational view in which, so he claims, the cultural artefacts of this world are seen to break out into the next age through a process of progressive change. I find myself mystified by this claim, since the reformational perspective has always stressed the coming of the kingdom of God breaking into this world to accomplish God’s purposes at the eschaton. We are not called to build the kingdom through our cultural artefacts. But the cultural artefacts we are called to create here and now should reflect the fact that Christ is **already** king and has called us to whole-hearted obedience in all that we do. Our work here and now should be shaped by the reality of Christ’s present rule, even though that rule is not yet fully accomplished or acknowledged since many resist their rightful king and continue the cry, “We have no king but Caesar!” (John 19:15).

The fact that Christ is already king is acknowledged in the “two kingdoms” interpretation, although his kingly rule as Redeemer is limited to the church, while he rules the “common kingdom” as Creator. I reject this distinction, but regardless of that, it is undeniable that the resurrected and exalted Christ rules **now** as king over all creation, including the church. To suggest otherwise is to require exceedingly strained interpretations of passages such as Philippians 2:6-11, Hebrews 1:1-3 and Colossians 1:15-20, especially the latter since here the Creator is called “the head of the body, the church!” The distinction between Christ’s rule as creator over the common kingdom and his rule as redeemer over the church risks being more than a distinction of offices. It may become a separation of the persons of the Eternal Son and the Incarnate Christ—the dyophysite doctrine (sometimes inaccurately called Nestorianism). The reformational view simply seeks to teach that in our daily lives all that we do is subject to Christ the King, who is creator **and** redeemer, who rules over all things as the Creator, who redeemed what he has made. Not only that, Christ also serves in heaven as high priest (Hebrews 5-7), a task which is not separated from his kingship although it is distinct from it.³⁶

The current form of the cultural mandate

As Roth tells it, Adam disobeyed and was expelled from the garden, and God then initiated a plan to develop a new priestly people. But Israel also failed at its task, and only Christ was obedient to the calling given to him. He completely fulfilled the commission given to Adam, although it is not clear what exactly this commission entailed. Continuity for our human task then is not found in cultural artefacts, but in the continuity of worship, from this present age and on into the eschaton (17). The glory of God is not shown in what we do, but in the attitude of our hearts and the way in

the deficit. VanDrunen claims that this is works-righteousness and is to be eschewed. He says, “God does not call [Christians] to engage in cultural labors so as to earn their place in the world-to-come.”⁴⁰ He explains,

We are not little Adams. Instead, God gives us a share in the world-to-come as a gift of free grace in Christ and then calls us to live obediently in this world as a grateful response. Our cultural activities do not in any sense usher in the new creation. The new creation has been earned and attained once and for all by Christ, the last Adam. Cultural activity remains important for Christians but it will come to an abrupt end

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which we declare and witness to his glory.³⁷ Thus, the worship of the gathered church on Sundays becomes the centre and orienting experience of Christian life. This is in contrast to his claim that the reformational vision downplays the importance of the church.

The problem Roth sees in a reformational perspective shaped by “kingdom” is that it is too easy for us to see continuity between what we make and do here and now, and that which is taken up into the eschatological kingdom of God at the return of Christ. Instead, he emphasises the radical discontinuity between our current activities and that which we will be engaged in following the inauguration of the eschaton (21).

The cultural mandate is instead completely fulfilled in Christ.³⁸ In fact, according to David VanDrunen, on whom Roth draws, to seek to work out this mandate is a collapse back into works-righteousness, seeking to add our human efforts to the achievements of Christ in winning redemption.³⁹ This view is based on the claim that Christ fulfilled the mandate given to Adam and that there is nothing else which Christians need to do. Any efforts we make in this regard implies that Christ's work is incomplete, or insufficient, and that we must engage in “kingdom” activities in order to make up

along with this present world as a whole, when Christ returns and cataclysmically ushers in the new heaven and new earth.⁴¹

VanDrunen asserts that Adam and Eve were given the task of being fruitful, multiplying, and exercising dominion over the earth, and that faithful obedience to this task would enable them to enter the “new heaven and new earth,” which surpasses even the world as it was before Adam and Eve sinned. He writes, “By a divine covenant, Adam's righteous cultural labors would have earned him a share in the eschatological world-to-come.”⁴² Because of their sin, Christ was sent to deal with sin and “took upon himself the responsibility of fulfilling Adam's original task.” Christ's perfect obedience led to his being exalted to God's right hand, and he has thus “attained the original goal held out for Adam: a glorified life ruling the world-to-come.” Christians no longer need to carry out Adam's commission—they already possess eternal life and an everlasting inheritance, since Christ has carried out that commission on our behalf.⁴³

This gets to the heart of the issue: what should we as Christians be doing here and now? For instance, how would we interpret, on this approach, John 14:12, which reads, “Anyone who has faith

in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father”? Is this not the reverse of what Roth and VanDrunen are arguing, which would have to be something like: “None of these works I have been doing will be done by you, since I have done them all”?

The suggestion that the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:26-28 was revoked or suspended for Adam after his sin and then fulfilled in Christ, so that we no longer have to do anything to fulfil it (since that would be works righteousness, adding to what Christ has achieved), needs much greater exegetical support than the rather speculative framework presented by Roth (drawing from VanDrunen).⁴⁴

For VanDrunen, the transformationalists are burdened by having to attempt too much, while transformationalists would see VanDrunen as aspiring to too little. He thinks that we need not, indeed **must not**, attempt to fulfil that mandate. But this view, that cultural activity was to earn favour with God, is based on his understanding of the mandate given to Adam, which was completed by Christ, and therefore there is nothing of that mandate for us to do. His claim must be substantiated by a demonstration that what Christ achieved in his redeeming work was that which Adam was mandated to do, but in which he failed.

Continuity and discontinuity

A central argument for Roth and VanDrunen is that reformationals see too much continuity between the present age and the age to come. That is, they presume that their current activities will form part of the eschatological Kingdom of God.

Roth suggests that the reformational tradition has “an especially marked issue” with over-emphasising human agency, “particularly in an emphasis on continuity that is dependent on the correctness of our current valuations of goodness” (13). This is claimed to be evident in Wolters’ metaphor of the kingdom of God having “established a beachhead” from which to progress further in seeing the kingdom realised in our midst.⁴⁵ The danger in this approach, Roth suggests, is that this “places quite a bit of the task of reconciling all things to Christ into our hands on political terms,” namely pressing

the claims of Christ further from this beachhead. The error lies, Roth suggests, in the “continuity” seen between this present age and the age to come, in which work for the kingdom done now is carried into the eschatological age. Roth suggests that it is dispositions and habits which make up our identity and which are continued in the eschaton, but he rejects the idea that the things themselves which we make will also be present there, contrary to N. T. Wright, A. A. Hoekema, Richard Mouw, and Andy Crouch, who suggest this (13-14). Note though that Roth misrepresents Mouw here, suggesting that Mouw thinks things such as racist posters and ballistic missiles will be in the New Jerusalem. But Mouw actually stresses transformation repeatedly, when he says,

Not all the items of pagan culture will be gathered **as is** into the Holy City. A pagan ship will be **changed** into a redeemed ship – but it will still be a ship. But other things will have to have their identities, their basic functions, **transformed**: some of them will be **changed almost beyond recognition**. Swords will **become** ploughshares. Spears will be **changed** into pruning hooks. Racist posters will **become** aesthetic objects that will enhance the beauty of the city. Perhaps missiles will **become** play areas for children. Once again, the emphasis here is on **transformation**, not destruction [my emphasis].⁴⁶

Suggesting that Mouw sees “racist posters and ballistic missiles” in the New Jerusalem but neglecting his stress on **transformation** is bearing false witness. Given the frequency with which Mouw stresses both continuity and transformation here and throughout his book, it is hard to know how this could have been missed.⁴⁷

Similarly, there are problems with Roth’s reading of Hoekema, problems which should have been evident from the very quote from Hoekema he uses [13], which says things of value in this present life “will somehow, in some way, be retained and enriched in the life to come.” This also requires transformation and not just continuity. But even more importantly, Hoekema goes on to say immediately after this comment, “This implies that there will be continuity as well as discontinuity between the present life and the life to come.”⁴⁸ He then suggests ways in which that discontinuity is mani-

fested, including the perfection and glorification of human beings, and explains that we cannot now imagine what the future will be like.⁴⁹ Roth has not read this material carefully.

