

# **PRACTICAL PROBLEMS IN LAW AND MINISTRY:**

**Puritanism and the Presbyterian Enlightenment**

or

The Religion of Nature

As the Foundation of the United States Constitution

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## **APPENDIX D**

*An Open Letter to the President of the A.M.E. Council of Bishops:  
The Ten Pillars of Reformed Methodist Theology which is also known as*

## **OXFORD METHODISM**

By

**Roderick O Ford, D.Litt.**

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate School of Ministry at Whitefield Theological Seminary

In Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Religion

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*“Practical Problems in Law and Ministry: Puritanism and the Presbyterian Enlightenment”*

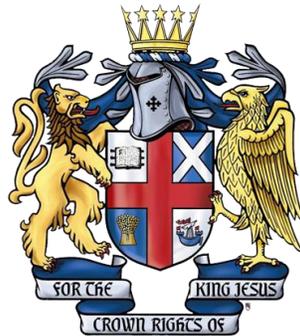
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APPENDIX D

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**“An Open Letter to the President of the A.M.E. Council of Bishops:**

***“The Ten Pillars of Reformed Methodist Theology  
which is also known as Oxford Methodism”***

by

Roderick O. Ford, D.Litt. (Law & Religion)

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African Methodist Episcopal Church  
ATTN: Bishop Ronnie Elijah Brailsford, Sr.  
President of the AME Council of Bishops  
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Dear Bishop Brailsford:

I am one of your former church members who attended the Bethel A.M.E. Church in Columbia, South Carolina during the late 1990s, where, at that time, I was stationed as an Army captain at Fort Jackson. I am also a distant relative of our mutual friend and dear brother Vince Ford of Columbia, S.C. (1958 – 2022).

Ecclesiastical greetings to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Sometime during 2012, I became interested in pursuing ordination in either the Episcopal, United Methodist, or the African Methodist Episcopal Church and soon became engulfed in several pressing theological questions then pressing upon, and splitting up, the church, including the approval of openly gay priests and bishops and same-sex marriage in the churches. I was quite surprised, if not altogether bewildered, to find the mainline churches of Jesus Christ in such a spiritually dilapidated state.

We are now witnessing great schisms within the United Methodist Church and the Anglican Communion. And, for all intents and purposes, African Methodism appears to be suspended in between the two emerging camps of mainline Methodism—the conservative Global Methodist Church and the more liberal United Methodists. I do not believe that African Methodism will long remain unaffected by the vast changes and immense challenges that are transpiring throughout Protestant Christendom.

Since encountering these challenges, I met Dr. Gary Talbot (1954 – 2022), who was then President of Whitefield Theological Seminary and the senior pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church in Lakeland, Florida. Whitefield Theological Seminary is a very conservative, Reformed institution. At Whitefield, I became more familiar with conservative evangelical Christian theology, and I was able to better compare-and-contrast it with African Methodism, Wesleyan-Methodism, and more liberal theology, such as liberation theology. Since 2015, I have been engaged in theological research into several pressing questions involving civil polity, church-state relations, and the Christian foundations of the United States Constitution. And you will be pleased to know that throughout this period, I have also worked closely with a few senior A.M.E. pastors in central Florida. As a consequence, I have devised my own theory and theology which I have called the “Ten Pillars of Reformed Methodist Theology which is also known as Oxford Methodism,” which I would like to share with you.

I founded Reformed Methodist Theology at Whitefield Theological Seminary, and I further refined it while regularly attending services at the Mount Olive African Methodist Episcopal Church in Gainesville, Florida, where I purposefully refined my theology on Oxford Methodism in order to address some of the deficiencies which I see in African Methodism. As a baptized A.M.E. Methodist, I have never relinquished my official affiliation with the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and I shall continue to support its historic and noble missionary work for so long as I live, even though I am now a neo-orthodox, Afrocentric Puritan, an Augustinian theologian, and a Presbyterian— in a word, I am an Oxford Methodist.<sup>1</sup>

From the time of its origins in the Free African Society, which was led by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones, the A.M.E. Church’s great history has been deeply rooted in the struggle of Pan-African freedom. For good reasons, the A.M.E. Church has much to be proud of; and yet, at the same time, we must admit, the danger of having an undue amount of pride in denominational history and dogma. Once we move past the Gospels and the Book of Acts, we tend easily to take our eyes off Christ and become bogged down into historical anomalies that have no relationship to spiritual regeneration, sanctification, and salvation. Hence, an undue amount of denominational pride may easily lead to a sort of spiritual arrogance that is fatal to the humble work of the Holy Spirit. To that end, we must remind ourselves to remain as humble Christians. See, e.g., Matthew 23: 1- 39 (“... [b]ut he that is greatest among you shall be your servant....”)

