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need, Stearns offers three simple principles for Christians to embrace: “Every one of these hurting people is created in God’s image and loved by him. Every one of these challenges has a solution. Every one of us can make a difference” (162). The technology and resources exist to drastically change the circumstances of the world’s most vulnerable, but a concentrated and significant movement of will is needed. The remainder of the book shifts focus toward the response of the church and individuals in repairing the hole in the world and in our gospel.

The most powerful and convicting parts of in *The Hole in our Gospel* are Parts 4 and 5: “The Hole in the Church” and “Repairing the Hole.” Stearns makes a convincing and passionate argument that Christians can and should be the ones who lead the charge to change the world. The American church is the wealthiest group of Christians in history (216). He calculates that if all churchgoers committed to tithing their full ten percent, there would be an extra $168 billion per year: “If every American churchgoer tithed, we could literally change the world. In fact...$65 billion—less than 40 percent of the extra $168 billion—could eliminate the most extreme poverty on the planet for more than a billion people” (218). Instead of being known by what we are against, the church needs to be known by our successful efforts to change the world (228). Instead of being comfortable with the American Dream (individual hard work bringing individual success), we should find comfort in belonging to God and being entrusted with, not entitled to, His resources (207).

Stearns laments the failure of the church’s full participation in major social change efforts:

If the Church is indeed a revolutionary kind of institution, called to foment a social revolution by promoting justice, lifting up the sanctity of human life, fighting for the underdog, and challenging the prevailing value systems in our world, then it seems we should be out in front on social justice issues rather than bringing up the rear” (190).

He shows how the church has lagged behind by citing enslavement of blacks and treatment of Native Americans as examples (190-202). Although his argument is valid, the assumption that the institutional church acts in concentrated ways is questionable. On any issue, there seems to be wide and diverse response within the body of Christ. The church certainly should move together to respond to the vast need in the world, but it seems Stearns even agrees that this response really begins with individuals and small groups of committed people. He mentions Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., William Wilberforce, and others as examples of those who have fought against social injustice and inspired others to join the effort. The chapter “A Tale of Two Real Churches” gives us examples of how local churches saw the need around them and responded with action (231-241). World Vision and other development organizations serve as powerful examples of the impact and influence that a few committed Christians can have in inspiring organizations that do a great amount of good.

Stearns presents a compelling case for the urgency of Christians to “repair the hole” in the world. The final section of the book turns the challenge to us, asking what we are going to do with our time, talent, and treasure. Stearns reminds us again that each of us has a responsibility to act and live out the whole Gospel in a world full of need. He does not argue that everyone should join the mission field but rather that each should give of what he or she has and use influence and resources to make a difference. Interspersed throughout the book are stories of inspiring people and churches that have done amazing things to respond to various problems in their neighborhoods and around the world. One small group of people can change the world. The *Hole in our Gospel* contains an inspiring and convicting message, and Stearns pushes us to imagine a world where a concentrated effort of the church makes a drastic difference in the lives of the world’s most vulnerable people.


the so-called “enlightenment,” which were its guiding principles, or must we look elsewhere for the historical roots of what we have come to associate with “liberty”? Historians still offer divergent, though not necessarily totally contradictory, replies to such questions. This may be said of The Reformation of Rights, by John Witte, and Jonathan Israel’s A Revolution of the Mind.

English-born Jonathan Israel is one of the most accomplished scholars working on enlightenment studies in North America. He was appointed Professor of Modern History at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, in 2001. He has to his credit a wide-ranging and massively detailed work on the Netherlands: The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477-1806 (1995). He is an authority on Baruch Spinoza (1632-77) and is currently at work on a comprehensive three-volume work on the “radical” enlightenment, destined to stand alongside the work of Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945), and Peter Gay (b. 1923). Two immense volumes have appeared so far: Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750 (2001), and Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670-1752 (2009).