Roth sees these problems arising from merger of contemporary culture with Christian life and witness, which results in “devaluing corporate worship and professing a distinctiveness in the Christian perspective which we often struggle to articulate” (14). The consequence is that “If what we make at our day jobs will endure, while Sunday services are passing away, which one should a Christian be pri-

approach, indicating that technology is part of the “common kingdom” and, in itself, does not show the glory of God – but Christians can testify concerning it to the glory of God.

What about Calvin Seerveld’s injunction that the task of Christian cultural work is to produce serviceable goods and good services? Would not a Christian approach to technology be demonstrated in building a smart phone without planned obsolescence within a few years, forcing a replacement? Or endless new models with dubious improvements over previous ones? Should it not be built

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oritising?” (14).⁵⁰ In addition, the distinctiveness of a “Christian perspective” is frequently incoherent and over-emphasises the importance of what we do in daily life. Again, Roth suggests that the errors of this approach are exaggerated because of the biblical illiteracy of American Christians. He again suggests using “temple” rather than “kingdom,” which he says is plagued with “cultural complications” (15).

Roth makes this somewhat confusing claim: “That is, the kingdom doesn’t break in when we build a smart phone so well that it testifies to the glory of God; instead, it breaks in when we testify to the fact that technology always has” (17). One might refer to Roth’s (mistaken) criticism of Mouw’s suggestion that ballistic missiles might find a place in the new earth and wonder what it might mean to say that technology always has testified to the glory of God. Does that include present-day operative nuclear missiles?

What Roth says about the smart phone seems to present the idea that technology *per se*, whether developed and implemented by Christians or non-Christians, testifies to the glory of God, presumably by showing how the resources within the creation enable development of technology by human skill given by God. This is the case whether it is a Christian or a non-Christian who is doing this. Here we see the influence of the “two kingdoms”

with sustainable use of precious resources like lithium, extracted without destruction of the landscape and the social and economic lives of those toiling to extract it? Would not a Christian approach lead to smart phones with apps that do not lead to screen addiction and algorithms that do not promote extremist content, anti-social behaviour, and a propensity to engage with the world through the screen rather than directly? Roth might argue that this is possible within the “common kingdom,” but the point is that the “common kingdom,” namely those who do not follow Christ as sovereign, produced the phones with precisely those problems. A Christian approach to technology will go much deeper than simply saying “smart phones point to the glory of God.”⁵¹ But this “pointing” is all that Roth seems to think necessary.

Roth also suggests that a focus on the “kingdom” and how that works out in daily life detracts from corporate worship as part of the church on Sundays. The “temple” metaphor sees the whole earth as becoming the temple of God and makes corporate worship the central focus of the week, which then integrates all that we do during the week with our worship. But that integration seems to be restricted again to “testifying” about God while doing our common kingdom work. This is because worship is where “the God that we are to point to is revealed to us in clearer form” (18). Thus,

we can testify more adequately to God, having learned more of him in worship. I would not deny that this is the case, but it is singularly myopic, in that what we are to learn of God in our worship is to be worked out in our lives during the week in ways which are distinctive from those around us who do not acknowledge God. Also, what we learn of God and his ways during the week, through exploring and engaging with his creation, is brought to our worship to give depth to our thanksgiving—focusing this on thankfulness for our everyday experience of God’s goodness. Roth’s view seems to be that the task of the Christian is to bring more people into the church services on Sunday, rather than taking the vision of a newness of life out from our worship to those who need to hear it, and to demonstrate what this means for them in their lives as well.

An alternative view of the Temple

Rather than saying that the garden of Eden, the original temple, has been expanded to make the whole earth a temple in which God can dwell, the Scriptures say clearly that in the eschaton, it is God himself and the Lamb who are the temple (Revelation 21:22). This is the complete opposite of what Beale and Roth are claiming. The Scriptures see God as the temple within creation, rather than seeing God as being within the creation, which is the temple. I would suggest that there was never any prior plan for a temple on earth; God came close to human beings in the ordinary context of the garden, where God walked and talked with Adam and Eve (Genesis 2-3). The temple was a post-fall concession to human sinfulness, providing a place where fellowship with God could be maintained, through the repeated offerings of the sacrificial system, which covered over sin until this could be dealt with permanently through Christ’s atoning death.⁵² Thus, in the eschaton, no temple is needed since God and the Lamb are with us forever without the barrier of sin (Revelation 21:3).⁵³ Beale’s argument, therefore, cannot be sustained.

It is clear from Scripture that God is not seeking a temple in which he can dwell. Solomon suggested that such an idea is nonsense: “But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you” (1 Kings 8:27). Solomon

throughout his prayer refers to prayer “towards this place” (the temple) and urges God then to “hear from heaven, your dwelling place” (1 Kings 8:23-53). God does not dwell in a temple, not even the one in Jerusalem consecrated by Solomon. Rather, the temple is a place where God places his “name” and a place towards which people were to pray, but God is not in the temple hearing them; he is said to “hear from heaven.” Paul stressed that God, who created heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by humans (Acts 17:24). Psalm 114 says that God already has a temple in heaven. As Stephen cited Amos, “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord” (Acts 7:49, citing Amos 5:25).

God then is not wanting us (or Adam, or Christ) to turn the world into a temple as a place that is suitable for Him as a place to live, since He needs no dwelling place, but wants to turn the world into a place where we can live and is fit for him to manifest his presence among us. Hence in Revelation 21 it is said, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them, and be their God” (Revelation 21:3). When the world has been made fit for us to live in (through its renewal and cleansing from every taint of sin), then God will be present with us here, and He himself will serve as the temple.

Note also that the temple was a place of worship for Israel: foreigners were excluded from all but the outermost court. Richard Mouw comments that in the new Jerusalem, “all traces of a Hebrew-centered religion are erased.”⁵⁴ Hence, there could not be a temple in the city since this would perpetuate Israelite particularity. Instead, God himself will be accessible to all (Isaiah 56:3-8).⁵⁵

Are cultural works carried into the eschaton?

VanDrunen and Roth object to the idea that our cultural works are carried forward into the eschaton. They claim that to anticipate this is to believe in “works righteousness” since it adds to the completed work of Christ. But we need to think about this issue in more depth.

When there is talk of cultural works being carried into the eschaton, what exactly is in mind?