One of the criticisms of the A.M.E. Church is that its local churches are systematically stifled from carrying out meaningful, practical ministry that uplifts the poor and oppressed.<sup>2</sup> In other words, the machinery of the A.M.E. Church tends to stifle the works of charity and the administration of social justice. And it is unfortunate that the A.M.E. Church has become, in

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<sup>1</sup> There really is nothing new or novel about my Christian beliefs system that I have called “Oxford Methodism” as, I think that it is reflected in the writings of Frederick Douglass, who once wrote, “I would invoke the spirit of patriotism, in the name of the law of the living God, natural and revealed, and in the full belief that ‘righteousness exalteth a nation, while sin is a reproach to any people.’” Frederick Douglass, *Autobiographies* (New York, N.Y.: The Library of America, 1994), p. 429.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 4:18 (“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised....”)

many respects, more preoccupied with the social standing of its members; with middle class paraphernalia such as official titles, social connections, and university degrees that implicate social status; with disbursement of the biennial church budgets; and with Afrocentric racial pride that tends to downplay the catholicity of the universal church of Jesus Christ.

Some of the problems that impede the ability of the A.M.E. Church, and the Black Church in general, is the idea that all ordained ministers must be “*called to preach*,” as is assumed in the *Doctrine and Discipline of the A.M.E. Church*. For more than two hundred years now, and for several generations, this idea of “preaching,” or of being called to preach, has grown into an ecclesiastical tradition within African American churches; and in many cases, black preaching has come to be closely associated with poetic or musical gifts— rather than theological, jurisprudential, and administrative acumen. We have great pastors who can preach but who are unable to creatively address the major problems of our times—or even practical problems such as church administration, capital and labor, taxation, prison ministry, social work, social justice, or other practical ministries that touch upon the plight of the poor. We thus have a great need for pastors who are not necessarily preachers like Rev. George Whitefield, but who nevertheless have the administrative acumen of a Rev. John Wesley or Pope Gregory the Great and can put together practical ministries that help alleviate the problems of the poor.<sup>3</sup>

I say this with a great deal of trepidation, because, as it now stands, the Black Church has made a grand assumption, and fatal miscalculation, that within the American church-state scheme—where the Church is split from the State by a complete wall of separation—that the secular society will produce laws, court opinions, and public policies that reflect and reinforce the values and ideas of the churches of Jesus Christ. My white brothers in the Puritan and Presbyterian church community have a healthy distrust of certain aspects of secular society and the government. The Baptist and the Anabaptist heritages have always had scathing critiques of the “worldliness” of secular civil polity. I am writing to suggest that the Black Church, and particularly the A.M.E. Church, attain a similar healthy distrust of the legal system, the court system, the bar, the bench, and the administration of justice. The truth is, the Black Church’s deeply held Christian values and interests are not safe with, or reflected in, the general ethos or praxis of the American bar and bench. See, e.g., Gustavus Myers, *History of the Supreme Court of the United States* (1912), *supra*, stating:

[The] lawyers themselves sprang from the ruling class, but with the fewest and most creditable exceptions, all others of that profession sought to ingratiate themselves into the favor of the rich by flattering, pleasing and serving them with an excess of zeal in stamping down the worker still further by statutes ingeniously borrowed from medieval law, or by harrowing the worker in the courts with lawsuits in which these attorneys by every subtle argument appealed to the prejudices of the judge, already antagonistic to the worker and prejudiced against him. Even if the judge, perchance, were impartially and leniently disposed, the laws, as they were, left him no choice. Reading the suits and speeches of the times, one sees clearly that the lawyers of the masters outdid even their clients in

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

asserting the masters' lordly, paramount rights and powers, and in denying that any rights attached to the under class.'

See, also, Donald G. Nieman, ed. *African American Life in the Post-Emancipation South, 1861-1900*, stating:

A worker under the best of circumstances usually lacked the resources to hire a lawyer and sue his employer, and a black worker faced the added problems of **racist** lawyers, judges, and juries and the danger that his complaints would lead to physical violence.<sup>4</sup>

And see, also, Charles Hamilton Houston, "The Need For Negro Lawyers," stating:

The social justification for the Negro lawyer as such in the United States today is the service he can render the race as an interpreter and proponent of its rights and aspiration. There are enough white lawyers to care for the ordinary legal business of the country if that were all that was involved. But experience has proved that the average white lawyer, especially in the South, cannot be relied upon to wage an uncompromising fight for equal rights for Negroes. He has too many conflicting interests, and usually himself profits as an individual by that very exploitation of the Negro which, as a lawyer, he would be called upon to attack and destroy.<sup>5</sup>

And, thus, the Black Church has made a fatal error in placing so much trust in the secular arm of the American church-state system. The Black Church has unjustly maintained a sort of "fatalistic" trust or an "otherworldly" belief in our secular American justice system—and this to the sorrow of both the African American churchmen and the poor. It is for this reason that my philosophy of Oxford Methodism holds that the Black Church should reorganize its ministries to include a battalion of highly-competent retired judges and senior lawyers who are *ordained* in the churches as "chancellors" (i.e., as senior elders with law degrees), and organized and set aside into separate and distinct ecclesiastical sub-units, for legal and taxation purposes, so that the Black Church can begin to function and to carry out effective social service and public interest ministries with competence.