Israel’s much shorter A Revolution of the Mind may be read as a kind of interim report on the entire project as it approaches completion. Israel insists that we distinguish between a “moderate” enlightenment, which sought gradual improvement, and a “radical” enlightenment, which stood more stridently for the sovereignty of reason and, if need be, for the implementation of sweeping programs of change (Israel 3, 15, 19). The distinction is fundamental (94-6), the radicals emerging as deeply anti-hierarchical, without being socialists or communists (97). He sees Spinoza at the head of the “radicals” and Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) heading the “moderates” (239-41). In the crucial period from the 1760s to 1790s, the elites of the ancien régime rebuffed the advocates of gradualism (34-36). The greater the delay in the substantive rectification of grievances, the more convincing became the call of the radicals for a “revolution of the mind” (38). Here the Dutch Patrioten find their context (39, 66-68, 235). As other writers have emphasized, they were a harbinger in the Netherlands of what was to come in France. Edmund Burke (1729-97) turned against them in 1787, prior to the revolution in France (142). According to Israel, the cahiers of 1789 testify to the reality of such a “revolution of the mind” in the thinking of many (198, 229). For him, Voltaire (1694-1778) with his critique of radical writers, including Spinoza (208-14, 217), Thomas Reid (1710-96) with his focus on the senses (179), and even Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) with his emphasis on “sentiment” (157), fail to make the cut as “radicals” and are therefore numbered among the assorted “moderates” (218-220).

There is much that is provocative in all this. In my judgment, Israel is right to point to the question of slavery before 1776 (42-44), as well as to draw attention to the shifting meanings of the word “tyranny” (89, 91). He acknowledges that recent history-writing on the intellectual origins of the French Revolution does not reflect the fundamental moderate/radical distinction he posits (221-5, 231). Beyond these points, as Israel acknowledges, “The Revolution came and went. It proclaimed liberty, equality, and fraternity but failed to establish a viable democratic republic” (230). This statement leaves the way open for Israel to suggest that after early 1793 “the darker side of the French Revolution” emerged, represented by Maximilien Robespierre (1758-94), who “was inspired by the Rousseauist tendency.” Indeed, the “Jacobins did not hesitate publicly to condemn all the philosophes and the whole Enlightenment” (231). Israel would have us ascribe the worst crimes and outrages of the French Revolution to its “moderates” rather than to its “radicals”—an argument that can be expected to stir the scholarly pot. However, although the tables turned yet again with the fall of Robespierre, it was the radical agenda that managed to survive, emerging, Israel asserts, as “the official values of a major part of the world after 1945.” Anglo-America, influenced by Locke and others, tended to remain “implacably hostile” to the “radical” legacy (235).

Israel’s arguments, while not conclusive, are constructively provocative. The complexities of the late enlightenment and tortuous course of the French Revolution call for a carefully nuanced approach. And this is certainly what is required when assessing the presentation and utilization of “the revolution” in the Stone Lectures on Calvinism, offered by Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) in 1898. It is not always clear to readers how Kuyper can laud the Dutch struggle against Spain (1568-1648) and the British “Glorious Revolution” (1688-90) and the American struggle for independence (1776-83) and yet be so emphatically anti-revolutionary in regards to France. Kuyper bracketed the Dutch, British, and American developments together and contrasted them strongly with the French Revolution, while many others—including many in the 1780s—saw great continuities between the American and French events. Persons adopting the latter standpoint tend to see democracy arising in the 1770s and ‘80s.

Others, like John Witte, will adopt a less convulsive and more gradualist view of historical change. His focus is the long-term pre-French revolutionary and partly pre-enlightenment reformed struggle for religious rights. This author will be known to some Pro Rege readers as a student of the late H. Evan Runner and as a prolific author in the fields of jurisprudence and the history of law, not least on the relationship of religion to law in regards to marriage and the family. In 2002 he published Law and Protestantism: The Legal Teachings of the Lutheran Reformation. The work now before us, The Reformation of Rights, is essentially a continuation of the earlier work, but with the emphasis on the Calvinistic reformation and particularly on its leading public-legal consequences. Witte is Jonas Robertscher Professor of Law and Director of the Center for the

In their short and easy-to-read paperback book *When Helping Hurts*, Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert leave no doubt about two of their primary beliefs: that Christians need to be more concerned about the poor, and that they need to change many of their well-intentioned but counter-productive methods of helping the poor. Given the credentials and experience of these two Covenant College professors, the Christian community and especially those who work directly with disadvantaged groups would be well advised to consider their words. Steve Corbett is a Community Development Specialist for the Chalmers Center for Economic Development and the former Regional (Central and South America) Director for Food for the Hungry International. Dordt graduate