Some might think that the eschaton would be lessened if we did not have such magnificent products of human culture as Michelangelo's *David*, Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's oratorios, Rembrandt's paintings, Notre Dame cathedral in Paris, or the works of other cultures such as the Sphinx of Egypt and the great Pyramids, the Acropolis of Athens, Machu Picchu in Peru, the Moai statues on Easter Island, and so on. But these relate to supreme levels of cultural achievement. The vast bulk of humanity has never produced anything remotely like these, although they may have contributed their labour.

where Jesus welcomes those on his right, saying "I was hungry, I was thirsty, I was a stranger..., naked..., sick..., in prison" and "**you** fed me, **you** gave me something to drink, **you** gave me clothes..., looked after me..., visited me." This is a plural **you**, not singular. Jesus is not referring to the actions of each person in isolation but is saying "**you** [plural]" did this! Someone may have handed him food, but someone else cooked the food, another had reaped the harvest or slaughtered the sheep to provide the food or carried the water from the well to where the cup of water could be offered to the thirsty. The

Rather than saying that the garden of Eden, the original temple, has been expanded to make the whole earth a temple in which God can dwell, the Scriptures say clearly that in the eschaton, it is God himself and the Lamb who are the temple (Revelation 21:22).

The stones comprising the pyramids, the marble carved by Michelangelo, the slates on the roof of a cathedral, and many other aspects of these cultural products did not emerge out of the ground: they were hacked out, cut, split, transported many miles, and laboriously set into place in accordance with a freely developed human design.

But setting aside contributing to such projects as these, what about our ordinary lives and those of millions like us? What of the cooks who prepared meals each day? Their efforts lasted only hours or days, but without them, the other cultural products would not have been produced. Who cooked meals to sustain Michelangelo during his sculpting labours? What of the ones who dusted and swept and polished to keep cathedrals pristine? Are their labours wasted? They do not produce something that can be carried forward into the eschaton, but without them, the faithfulness of others in doing their tasks would not have been possible. We can see that everyone contributes in some way to the achievements of human civilisation. If we do not take that approach, then we are confined to a barren and insular individualism, which sees only the direct results of each person's labours to be important. See the parable of the sheep and the goats,

reward is not just for the one who handed it to him, but for all those who contributed in whatever way: "Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's **reward**, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's **reward**" (Matthew 10:41). And the ones being commended explicitly acknowledge this when they respond, "Lord, when did **we** see you hungry..., thirsty...? When did **we** see you a stranger... naked...? When did **we** see you sick or in prison?" The response is not that of individuals, but of the community that together undertook these acts of mercy (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

Similarly, he said "Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me" (Matthew 10:40). Thus, we do not need to articulate our faith commitment in carrying out our tasks and in caring for the needy. We do not need to say, "In feeding you we are ministering to Christ." We just need to do it (cf. Matthew 6:3-4, "But when you give to the needy do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.") and leave it to Christ to take note for his commendation at the judgement.

But what of 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, where Paul speaks of the different materials used by us in our work here and now? The (metaphorical) gold, silver, and precious stones will survive the fire of judgement, while the wood, hay, and straw will be burned up. Does that not mean that the items made of precious materials pass into the eschaton? I think not, since what is revealed in that fire is the quality of the work done, and the resulting reward which is received is based on that quality. If what someone has built survives the fire of judgement, he or she will receive a reward. It does not mean that what survives the fire **is** the reward, or that an item of gold, silver, or jewels is itself to be carried into the eschaton. This is a metaphor for the quality of work, not the work itself.

I suggest that it is not the cultural works themselves that are carried into the eschaton, but our training, our discipling, our faithfulness in what we do here, which shapes who we are, and which will receive its appropriate reward in the age to come. We could perhaps take a lesson on this from the parable of the stewards (Matthew 25:14-30), who are told “Well done, good and faithful steward; you have been faithful in few things, I will put you in charge of many things.” In Luke, we are told they would be placed in charge of a number of cities (Luke 19:17, 19). Their reward for faithfulness in this age is authority and honour in the age to come. Is this not the case with **all** our human work? We should not complain that we are not a Michelangelo, a Handel, a Bach, or try to be like them. We have our own tasks and responsibilities to fulfil, and we will be rewarded for how faithfully we carry them out. What tasks and responsibilities we are allocated in the age to come are unknown. But we have the promise of Revelation 14:13, which teaches us that God’s faithful will have their works follow them (See also Hebrews 4:9-11.). Is this not the reverse of what Roth, following VanDrunen, suggests – namely that we rest now and work later in the new earth? Our focus should be on faithfulness here and now, not on what we may or may not receive as a reward.

The implications of this view for scholarship

Roth claims that the essence of his search for an alternative metaphor was to find a better ap-

proach to what is meant by “faithful scholarship,” or in his terms, to “integrate faith and learning” in a more coherent manner. For this, he draws on the views of Abraham Kuyper, but he interprets these views through a “temple” metaphor and in terms of the “two kingdoms” approach. While Kuyper is revered as an innovative and stimulating thinker and activist, Christian scholarship has moved on since his day and has improved on, enhanced, and in some cases discarded or radically corrected the views which Kuyper expressed.⁵⁶

Unfortunately, Roth draws on some of the more questionable concepts espoused by Kuyper. He recounts,

Kuyper begins from the foundational assumption that the entire created order proceeds from God’s thoughts. These thoughts are embedded into Creation like veins of precious metal shot through the earth. In creating mankind with the capacity of understanding, Kuyper therefore sees a calling for human knowledge (science) to pursue knowledge of the Creator by unearthing these thoughts. (19)⁵⁷

This conception of the task of science seems more indebted to Stoicism than to Scripture.⁵⁸ The idea that God’s thoughts are embedded in creation for us to unearth finds no support in a reformational perspective but is a speculative concept. Rather, God established the creation under a law-order, which governs the creation in every way. Our investigation of the creation in the light of Scripture, which alone discloses to us the existence of the law-order God has established, enables us to discern the orderliness of the creation through our empirical experience of it, which we can then articulate in humanly shaped symbolic forms (e.g., texts, formulae, diagrams), which enable us to communicate that understanding to others. We do not, then, unearth God’s thoughts embedded in creation, an impious concept, which does disrespect to God’s transcendence and sovereignty, distinct from his creation and forever inaccessible to us. All that we know of God’s thoughts is disclosed to us in Scripture. It is in the light of Scripture that we learn of and are taught how to discern the law-ordered nature of all things visible and invisible. Anything more is speculative.

The idea of a “common kingdom” cannot ac-

cept a reformational approach, since the former presupposes the idea of natural law, understood as something rational in nature, which is embedded in creation in such a way that it is accessible to human rational thought. Hence, it is accessible to believers and unbelievers alike, provided they use clear and logical thinking. It supposedly forms part of God's common grace, but it can be truly understood only through special grace, through Revelation.⁵⁹ Roth cites Bavinck's view that general revelation is clarified and directed towards its proper object via special revelation (19). A reformational

that a seminary is not a church? The justification offered by VanDrunen is strained beyond the limits of credibility.⁶⁰ The idea of a Christian university such as that established by Kuyper, or that of Dordt University itself, loses all justification for its existence on the basis of the two-kingdoms approach. Far from providing a "profound mandate" for a Christian university (19), it sows the seeds of its own destruction.

Roth then discusses what "integration of faith and learning" might look like in a Christian university, despite the shaky foundations in his thought

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view does not understand natural law in this way.