Of course, there is nothing strange or new about the suggestion that ordained ministers should also be practicing lawyers or members of the bar and bench. In England, for instance, many of your counterparts in the Church of England sit as "Lords Spiritual" in the House of Lords,<sup>6</sup> and grapple with the exigencies of public policy, with an understanding that the Law of

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<sup>4</sup> Donald G. Nieman, ed. *African American Life in the Post-Emancipation South, 1861-1900*, Vol. 12 (New York: Garland Pub., 1994), p. 463.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Hamilton Houston, "The Need For Negro Lawyers," *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Jan., 1935), pp. 49-52.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., "U.K. Parliament," <https://www.parliament.uk/site-information/glossary/bishops/> ("Bishops. As senior members of the Church of England, which is the established church, some bishops are entitled to sit in the House of

Christ is the “law of equity”<sup>7</sup> which governs the practical and secular affairs of human relations.<sup>8</sup> By nature, then, the criteria of service as ordained ministers within that learned Church of England demands leaders with theological, jurisprudential, and administrative acumen—but not necessarily those who are able to preach like George Whitefield, Billy Graham, or Martin Luther King, Jr. Now preaching the Gospel is extremely important (Romans 10:14 “[h]ow then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”) and singing hymns of praise is important (Psalm 100:1 “[m]ake a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.”). But the practical administration of charity,<sup>9</sup> justice, equity, and judgment<sup>10</sup> are the most important objectives of the Church of Jesus Christ. In the Sacred Scriptures, this divine mandate to administer charity and to implement substantive justice comes from God’s dominion covenant with Adam and, later, with Noah, and, indeed, it predates the liturgical practices of the Levitical priesthood. (see, e.g., Exodus 18). This divine mandate to do justice and judgment is the primary distinguishing characteristic of the House of our dear Patriarch Abraham (Genesis 18:18-19 “... he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment...”). In fact, the prophet Amos assures us that this duty to keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment, is far more important to God than our religious gatherings and liturgical hymns and sermons and similar rituals, to wit:

I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.

Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.

Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.<sup>11</sup>

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Lords. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop of York, the Bishops of London, Durham and Winchester and 21 other bishops in order of seniority together form the Lords Spiritual.”)

<sup>7</sup> The fundamental “Law of Christ,” to wit, is to “love ye one another” (John 15:12); to do justice and judgment (Genesis 18:18-19; Proverbs 21: 1-3); to judge not according to appearance but to judge righteous judgments (John 7:24); and to do justice, judgment, and equity (Proverbs 1:2-3).

<sup>8</sup> The central message of Jesus of Nazareth was to love ye one another (John 15:12); to do justice and judgment (Genesis 18:18-19; Proverbs 21:1-3); to judge not according to appearance but to judge righteous judgments (John 7:24); and to do justice, judgment, and equity (Proverbs 1:2-3), and that message was sown into the English common law through the canon law of the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England, the English Inns of Court, and the law faculty of Oxford and Cambridge universities.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:13 (“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the **greatest of these is charity.**”)

<sup>10</sup> The fundamental “Law of Christ,” to wit, is to “love ye one another” (John 15:12); to do justice and judgment (Genesis 18:18-19; Proverbs 21: 1-3); to judge not according to appearance but to judge righteous judgments (John 7:24); and to do justice, judgment, and equity (Proverbs 1:2-3).

<sup>11</sup> Amos 5: 21-24.

Indeed, we are to understand that preaching, singing, liturgy, charity, and the administration of equity, judgment, and justice constitute one unbroken chain linking the gifts of the Holy Spirit within the body of Christ.<sup>12</sup> And while our African American churches have become quite proficient at preaching, singing, and administering of the sacraments, we still have largely only superficial charitable ministries, and next to no social justice, legal assistance or legislative ministries. The result is a disfigured conception of both ministry and church within the African American community.<sup>13</sup>

But why is this so? In colonial British North America, and later, in the new United States, the African American religious and church tradition—nourished within the limitations of the institution of chattel slavery—the Black Church emerged as, perhaps, the most important institution within the African American community. The Black Churches' natural limitations placed great restraints upon what it might aspire to do, realistically, given the socioeconomic and political constraints of its environment. That it could conceivably imagine the administration of ecclesiastical courts or the development of a well-trained chancery to carry out its social justice mission was impossible. When African American lawyers and judges first entered the American legal profession in significant numbers, which was only as recently as the early part of the twentieth century, the American legal profession and legal education had already become thoroughly secularized. It is likely that African American jurists and lawyers, who would not have known to link the Christian religion to natural law, fundamental law, and secular jurisprudence, would have settled for a separation of church-state doctrine that would marginalized African American pastors and churches. African American civil rights lawyers who were trained at Howard University and learned under the great Charles Hamilton Houston (1895 – 1954) were not encouraged to appreciate the Christian foundations of Anglo-American law or to galvanize the Christian power of the black church in support of general equity for the black community. The theology and philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929 – 1968), especially as they were expressed in his *Letter from the Birmingham City Jail* (1963), certainly helped to bridge the gap between American constitutional law and jurisprudence and Christian theology, but neither African American lawyers nor pastors have since developed a practical program for instilling Christian equity or ideals of social justice into legislative enactment, administrative decisions, or court opinions. Oxford Methodism thus seeks to redirect the attention of African American churches and pastors to the various injustices within the court system, and to encourage them to promote law practice in areas that impact the public interest as

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<sup>12</sup> Luke 4:18 (“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.”)

<sup>13</sup> Most African American Christians—who have been suppressed by centuries of slavery and discrimination—know not how to decipher the delicate balance involving “Separation of Church and State.” See, e.g., Algernon Sidney Crapsey, *Religion and Politics*, supra, pp. 248-249 (“To speak of the separation of church and state is to speak of the separation of soul and body.... The church without the state is a disembodied spirit; the state without the church is a putrefying corpse. When the church is true to itself and true to its God it becomes the conscience of the state. Then the state must be in subjection to the church, or the state must perish. When the church forgets its high calling, and becomes simply a function of the state, then both church and state go down in one common ruin. The present separation of the religious from the civil and political life of the nation is cause for grave apprehension for the future of the American people.”)

a legitimate extension of the ordained pastoral ministry of the Christian church. Thus, it is appropriate here to point out that the first ecclesiastical degrees were law degrees awarded at Roman Catholic universities in Medieval Europe.

The first academic degrees were law degrees, and the first law degrees were doctorates. The foundations of the first universities in Europe were the glossators of the 11th century, which were schools of law. The first European university, Bologna, was founded by four legal scholars in the 12th century. The first academic title of "doctor" applied to scholars of law. The degree and title were not applied to scholars of other disciplines until the 13th century.

The University of Bologna served as the model for other law schools of the medieval age. While it was common for students of law to visit and study at schools in other countries, that was not the case with England. This was because of the English rejection of Roman law. Although the University of Oxford and University of Cambridge did teach canon law up until the English Reformation, its importance was always superior to civil law in those institutions.<sup>14</sup>

To that end, and along the same lines, African American clergy and churches should consider the English experience with developing trained clergymen who were proficient in both law and religion, to wit:<sup>15</sup>

<b>Type of Law</b>	<b>Education/ Training</b>	<b>Professional Title/ Degree</b>	<b>Secular/ Church Affiliation</b>
I. English Common Law	Inns of Court	Barristers; Solicitors; and Sergeants-at-Law. (No university training required)	Non-Clergy or Clergy.
II. Royal Law (Equity or Chancery; Statutes; Ordinances; Decrees)	Inns of Court; Inns of Chancery; Sergeant's Inn; Oxford Univ.; Univ. of Cambridge	Barristers; Solicitors; Sergeants, Clergy; J.C.D (doctor of canon law); LL.D. (Doctor of Canon/ Civil Law).	Clergy (Roman Catholic; Church of England)
III. Roman Civil Law	Roman Church; Oxford; Cambridge, etc.	Clergy; J.C.D (doctor of canon law); LL.D. (Doctor of Canon/ Civil Law).	Clergy (Roman Catholic; Church of England)
IV. Canon Law	Roman Church; Oxford; Cambridge.	Clergy; J.C.D (doctor of canon law); LL.D.	Clergy (Roman Catholic; Church of England)

<sup>14</sup> "Law Degree," [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law\\_degree](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_degree)

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., Roscoe Pound, *Legal Profession in the Middle Ages*, 3 Notre Dame Law Review 229, 234 (1944).

		(Doctor of Canon/ Civil Law).	
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Significantly, throughout a large segment of English history, the entire legal system, both secular and ecclesiastical, was controlled by the clergy. The royal judges and justices were typically clergy:

Until the Conquest, the law was discharged by men of substance and of rank—very often the men of the church, learned in the law, who some centuries later provided the first professional ‘lay’ lawyers with their own model. When it is considered how swiftly William and his Norman barons gave to England a measured administration after their arrival, the best view must still stand that already, in Anglo-Saxon times, the Normans and English were kinsmen.... This nascent legal profession breathed on and fertilised the older systems which had been represented in England, and the slate was wiped clean of tribal inconsequences. The educational houses of the medieval era were the monasteries, and thus the vestibules of all learning. **It was natural therefore that the legal gentlemen of the age were priests and not lawyers**—the post-Norman period followed the Anglo-Saxon tradition—for example, Bishop Aethelric and his monks of Abbingdon, with men such as Alfwin , and the brothers Sacol and Godric.”<sup>16</sup>

The archbishops of Canterbury and York and the bishops tended to be the chief judicial officers. “As to actual judicial authority, it seems, at least in the time of [the Anglo-Saxon king] Cnut, to have lain chiefly in the hands of the bishop, who was assisted by the secular arm of the ealdorman (earl) and the executive power of the latter or his deputy, whether a sheriff or other officer.”<sup>17</sup> “The shire court referred to the magnates, both lay and spiritual, who were entitled to sit in council for the shire and was a very early form of representative democracy. The Shire Courts themselves met twice a year.... The gathering was headed by nobility, usually Bishops, Earls, Abbots or Lords. The practice of holding shire courts began in Wessex and was later used throughout the rest of England.”<sup>18</sup>

After 1066, the royal judges who now presided over the manor courts, hundred courts, and shire courts were clergymen. Appeals from these common law courts could go directly to the king himself, but he eventually assigned the task of hearing these appeals to his Lord Chancellor, who was “keeper of the king’s conscience” and who was himself a bishop or archbishop in the Roman Church of England. The Lord Chancellor’s judicial authority was eventually organized

<sup>16</sup> Timothy Daniell, *The Lawyers* (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Oceana Pub., 1976), pp. 45-46.