Roth picks up Kuyper's idea that science involves a communal approach, in which many different people working on a wide variety of areas together contribute to "building a temple of science" (18), but his approach seems to treat the providence of God, which brings all these contributions together, as something like Adam Smith's "invisible hand" guiding a free market. How this is to be understood needs more clarification than is offered by Roth.

Roth then suggests that Kuyper's vision of a Christian university recognises the calling of humanity to work together to understand God's world largely as a call for collective effort, since this is greater than any individual can achieve. It is unclear (to say the least) how this approach can provide the justification, which Roth claims it does, for the establishment of a **Christian** university. Surely this view is in conflict with his view that activity in the world (the "common kingdom") cannot be called Christian. In fact, VanDrunen even struggles to explain how his own institution, Westminster Seminary, fits into his two-kingdoms approach: can an institution in the common kingdom train ministers for the spiritual kingdom, since it is clear

for such an institution. He suggests that the "temple" metaphor liberates staff and students from the burden of "going beyond merely adding on devotional exercises" (18). Thus, adding devotional exercises seems to be all that his approach aspires to, or can achieve. The "integration of faith and learning" is a common phrase, but one which has detrimental effects. Such "integration" presupposes the existence of two separate kinds of activity, faith on the one hand and learning on the other, which somehow have to be brought together to form an integral whole. But such "integration" cannot be achieved. Faith does not stand over against learning; instead, faith underlies learning as the root from which it emerges. What that learning looks like will depend on the faith that lies at its root. A Christian faith leads to Christian learning (unless it is diverted by conceptions of the role of faith that are untrue to its real nature), and non-Christian faith leads to non-Christian learning. That does not mean that what non-Christians discover about the world is not true; but it does mean that the way they examine, experiment on, and explain features of the world tends to be distorted by reductionistic philosophies and placed in the service of idolatrous commitments. Christians and non-

Christians alike encounter and engage with the same world, but they understand it and work with it in ways which reflect their heart commitments – towards the creator God or towards an idol, a God-substitute of their own devising. Learning, an activity of the person, is shaped and directed by the heart-orientation of the person. Faith, therefore, cannot be “integrated” with learning since it **precedes** learning, and the learning is thus shaped by that faith. What we need then is not “integration” of our Christian faith with learning developed on the basis of a non-Christian commitment, but an “integral” Christian learning, which consciously grounds itself in an obedient response to God and a grappling with the Scriptures as the only sure and certain guide in all our living – learning included.⁶¹

Roth’s explanation of the task of learning (20) treats the learning produced by non-Christians as a neutral part of the common kingdom, while Christians working with a “kingdom” perspective are obliged to be explicit about their faith. But that is not the case at all: the results of Christian endeavour can speak for themselves, by inherently critiquing the reductionistic manner of working that is typical of non-Christian scientific work. There is nothing wrong with claiming such work to be “Christian,” but we need not say so in order for it to **be** Christian. It is Roth’s approach that needs to make an explicit connection between faith and the scholarly enterprise, since in being part of the “common kingdom,” there is no such connection without one being assigned to it *post hoc* (20).

The image of the “temple” does not appear to have any advantages over that of the “kingdom” in terms of shaping and directing our Christian vocation in scholarship. This can be seen in the example Roth gives of how we should address taxation. He suggests that in the “kingdom” approach, going beyond a purely devotional level is quite difficult in such a technical subject, as there is nothing we can say about doing “Christian taxes.” He gives no further description of how taxation could be taught in that approach.⁶² However, he sees benefits in the “temple” approach, namely that taxation *itself* [his emphasis] might point to the ordering of God’s creation, mentioning how this shows human inter-dependence and provision for mutual welfare, including how we stand before others and the sov-

ereign God and provide incentives to restrain evil and promote the good. He concludes, “Teaching taxation helps students unpack and articulate how Christ provides a lynchpin to their entire identity and how even something as mundane as taxation can highlight the glory of God” (20). For instance, service to God as a tax accountant can promote the common good.

But Roth speaks only of what could be considered “external” features of taxation. He does not suggest that we could examine how taxation policy is distorted by idolatrous commitments in ways that enable the super-rich to pay minimal tax (if any) while the majority of the tax burden is borne by the middle classes, and how taxation could be reformed to redress such injustice. Leona Hemsley, a fabulously wealthy person, was heard to say, “We don’t pay taxes; only the little people pay taxes.”⁶³ Former President Donald Trump also has a questionable record with respect to taxes. Christian service in relation to taxation is more than technically accurate accounting; it is to examine a deeply dysfunctional aspect of our political framework and to propose needed, thorough reform on the basis of a distinctively Christian theoretical foundation, including the technical processes of accounting, which themselves are shaped by specific theoretical convictions rooted in a faith commitment.⁶⁴

The summary Roth gives of how we might approach teaching about technical matters such as taxation leaves me flummoxed. I have no idea why this approach is considered to show more of a “temple” approach than a “kingdom” approach, and indeed, taken out of this context, his description could well leave someone with the impression that he was teaching from a “kingdom” perspective.

What do we do then? Roth suggests that by common effort, the “temple of science” will emerge under the providential hand of God, as part of common grace and natural revelation. When this happens, “then the people of God, a royal priesthood, bear the responsibility of taking every thought captive to the Author of knowledge” (21). But it is not at all clear how this is to be done. The implication, it seems to me, is that whatever knowledge emerges from the common scholarly enterprise, if determined to be “true” (“all that represents an apprehension of real truth is science, whether first

expounded by a believer or a non-believer” [20]), is to be claimed for God as something that shows his glory. All Roth can suggest is “merely adding on devotional exercises.”

The problem that presents itself on this approach is, of course, how we determine what is “true.” To determine that something is “true” requires assessment against the criteria by which we can determine that something is “true.” What are those criteria? Unfortunately, in the kind of approach suggested by Roth, what is “true” would seem to be the prevailing viewpoints in the wider academy.

But the point of plumbing is not as limited as Roth (along with VanDrunen) suggests. Plumbing is stewardship; it is management of physical infrastructure and services. To read Roth’s article is to be confronted by an abstraction about plumbing, that it is simply about stopping pipes from leaking. Of course, preventing leaks is critical, particularly when pipes are to take away waste—good plumbing has developed as an integral part of public health—but plumbing is also about bringing the vital resource of water to households and other buildings (among other tasks). Plumbing itself is

Faith does not stand over against learning; instead, faith underlies learning as the root from which it emerges.

Everybody, believer and non-believer alike, shares the same perspectives, the same methodologies, the same data for consideration, since this is part of the “common kingdom,” and the consensus within the “common kingdom” determines what is true. How can that be the foundation for a uniquely Christian scholarly enterprise which does more than add devotional exercises?

What about Christian plumbing?

Roth argues, drawing on VanDrunen,⁶⁵ for the alleged incoherence of the idea of “Christian plumbing” (17-18). He stresses that the task of the Christian plumber is to articulate how everything about the task of plumbing points to the glory of God. But a closer look at the issue of “Christian plumbing” does bring some wider issues into focus.⁶⁶ Roth’s approach seems to me to read the Christian vocation as it is described in the reformational tradition as a call to live to the “glory of God” as if it were something “super-added” to our everyday human lives. The way the “kingdom” has been spoken of in some reformational literature may, at times, lend itself to this reading. However, Christ’s teaching that we must “seek first the Kingdom of God” is directed to us so that we will find our rightful place within creation, and hence what we then do, whatever it is, will follow suit. Discipleship is, as Al Wolters has suggested, a matter of living within “creation regained.”⁶⁷

culture and, in reformational terms, forms part of the “cultural mandate”; therefore, it is not unrelated to the “great commission.”