<sup>17</sup> Frank Zinkeisen, “The Anglo-Saxon Courts of Law,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Mar. 1895), pp. 132-144.

<sup>18</sup> “Shire Court,” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shire\\_court](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shire_court).

into the Court of Chancery, where equity jurisprudence could be administered in order to correct the inefficiencies or injustices incurred from the common law. William I separated the common law courts from the ecclesiastical courts. However, it must be remembered that these ecclesiastical courts had an expansive jurisdiction, covering issues that regarding marriage, divorce, the family, the succession of estates upon death, and general jurisdiction over all clergymen. Today, it must be remembered—and it certainly behooves American pastors and theologians to acknowledge—that English jurisprudence which came from England’s ecclesiastical courts were incorporated into America’s common law and statutory law following the American Revolution. Stated differently, England’s ecclesiastical jurisprudence was considered to be part and parcel of English common law.<sup>19</sup> Certainly, then, as fellow Christians who represent a large constituency of persons of African descent, who have been historically oppressed by legal systems, the African Methodist Episcopal Church ought to have an interest in understanding and, to the extent possible, restoring those Christian components within American jurisprudence that will liberate African American and other oppressed communities. Any serious interest in this field on the part of the A.M.E. Church will necessitate the need for serious Christian jurists and lawyers.

Ordaining Christian jurists and lawyers as chancellors, justiciars, and presbyters was thoroughly woven into the Roman and Anglican church traditions, and even within the Methodist tradition. For instance, Bishop Thomas Coke (1747 - 1814), who was an important aide to the Rev. John Wesley (1703 – 1791) and the first overseer of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, held the Doctor of Civil Law degree from Oxford.<sup>20</sup> And, indeed, many of the

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<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., Richard C. Dale, “The Adoption of the Common Law in the American Colonies,” *The American Law Register* (September 1882), pp. 562 – 565, published by the University of Pennsylvania Law Review.

<sup>20</sup> “Thomas Coke (1747 – 1814),” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Coke\\_\(bishop\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Coke_(bishop)), stating:

Born in Brecon, South Wales, his father, Barthomolew, was a well-to-do apothecary. Coke, who was only 5-foot and 1 inch tall and prone to being overweight, read jurisprudence at Jesus College, Oxford, which has a strong Welsh tradition, graduating Bachelor of Arts, then Master of Arts in 1770, and Doctor of Civil Law in 1775. On returning to Brecon he served as mayor in 1772.

In the same year as his mayoralty he was ordained in the Church of England and served a curacy at South Petherton in Somerset. He had already allied himself with the Methodist movement, and this made for trouble when a new rector arrived in the parish. Coke had begun to hold cottage services and open services of the sort promoted by John Wesley. He was dismissed from his post on Easter Sunday 1777, and his parishioners celebrated at the rector’s behest by ringing the church bells and opening a hogshead of cider. He returned to Petherton in 1807 and preached to a crowd of 2,000.

He met John Wesley in August 1776, becoming one of his closest assistants. Wesley called Coke “the flea” because he seemed always to be hopping around on his missions.

He was appointed Superintendent of the London District in 1780 and President of the Methodist Church in Ireland in 1782 – a function he was to serve many times in the coming decades. Following the American Revolution, most of the Anglican clergy who had been in America came back to England. Wesley asked the Bishop of London to ordain some ministers for the New World, but he declined. At this point Wesley still considered only a canonically consecrated bishop capable of conferring Holy Orders.

foremost theologians in Christianity have been either lawyers or had legal training, including Tertullian (155- 220 A.D.);<sup>21</sup> Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430 A.D.);<sup>22</sup> Lanfranc (1005 – 1089);<sup>23</sup> Henry de Bracton (1210 – 1268);<sup>24</sup> Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274);<sup>25</sup> Thomas More (1478 – 1535);<sup>26</sup> Martin Luther (1483 – 1546);<sup>27</sup> John Calvin (1509 – 1564);<sup>28</sup> Thomas Helwys (1575 -

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However, in September 1784, in Bristol, Wesley consecrated Coke as Superintendent, a title replaced in 1787 in America by that of Bishop (Greek episkopos) in spite of Wesley's strong disapproval ("superintendent" is etymologically equivalent to episkopos). Since Coke was already a priest (Greek presbuteros) or presbyter in the Church of England, some interpret this consecration as the equivalent of episcopal consecration. Wesley's action took place two months before the consecration in Aberdeen of Samuel Seabury as bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the USA.

Coke set sail for New York; during the voyage he read Augustine's *Confessions*, Virgil's *Georgics*, biographies of Francis Xavier (Jesuit missionary to India) and David Brainerd (Puritan missionary to North American aboriginals), and a treatise on episcopacy.

A conference of Methodist preachers was held at Baltimore, starting on Christmas Day 1784, at which Coke and Francis Asbury were elected superintendents, and the Church was constituted as an independent body under the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church. On 27 December Coke ordained deacons and presbyters and consecrated Asbury as Superintendent; Coke and Asbury are regarded as having been jointly the first superintendents of the Methodist Church in America (the American Methodist Conference formally endorsed the title of Bishop in 1787).

<sup>21</sup> "Tertullian," Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tertullian> ("Tertullian has been claimed to have been a trained lawyer and an ordained priest.")

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., Saint Augustine, *Confessions* (New York, N.Y.: Barnes & Nobles Classics, 2007), Book III ("Those studies I was then pursuing, generally accounted as respectable, were aimed at distinction in the courts of law").

<sup>23</sup> Lanfranc was a renowned Italian jurist who became Archbishop of Canterbury during the reign of King William I.

<sup>24</sup> Henry de Bracton was a most influential priest and lawyer, whose writings on natural law, constitutional law, and church and state laid the foundations for English law and jurisprudence. See, e.g., "Henry de Bracton," Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry\\_de\\_Bracton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_de_Bracton)

<sup>25</sup> "Thomas Aquinas," Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Aquinas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Aquinas)

Thomas of Aquino; 1225 – 7 March 1274) was an Italian Dominican friar and priest who was an influential philosopher, theologian and jurist in the tradition of scholasticism.... His influence on Western thought is considerable, and much of modern philosophy is derived from his ideas, particularly in the areas of ethics, natural law, metaphysics, and political theory.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Moore, who was a great English lawyer, jurist, and Lord Chancellor, is venerated as a saint in the Roman Catholic Church, although he was never officially ordained as a priest. See "Thomas More," Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_More](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_More).

<sup>27</sup> Martin Luther first trained for a career in law, when he read the Code of Justinian, before deciding to become an Augustinian monk.

<sup>28</sup> John Calvin first trained for a career in law and received the French legal credentials of a practicing lawyer before he decided to become a Protestant theologian and pastor.

1616);<sup>29</sup> Bishop William Warburton (1698 - 1779);<sup>30</sup> and many others. Thus, it is no accident that when the Medieval Roman Church established the first universities of Europe, the first ever degrees to be awarded from those august religious centers were law degrees that were bestowed upon clergymen.<sup>31</sup>

### **Payne Theological Seminary- Proposed Certificate Program for Lawyers**

To that end, I am writing to you with the objective of presenting training in law and the law degree as an adequate qualification for the ordained ministry. Ongoing discussion along these lines are being held between the faculty at Whitefield Theological Seminary and myself. A few years ago, I connected with the President of Payne Theological Seminary, Dr. Michael Brown, and another member of the Payne faculty, in order to propose a certification program for Christian lawyers. The discussions were productive and should be revisited with the objective of making an action plan to bring our wonderful ideas into fruition. I propose that the A.M.E. Church seriously move in the direction of ordaining serious Christian jurists and lawyers as presbyters—not solely for preaching the Gospel, but for grappling with serious church-state issues and social injustices that undermine the social fabric of African American and other communities of color. It is not only important, but it is high time, that the secular community hears the Gospel expressed through a different medium than traditional preaching, but rather it needs to hear that same Gospel expressed through sophisticated legal memoranda, appellate briefs, oral argumentation, legislative initiatives, administrative decisions, and executive orders on social, political, and economic issues that matter most to the poor and the oppressed.

I do not mean to state that Black churches should adopt ancient or outdated English practices and views of law or legal education, but rather the point that I am making is that Black

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<sup>29</sup> Thomas Helwys, who was one of the principal founders of the Baptist denomination, was also a trained English lawyer and a graduate of Gray's Inn of Court.

<sup>30</sup> Bishop William Warburton was both a lawyer and a politician. He was educated at Oakham and Newark, and at age 16 he was apprenticed to become an attorney. At age 21, Warburton became a licensed solicitor—which is not quite the same as a “barrister,” which is a more advanced position within the English legal system. In other words, the “solicitor” is not one who had been called the bar. Warburton never advanced to the position of “barrister,” because he became interested in theology and a career in the Church. See, e.g., “Warburton, William (1698 – 1779)” <https://snaccooperative.org/view/13223132>.

<sup>31</sup> See, e.g., “Law Degree,” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law\\_degree](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_degree)

The first academic degrees were law degrees, and the first law degrees were doctorates. The foundations of the first universities in Europe were the glossators of the 11th century, which were schools of law. The first European university, Bologna, was founded by four legal scholars in the 12th century. The first academic title of “doctor” applied to scholars of law. The degree and title were not applied to scholars of other disciplines until the 13th century.