Roth limits his discussion of plumbing to say there is nothing about being a “Christian plumber” that makes a difference to this task of preventing leaks. He seems to suggest that the use of the term “kingdom” places too much of a load on our attempts to find out what is “Christian” about plumbing. To him, there is no hint that God’s Kingdom, His rule in Jesus Christ, ensures the meaning and purpose and thus the important contribution of plumbing infrastructure and those engaged in its maintenance. Yes, in his view, “the uniqueness of the calling to be a Christian plumber is the ability to articulate how everything about the task of plumbing points to the glory of God and to find joy in that service.” I can agree with that statement wholeheartedly, but I do so because, unlike Roth and VanDrunen, I see the Bible’s revelation of Christ Jesus as the redeemer of Creation speaking of the one in whom “plumbing” now makes sense; in Christ all things “hang together.” Roth does not speak of showing forth the glory of God as something integral to plumbing, but only added on if the plumber happens to be a Christian (18).

In the context of the “kingdom,” what is the glory of God to which plumbing points? Is it not that for one of those who acknowledge Christ as king here and now (although we do not yet see the

obedience which is his due, even among his own people), a vocation as a plumber contributes to the health and well-being of the community in which we live? Central to the task of a Christian plumber is the recognition that we are not individuals seeking to find the fullness of purpose and meaning in our own lives. And this is where Roth and VanDrunen make their mistake in querying whether we can meaningfully speak of “Christian plumbing.”

Just as we do not find the meaning and purpose of our lives as individuals (see 1 Corinthians 12:12-27), so also we do not find the meaning and purpose of one or other activity in isolation from its context in God’s creation-order. A Christian plumber, **on his or her own**, cannot find a meaningful way of speaking about “Christian plumbing” as if he or she is called as a Christian to make the plumbing task “different.” Moreover, as a husband and father in a household, I also will, on occasion, engage in a plumbing task when I change a washer from a leaky tap. But if my toilet is blocked and threatens to overflow, then I will call in a tradesman who is expert in “plumbing functions.” Plumbing does not exist in a vacuum; it is one component, and a vital one, in the life of the community of which we are a part, and the plumber is called to serve as an expert in plumbing, helping people keep their homes healthy and assisting them in their stewardship of the resources given to them – including water.

Not only that, a plumber connects a house or a building to a wider network of water mains and sewers, of water purification treatment and filtration plants, of reservoirs and water catchments, and sewage treatment and disposal. The plumber, on his or her own, can achieve nothing: without this extensive infrastructure to connect to (using the materials provided by manufacturers), there is no task for a plumber to perform. But as a contributor to creating and maintaining this wider network for water management and distribution, plumbers fulfill their task to the glory of God. In addition, the water network is part of an even wider infrastructure, involving electricity reticulation (requiring the services of Christian electricians), roads, railways, and airports, all serving (if operating as intended by God) for the support of those whose principal task it is to be stewards of God’s creation. Without this infrastructure, that task cannot be

achieved adequately. The establishment of a reliable, convenient, and safe water supply is usually one of the first tasks undertaken in development of impoverished communities in developing countries. The individualistic approach taken by Roth, asking about the Christian plumber in isolation and in the abstract, fails to give any light whatsoever on how such a plumber is to serve God.

What is the glory of God in Christian plumbing? It assists us in our stewardship when it assures us that the pipes don’t leak but instead bring water to us and take sewage away. Each of us has a task within the community to contribute to its health, its well-being; and by living in service to others, **together** we show forth something of what it means to press Christ’s claims ever further into the creation from the beachhead he established.⁶⁸ What does that mean? Is it not that we walk in faith, and by God’s grace we show forth in what we do that we are called to enhance the health and well-being of our neighbors? Through good plumbing we bring glory to God through contributing to what a sound and healthy community looks like, which we shall see in its fullness in the age to come.⁶⁹

As another example, there is no “meaning” in being an individual soldier. It is only as part of an army, with its officer ranks, corps of soldiers, armies, and so on, that an individual soldier has meaning. Outside of that, someone fighting others with weapons is simply a brigand, a thug.

Those who share community with us have many different tasks, and together they shape and develop the lives of those who live in that community (and that community extends out from our immediate neighborhood to embrace the whole earth and all its people). The ability of those in the community to fulfill their tasks depends in large part on the ability and the reliability of others who also fulfill their own tasks. Not just plumbers, but builders, electricians, dentists, engineers, pastors, bus-drivers, trash-collectors, and every other task and function you can imagine can be carried out in a Christian way—that is, by contributing together to the work of the King in this world by all those who are called by His name, and also by those who have not yet bowed the knee to His rule. They too are served by Christian plumbers since they too need good water management for healthy lives on God’s earth.

In my judgement, the most profound and insightful contribution of the reformational movement is that it is daily life, ordinary everyday experience, which has priority, not the abstractions which are the joy and delight of academics. These have their place, and I am not negating that. But the recognition of the priority of concrete reality over abstraction means that we can indeed see how we can speak meaningfully about “Christian plumbing,” because it forms part of our corporate human task to care for the earth and all it contains, a task to be carried out in obedience to God.

Through good plumbing we bring glory to God through contributing to what a sound and healthy community looks like, which we shall see in its fullness in the age to come.

Perhaps one failing of the reformational community has been too much of a focus on how Christian scholarship can serve the community, without an equal emphasis being placed on how the wider community also serves others, including those called to be scholars, who without clean water and good sewage systems will be unable to pursue their calling. There is a certain elitism in that view and a neglect of that profound insight: daily life has priority over abstractions.

Will we need plumbers in the eschaton? I doubt that any of our current tasks and callings will be evident in the new earth—we will have new tasks and callings to fulfill there, which will still express the great commission of Genesis 1: fill the earth, subdue it, rule over it and all its creatures, to bring to light the glory of God so this is evident in everything. In this present age, we are called to faithfulness, so that the new life God has granted those who are his, here, now (John 3:36, 4:14, 5:24 etc.) will be shown in what we do, and thus the reputation of the God we serve will be enhanced, which is what it means to bring glory to God.

We, and all the works of our hands, are like the grass that withers and the flower that falls and returns to the dust (Genesis 3:19, 1 Peter 1:24). But plumbers and others who have been faithful stewards here and now will be rewarded, not with more plumbing jobs but in ways we cannot imagine. Just

as the stewards were given a **sum of money** to administer but were rewarded by being given charge of a number of **cities**, so too our limited tasks here may well be in line with the willingness of God to do “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” (Ephesians 3:2).