The University of Bologna served as the model for other law schools of the medieval age. While it was common for students of law to visit and study at schools in other countries, that was not the case with England. This was because of the English rejection of Roman law. Although the University of Oxford and University of Cambridge did teach canon law up until the English Reformation, its importance was always superior to civil law in those institutions.

churches should seriously re-think what it means to be an ordained minister beyond the rituals of liturgical practice, and what the “juris doctor,” the “master of laws” or “doctor of laws” degrees have to offer the ministerial services of the Christian church, particularly in the areas of church administration, charity, and social justice initiatives.

## II.

Oxford Methodism was conceived by the undersigned author while working with various African American pastors within the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Church of God in Christ (Pentecostal), the Church of God the Bibleway (Apostolic), and other nondenominational churches throughout the Tampa Bay community and central Florida. The undersigned author notes that, as a general rule, African American pastors have only a very vague understanding of the Christian foundations of Anglo-American constitutional law and jurisprudence and, as such, they are greatly inhibited from not only preaching a more comprehensive and responsible social gospel, but also from imagining the sort of outreach ministries that will have a tangible impact upon their parishes or local communities. Thus, Oxford Methodism seeks to re-introduce, and to promote, the “Augustinian” conception of law and jurisprudence<sup>32</sup> among African and African American pastors and churches throughout the United States and the world.<sup>33</sup>

In both the Lutheran and Reformed Protestant traditions, the theology of the North African Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430 A.D.) is foundational.<sup>34</sup> In the Roman Catholic Church,

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<sup>32</sup> St. Augustine, *The Confessions* (New York, N.Y.: Barnes & Nobles Classics, 2007), p. 36. (“Thus, what is agreed upon by convention, and confirmed by custom or the law of any city or nation, may not be violated at the lawless pleasure of any, whether citizen or stranger. For any part that is not consistent with its whole is unseemly. Nevertheless, when god commands anything contrary to the customs or compacts of any nation, even though it were never done by them before, it is to be done; and if it has been interrupted, it is to be restored; and if it has never been established, it is to be established.... For, just as among authorities in human society, the greater authority is obeyed before the lesser, so also must god be above all.”). And see St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), “God Himself, the fountain of all justice....” *The City of God*, p. 27. “Justice being taken away, then, what are kingdoms but great robberies? For what are robberies themselves, but little kingdoms?” *The City of God*, supra, p. 112. “And justice, whose office it is to render every man his due, whereby there is in man himself a certain just order of nature, so that the soul is subjected to God, and the flesh to the soul, and consequently both soul and flesh to God—does not this virtue demonstrate that it is as yet rather laboring towards its end than resting in its finished work?” *The City of God*, supra, p. 678. “[A] republic cannot administered without justice.” *The City of God*, supra, p. 699. “For by consulting the Gospel we learn that Christ is Truth.” *The City of God*, supra, p. 645. “That the last judgment, then, shall be administered by Jesus Christ in the manner predicted in the sacred writings is denied or doubted by no one....” *The City of God*, supra, p. 762.

<sup>33</sup> I believe that Martin Luther King, Jr.’s *Letter from the Birmingham City Jail* (1963), for instance, is the clearest exemplification of “Augustinian” jurisprudence.

<sup>34</sup> See, e.g., Kenneth Talbot and Gary Crampton, *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism, and Arminianism* (Lakeland, FL.: Whitefield Media Publishing, 1990), p. 114 (“Calvinists avow that the chief theologian of the first century church was the apostle Paul. We believe that this book has fully documented the fact that apostolic doctrine was that of Reformed theology. The second and third century church did not produce a systematic theology treatise, per se, but the writings of the Patristic period reveal strong leanings toward Calvinism. The doctrines of these early years were further developed during the time of Saint Augustine (A.D. 354- 430), one of the greatest theological and philosophical minds that God has ever so seen fit to give to His church. Augustine was so strongly Calvinistic, that

Augustine is both a Saint and a Father of the Western Church. Moreover, Augustine’s theology might be considered the foundation of western constitutional law and jurisprudence—i.e., the “Augustinian” constitutional order of family, church, and state.<sup>35</sup> The Augustinian family-church-state constitutional order is a conception of constitutional law and jurisprudence.<sup>36</sup> The family unit is the cornerstone of that system. Oxford Methodism is especially designed to introduce, or reintroduce, Augustinian theology to the A.M.E. and other predominantly-black church denominations in the United States, the Caribbean, and all parts of the Pan-African world that have been impacted by the institution of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. This is especially important, because, throughout the western hemisphere, slavery devastated both gender and family relations amongst persons of African descent.

### **The Augustinian Constitution: Puritanism, the Family, and Family Government.**<sup>37</sup>

#### **THE AUGUSTINIAN CONSTITUTION: “Puritanism, the Family, and Family Government”**

##### **I. Puritanism and Family Law: Christian Theology**

1. Sanctification of the Family Unit
  - a. The Covenants of Noah and Abraham
  - b. The First Passover and Circumcision— Family Sacraments
  
2. The Family Covenant
  - a. Family as Church
  - b. Family Prayer and Family Time

John Calvin referred to himself as an Augustinian theologian. Augustine’s theology was dominant in the church for a millennium.”)