A word to reformationals

While Roth’s approach, which draws on Beale and VanDrunen, is in my view an implausible reading of the Scriptures, there are warnings to reformationals in their critique. Principal among these

is the claim that reformationals pay inadequate attention to the church and the centrality of worship. I think this claim is overstated, in the sense that the (institutional) church as a whole over the centuries has paid precious little attention to the “cultural mandate” and what this requires of us concerning living and working in God’s world *as Christians*. The reformational emphasis on the latter, with relatively little attention given to the (institutional) church and its mission, is more from a recognition of the need to redress the balance, rather than a neglect of what is essential. There are books without number on the nature, task, mission, structure, offices, etc., of the church and of mission work (some of dubious merit), but it can be exceedingly difficult to discover explicitly Christian treatments of virtually any other subject not immediately connected to the life and mission of the church.⁷⁰ Roth and VanDrunen would doubtless claim that this is because such subjects fall into the “common kingdom” and that Christians therefore are not obliged to (or actually, it is not possible to) produce explicitly Christian books on these subjects. They claim that criticisms that the church has neglected to foster such writing is to burden people’s consciences with non-Biblical claims, or worse, to endorse works-righteousness, which diminishes the completed work of Christ. As a result, their approach will continue to leave the bookshelves dedicated to

subjects such as politics, physics, art history, etc., written from an explicitly Christian perspective, completely bare. The fruit of the reformational approach, however, is evident in the availability of such material for those who care to look.

The work of the institutional church is important. Its task in preaching and teaching the Scriptures, in administering the sacraments, in doing pastoral work, and in carrying out other responsibilities, cannot be neglected without detriment. But the church as much as any other aspect of life needs the reforming light of Scripture,⁷¹ and a reformational vision cannot omit the consideration of what the church could and should become as a result of a renewed vision of **the whole of life** lived under the covenant grace of God. The reformational vision must pay more attention to the church if this vision is not to fade away.⁷²

Conclusion

Do the cumulative arguments brought against a reformational vision lead us to conclude that it should be discarded? Are those arguments as persuasive as Roth would assert? I think not. Instead of providing a better “metaphor” for viewing our task here on earth, it in fact closes down the great insights of the reformational vision, which sees the Lordship of Christ operative, here and now, ever since His entry into glory at the ascension. It posits, instead, a repetition of previous dualistic approaches, which leave Christian scholarship, in fact almost all of life (outside of the activities of the institutional church), in a kind of “no-man’s-land” in the warfare between Christ and the spirits of wickedness, as if it is of no interest to Christ and only of temporary use for us. The Scriptures provide us with a much richer vision of life than that:

In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. (Hebrews 2:8-9)

Endnotes

1. I would like to express my appreciation to Alan Cameron, Bruce Wearne, Andy McKenzie, Keith Sewell, and Alida Sewell for their comments on this paper.
2. Donald Roth, “Building the Temple”: An Alternative Metaphor to the Use of “Kingdom” in the Christian University Context,” *Pro Rege* Vol. 49, No. 4 (March 2021): 10–23. Subsequent page references to this article are in brackets within the text.
3. Roth concedes at the very end of his article (21) that “kingdom” is still a useful term, but the qualifications he has placed around it, and its subservience to “temple,” makes that concession of little real value.
4. Note that Roth had earlier argued for a comparison of the metaphors of “kingdom” and “pilgrim.” See Donald Roth, “Operative Metaphor and Antimony: A Framework for Understanding the Two-Kingdoms/Neo-Kuyperian Debate,” *Pro Rege* Vol. 44, No. 1 (Sep. 2015): 31.
5. See the discussion on metaphors in James W Skillen. *God’s Sabbath with Creation: Vocations Fulfilled, the Glory Unveiled* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2019), xv-xvi.
6. Note also Lioy’s comment that “there is no scholarly agreement regarding the notion of ‘temple’ in the canon of God’s Word...[.] interpreters part company over the specific ways in which the temple concept is pertinent. They also propose conflicting theories about how the metaphorical notion of the ‘temple’ contributes to an understanding of the theological trajectory of the Bible,” in Dan Lioy. *Axis of Glory: A Biblical and Theological Analysis of the Temple Motif in Scripture* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 2-3.
7. On the grounds that it is “works righteousness.” See discussion of this later in the article.
8. G K Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove: Apollos/InterVarsity Press, 2004). See also a popularised version of his proposal in G K Beale and Mitchell Kim, *God Dwells Among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth*. (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2014). Beale has also summarised his argument in “Eden, The Temple, and the Church’s Mission in the New Creation,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48 (March 2005), 1:5–31, and “Adam as the First Priest in Eden as the Garden Temple.”

Southern Baptist Journal of Theology 22 (2018) 2: 9-24. Detailed analysis of Beale's view (mostly positive) can be found in Jahisber Peñuela-Pineda, *Sanctuary/Temple in Genesis 1-3: A Reevaluation of the Biblical Evidence*, PhD Thesis, Andrews University, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 2019; and Charles Robert "Chet" Harvey, *A Templed Creation: Application of Gregory K. Beale's Cosmic-Temple Motif to a Theology of Creation*, PhD Thesis, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018.

9. David VanDrunen, *Living in God's Two Kingdoms. A Biblical Vision for Christianity and Culture* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010). VanDrunen also cites Beale's book, *Ibid*, 42.
10. Daniel I Block, "Eden: A Temple? A Reassessment of the Biblical Evidence," in *From Creation to New Creation: Biblical Theology and Exegesis. Essays in Honor of G K Beale*, Daniel M Gurtner and Benjamin L Gladd, eds. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2013), 3-29.
11. The "two kingdoms" approach has been extensively canvassed within the pages of *Pro Rege*—there have been at least 15 articles on the subject since 2014, including one by Roth himself—Donald Roth, "Operative Metaphor and Antimony: A Framework for Understanding the Two-Kingdoms/Neo-Kuyperian Debate," *Pro Rege* Vol. 44, No. 1 (March 2021): 29 – 38. This approach has been subjected to sustained analysis in a Reformational response to that theology, for instance. *Kingdoms Apart: Engaging the Two Kingdoms Perspective*, Ryan C McIlhenny, ed. (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2012).
12. Roth, *ibid.*, refers to Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, pp. 23-29. For an extensive bibliography of interpretations of the original creation as a "temple" see Richard Davidson, "Earth's First Sanctuary: Genesis 1–3 and Parallel Creation Accounts," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 53 (2015), 1: 65, n. 1.
13. Note Beale's comment: "Ezekiel 28:18 is probably therefore the most explicit place anywhere in canonical literature where the Garden of Eden is called a temple." *Eden, The Temple, and the Church's Mission*, p. 10. However, this passage in Ezekiel "is at the same time one of Ezekiel's most intriguing artistic creations and one of the most difficult texts in the entire book. The problems, many of which defy satisfactory scholarly solution, include... the relationship between this text and biblical traditions (esp. the narratives of Gen. 1-3...)" Daniel I Block. *The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 25-48, New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1998), p. 87. This defies the exegetical rule that a clear text is used to help clarify a difficult one. In this case, a text which is difficult to interpret is used to complicate the explanation of what is otherwise the straightforward (if extremely deep) meaning of Genesis 1-3. Block comments, "Ezekiel's prophecy is indeed couched in extravagant terms, but the primary referent within the context is clearly the human king of Tyre," *Ibid*, 119. The identification of Eden as a temple drawn from Ezekiel 28 therefore is problematic.
14. G K Beale, "Eden, The Temple, and the Church's Mission in the New Creation," 18.
15. Note the point made by Halbertal and Holmes, that the Biblical story of the rise of the kingship is historical, not something happening in a mythical (a-historical) past. This applies to other aspects of the Scriptures as well. Moshe Halbertal and Stephen Holmes, *The Beginning of Politics: Power in the Biblical Book of Samuel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 7. I understand myth to be a pagan pseudo-revelation as a substitute for Scripture, not a genre of literature, as myth can appear in narrative, hymnic, poetical, and many other literary forms. There is, therefore, no myth in the Scriptures.
16. David VanDrunen, *Living in God's Two Kingdoms*, 89. This makes it puzzling, to say the least, for Roth to refer to the story of the establishment of kingship in Israel as instructive for us today. He cites Moshe Halbertal and Stephen Holmes, *The Beginning of Politics*, although he sees this narrative as demonstrating that political power always corrupts (12). This is a very lifeless way of reading the Scriptures, and it glosses over the depth of insight offered by Halbertal and Holmes for our political calling today. Also instructive in this regard is Eric Nelson. *The Hebrew Republic: Jewish Sources and the Transformation of European Political Thought* (Cambridge, Mass./London: Harvard University Press, 2010).
17. David VanDrunen, *Living in God's Two Kingdoms*, 90.
18. David VanDrunen, *Living in God's Two Kingdoms*, 91. This is a highly speculative interpretation of Israel's history.

19. See my comments in this regard in Chris Gousmett, "Christopher Cone and Redacted Dominionism: Review Essay," *Pro Rege* Vol. 50, No. 1 (September 2021): 9-10.
20. We should note here that the mandate of Genesis 1 refers to ruling over the other creatures—a "kingdom" metaphor. There is no mention here of anything relating to priestly activity which would indicate a "temple" metaphor.
21. The two terms "keep" and "guard" appear together in Numbers 3:8, 4:4, and 18:4.
22. Other interpretations of Genesis 1 in terms of a cosmic temple can be found in Jon D Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988); John Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), and Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006).
23. For a reformational presentation of this vision which avoids the problems in Roth's views, see James W Skillen, *God's Sabbath with Creation: Vocations Fulfilled, the Glory Unveiled* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2019).
24. See for instance Wayne Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1998); Othmar Keel and Silvia Schroer, *Creation: Biblical Theologies in the Context of the Ancient Near East*, Trans. Peter T Daniels (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015); David Toshio Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005).
25. See discussion of the arguments for and against a Priestly writer as the source of the cosmic temple motif in Scripture, in Charles Robert "Chet" Harvey, *A Templed Creation: Application of Gregory K. Beale's Cosmic-temple Motif to a Theology of Creation*, PhD Thesis, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018, 11-16. Harvey concludes that the presupposition of a Priestly source is problematic, although he concludes that the characteristics seen as "priestly" can be understood in terms of textual themes and not as indications of separate authorship.
26. I suggest that the much-contested opening of Genesis 1 would perhaps best be translated as "To begin with, God created..." or "First of all, God created..." to emphasize it was the beginning of God's creative work and not shaping of pre-existing matter, or that the result of this initial creation was chaotic in nature. It is subjected in its orderliness to God, along with the rest of the creation described in Genesis 1.
27. The description of the earth and its waters in Genesis 1:2 should be translated along the lines "uninhabitable and empty," following which we have the description of the work of God to make it habitable, and then to begin its filling with living creatures. See Richard J Mouw, *When the Kings Come Marching In: Isaiah and the New Jerusalem*, Revised edition (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2002), 35-37, for an even broader concept of "filling."
28. It would be apposite to consider whether this interpretation of chaos and creation was influenced by Kant's view that the mind imposes order on external disorder, or even Bacon's idea of the deduction of information, which is created from raw "facts."
29. G K Beale and Mitchell Kim, *God Dwells Among Us*, 34.
30. There are close similarities between VanDrunen's view and those of dispensationalists regarding the termination of the mandate. See my discussion of this latter view in Chris Gousmett, "Christopher Cone and Redacted Dominionism: Review Essay," *Pro Rege* Vol. 50, No. 1 (September 2021), 1-15.
31. Beale says: "Although Gen. 2-3 does not explicitly say that Adam's 'ruling and subduing' task was to guard the garden from the satanic snake, this is likely conceptually in mind," and he cites Adam's commission to subdue and rule over every creature that creeps along the ground, and that Eden was a temple in which Adam was a priest whose job it was to keep out unclean creatures. G K Beale. *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011, p. 45. This is sheer speculation.
32. G K Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 70.
33. Tabernacle: Numbers 3:8, 4:4, 18:4; Sheep: Genesis 30:31, 1 Samuel 17:20, 34.
34. Meredith Kline suggests that the cherubim act as guardians of God's presence after Adam's

expulsion from the garden, as reported by Harvey, *A Templed Creation*, p. 27. But there is nothing in the text to indicate this, nor is it clear that God's presence remained in the garden after Adam and Eve were expelled, since the purpose of having the garden was for it to be a location where God could meet with Adam and Eve, a situation which is remedied in Revelation 21:3.

35. Revelation 8:3 speaks of an angel offering incense in the heavenly temple, but this is followed by hurling the censer onto the earth to bring God's judgement; this is not a priestly task.
36. See for instance Hebrews 1:3, which speak of Christ's priesthood, "providing purification for sins," after which he sits down at God's right hand from whence he rules as king. Those who are his will be a "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9)—combining kingship and priesthood—both kingdom and temple! Jesus never made any claims that he himself was a priest, but he did acknowledge his kingship (John 18:37). See also importantly Hebrews 9:11: "But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is **not a part of this creation.**" Gordon Spykman, *Reformational Theology: A New Paradigm for Doing Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), covers the work of Christ with regard to his different offices.
37. We need to take care that the way we speak of worship does not consume all other callings and tasks. Note the frequency with which the OT speaks of both "worship" and "service" (relating to both God and idols). These terms are not synonyms but are what we could call our **cultic** acts (oriented towards God) and our **cultural** acts (oriented towards creation). Jesus used this distinction: "Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only."'" (Matthew 4:10)
38. This view of the mandate given to for Adam and completed by Christ seems dependent on the view that the mandate was for priestly worship. This is not explicit in the text of Genesis 1.
39. David VanDrunen, *Living in God's Two Kingdoms. A Biblical Vision for Christianity and Culture* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 57, 62.
40. David VanDrunen, *Living in God's Two Kingdoms*, 28. I am not aware of any reformationals who suggest that Christians must "earn" their place

in the eschaton. All our efforts are in response to, and enabled by, grace and grace alone, and what we offer is in praise and honour of the King, not to earn merit. This is an assumption about reformational views based not on their actual statements but on the presuppositions used by VanDrunen. It is untrue.

41. David VanDrunen, *Living in God's Two Kingdoms*, 28. VanDrunen seems to hold to the destruction of this present world and its replacement. I believe this is incorrect. See for further argument along these lines J Richard Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014).
42. This view is dependent on the doctrine of the "covenant of works," which is not above criticism.
43. David VanDrunen, *Living in God's Two Kingdoms*, 27-28.
44. Note that this view is also promoted by others based on Meredith Kline's work.
45. Al Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview* 2nd Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 74.
46. Richard J Mouw, *When the Kings Come Marching In*, Revised Edition (40-41). See also the first edition, 1983, 19-20, where the same comment is made.
47. Mouw also speaks of the "irruption" of the future: "Nothing that is said in these meditations should be taken as suggesting that we can in any significant way 'build' the Holy City here and now. The Holy City comes 'down out of heaven from God' (Rev. 21:2); the Lord is its 'builder and maker' (Heb. 11:10). The arrival of this City will constitute a radical break with the present patterns of sinful life." *When the Kings Come Marching In*, 19. See also p. 129. But then Mouw comments, "But the Holy City is not wholly discontinuous with present conditions." Ibid, 20. We should consider what might be meant by continuities, while bearing in mind the discontinuities, on which we perhaps place too great an emphasis.
48. Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 94.
49. Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 95.
50. Before plunging into an answer to this question, it would be wise to note that the question itself is poorly formulated and, as such, will inevitably lead to inappropriate answers. We should not

expect the products of our “day jobs” to endure unchanged, and while “Sunday services” as we know them will pass away (being replaced with a much greater form of worship, see Revelation 4-5 for example), why would we prioritise our current activities on the basis of a speculative view as to what the eschaton will be like? See John 21:22 for the focus Jesus places on each one’s own tasks and not those of others.

51. See for instance Egbert Schuurman. *Faith and Hope in Technology* (Toronto: Clements, 2003). Derek C Schuurman, *Shaping a Digital World: Faith, Culture and Computer Technology* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013).
52. We could also view the church as a post-fall concession where Christian community can be fostered in distinction from the ungodly lifestyles of unbelievers. Once the kingdom has been inaugurated in its fullness at the return of Christ, there will no longer be any need for the church as a separate institution, since “No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest” (Hebrews 8:11).
53. Note that the temple mentioned frequently in Revelation eventually disappears from view and is not continued into the eschaton.
54. Richard J Mouw, *When the Kings Come Marching In*, 79.
55. This prophecy of the future is given in terms comprehensible at the time, namely, that all will be welcome in the temple of God. But in the future, there will be no need for a temple: God himself will be with us without any need for structures. Mouw describes how John and Isaiah described the “new Jerusalem” in vastly different ways (*When the Kings Come Marching In*, 99-100). Regarding the hermeneutics involved in interpreting prophecy, I take the prophecies of Isaiah 11 and 60, for instance, to be speaking of the future to come in terms which would have made sense, and given hope, to the people of his day. Having herds of camels spoke to them of wealth and resources; it does not mean we will have to learn how to manage camels! Wealth and resources mean different things to different periods and cultures. Isaiah’s point is this: God will bless us abundantly. OT prophecies were given originally **to** the people of the time (in terms they could understand), but they are recorded **for**

us. For this distinction between **to** and **for**, see 1 Corinthians 10:11, and see 1 Peter 1:10-12 for the indication that the meaning went beyond what it could convey to the immediate audience.

56. While much of what Kuyper wrote is of enduring value, and inspiring rhetoric, his views were also tainted with attitudes which we find less admirable. Some of his ideas are simply out of date, while others are so bound up with the cultural specifics of his own time and place that they may not be readily transferable to other contexts. His views on women have particularly been criticised. He also worked within a scholastic framework, which may make him more acceptable to Two Kingdoms advocates, but that scholasticism is criticised by reformationals. VanDrunen suggests that the redemptive tradition of “neo-Calvinism” *claims* to be heir to Kuyper. His emphasis on the word “claims” indicates that he disputes the validity of its roots in Kuyper’s vision (*Living in God’s Two Kingdoms*), 16.
57. Roth takes this from Abraham Kuyper, *Wisdom and Wonder: Common Grace in Science and Art*, translated by Nelson Kloosterman (Grand Rapids: Christian’s Library Press, 2011), 42. See the discussion of Kuyper’s view of science in Peter S Heslam, *Creating a Christian Worldview: Abraham Kuyper’s Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), especially 167-195. Also helpful is Craig G Bartholomew, *Contours of the Kuyperian Tradition: A Systematic Introduction* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2017). For a detailed critique of Kuyper’s view of science, see the classic article by Herman Dooyeweerd, “Kuyper’s Philosophy of Science,” in *On Kuyper: A Collection of Readings on the Life, Work and Legacy of Abraham Kuyper*, edited by Steve Bishop and John Kok (Sioux Center, Iowa: Dordt College Press, 2013), 153-178. Also relevant are the papers by Del Ratzsch and Clarence Menninga in the same volume.
58. For a discussion of the influence of Stoicism on Augustine, and thence to Christian thought ever since, see Chris Gousmett, “Creation Order and Miracle According to Augustine,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 60 (1988) 3:217-240. The dangers of speaking of an “intelligible world order,” which can be discovered by human reasoning, reflects the “world order” espoused by Plato or Aristotle, or the cosmic Logos of the Stoics. See H. Evan Runner “Scriptural Religion and Political Task,”

- in *Walking in the Way of the Word: The Collected Writings of H Evan Runner* Vol. 2, edited by Kerry John Hollingsworth (Grand Rapids: Paideia Press, 2009): 250.
59. See for instance David VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009). See also his *Divine Covenants and Moral Order: A Biblical Theology of Natural Law* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014).
 60. See the account of VanDrunen's confused and confusing justification for a "common kingdom" seminary in Ryan C McIlhenny. Christian witness as redeemed culture. In: *Kingdoms Apart*, p. 266, n 35 (continued on p. 267). Jim West comments on the discussion by McIlhenny: "This is one of many minuses that hamper the acceptance of the leading distinctives of Two Kingdom theology." *The Distinctives of "Two Kingdom" Theology*, p. 151.
 61. The classic book by Evan Runner, *The Relation of the Bible to Learning* (1974), is still worthy of careful study. It is reprinted in *Walking in the Way of the Word: The Complete Writings of H Evan Runner* Vol 2, edited by Kerry John Hollingsworth (Grand Rapids: Paideia Press, 2009), 1-158.
 62. See for instance Zoë M Prebble and John Prebble, "The Morality of Tax Avoidance," *Creighton Law Review* Vol 43, No. 3 (2010): 693-745.
 63. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leona_Helmsley
 64. The incisive work of Bob Goudzwaard should play a central role in considering the necessary reforms of taxation policy and accounting methods from a Christian perspective.
 65. Roth (ibid, 14) cites David VanDrunen, *Living in God's Two Kingdoms*, 169.
 66. See for instance Roy A. Clouser, "Is There a Christian View of Everything from Soup to Nuts?" *Pro Rege*: Vol. 31: No. 4 (July 2003): 1 - 10.
 67. Disclaimer: I studied under Dr. Al Wolters at the ICS in the 1980s.
 68. A metaphor drawn from Al Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*, 2nd Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 74. Roth is critical of this metaphor (13).
 69. There is also the historical influence of Christian thought on the development of trade professional codes of conduct, both purely internal ("private") and publicly mandated, which points to an underlying philosophy of public policy. See for instance Herman Dooyeweerd, *Encyclopaedia of the Science of Law* Vol 1, translated by Robert Knudsen, edited by Alan M Cameron (Grand Rapids: Paideia Press, 2012), 197-204.
 70. This criticism also applies to the apparent predominance of reformational work in the fields of philosophy and politics, for instance, while there is inadequate attention given to the history of science, historiography, psychology, accounting, or most other subjects one could name. Again, there may be good reason for this lopsided focus, but that does not alter the fact that the reformational vision has not yet been articulated in many fields of endeavour.
 71. See the comment by Jim West: "A church that does not seek to transform can easily render itself so irrelevant that she becomes a parachurch herself," in "The Distinctives of 'Two Kingdom' Theology," *Unio Cum Christo: International Journal of Reformed Theology and Life* Vol 4, No. 1 (2018): 145.
 72. See for instance, Keith C Sewell, *The Crisis of Evangelical Christianity: Roots, Consequences and esolutions* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016).