<sup>35</sup> The term “ancient Augustinian constitutional order” means the synthesis of ancient Greek and Roman philosophy with the Christian religion, as reflected in Augustine of Hippo’s *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950). See, also, Ruben Alvarado, *Calvin and the Whigs: A Study in Historical Political Theology* (The Netherlands: Pantocrator Press, 2017), pp. 7-8:

In dating the origins of Western civilization, and consequently of its constitution, the publication of Augustine’s *De Civitate Dei* [Of the City of God] serves as well as any for a reference point. This book was perhaps the most important ever written in the West; for a thousand years after its publication it exercised an influence unrivalled by any other, besides the Bible itself. For good reason, one writer calls it ‘The Charter of Christendom.’

<sup>36</sup> St. Augustine, *The Confessions* (New York, N.Y.: Barnes & Nobles Classics, 2007), p. 36. (“Thus, what is agreed upon by convention, and confirmed by custom or the law of any city or nation, may not be violated at the lawless pleasure of any, whether citizen or stranger. For any part that is not consistent with its whole is unseemly. Nevertheless, when god commands anything contrary to the customs or compacts of any nation, even though it were never done by them before, it is to be done; and if it has been interrupted, it is to be restored; and if it has never been established, it is to be established.... For, just as among authorities in human society, the greater authority is obeyed before the lesser, so also must god be above all.”)

<sup>37</sup> This chart was taken from the theological writings of the Reverend Richard Baxter (1615 – 1691). Richard Baxter, *A Christian Directory (or, A Sum of Practical Theology, and Cases of Conscience)*, Part 2, Economics (reprinted in Columba, S.C. on January 18, 2019).

c. Holy Education of Children

3. The Family as Basic Unit of the Christian Commonwealth

**II. Puritanism and Family Law: Christian Theology**

4. General Duties and Obligations during Marriage

- a. Duty to Help Each Other to Salvation
- b. Duty to Guard against Dissension and Discord
- c. Duty to Maintain Conjugal Love

5. Specific Duties and Obligations during Marriage

- a. Husband's duties to wife
- b. Wife's duties to husband
- c. Wife's duties regarding, and control over, marital property

6. Cases of Conscience: Marriage, Separation and Divorce

**III. Sacred Duties of the Parent-Child Relation**

7. Duty of Infant Baptism

8. Duty of Confirmation

9. Duty to Train Children to be in Obedience to Parents, etc.

10. Duty of Correction

11. General Duties and Obligations of Children to Parents

12. General Duties and Obligations of Children to God

13. Duty of Parents to provide a Christian Education

**IV. Sacred Duties of the Lord's Day and of Daily Living**

14. Duty of Holiness on the Lord's Day

15. Duty of Holy Living Each Day of the Week

16. Duty of Holy Instruction to Servants and Slaves on the Lord's Day

I sincerely believe that somehow, the evangelical Wesleyan-Arminianism, with its emphasis upon individual holiness and its lack of a robust church-state relations ministry, have misconstrued or failed to acknowledge, the seminal nature of Augustinian constitutional theology and its influence upon family law and secular jurisprudence. Here, the Wesleyan Methodists could learn much from the Puritans of colonial New England who were saddled with the responsibility of founding and administering colonies, and they did so upon an understanding of

Puritan covenant theology, *placing the institution of the family*<sup>38</sup> *at the foundation of ecclesiastical and civil government.*<sup>39</sup>

In colonial New England, the practice of Christian organization of family government continued—a form of government, as you and I well know, was ruthlessly denied to African slaves and especially to African American fathers.<sup>40</sup> This practice of family government was deeply-rooted in the Sacred Scriptures, to wit:

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<sup>38</sup> See, e.g., J. Andrew Dearman, “The Family in the Old Testament,” *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* (April 1, 1998), stating:

The Hebrew term to ‘Family’ is bet’ ab, literally rendered as ‘father’s house,’ reflecting a male-headed, multigenerational household as the basic unit in ancient Israel. A household was shaped by endogamous marriage rites, patrilineal succession, and inheritance customs that privileged the eldest son. . . . Another term related to the concept of ‘family’ is mispaha, often rendered ‘clan.’ A mispaha is a kinship unit of related fathers’ houses. An association of related ‘clans’ would comprise a tribe (sebet).

See, also, Brenda Colijn, “Family in the Bible: A Brief Survey,” *Ashland Theological Journal* (AJS 2004), stating: “The Old Testament affirms the biological family, which is assumed to be the basic unit of society.”

<sup>39</sup> This Puritan belief was in keeping with traditional Catholic and Anglican views on paterfamilias. See, e.g., Saint Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library), pp. 694-695:

And therefore, although our righteous fathers (i.e., The Patriarchs) had slaves, and administered their domestic affairs so as to distinguish between the condition of slaves and the heirship of sons in regard to the blessings of this life, yet in regard to the worship of God, in whom we hope for eternal blessings, they took an equally loving oversight of all the members of their household. And this is so much in accordance with the natural order, that the head of the household was called paterfamilias; and this name has been so generally accepted, that even before those whose rule is unrighteous are glad to apply it to themselves. But those who are true fathers of their households desire and endeavor that all the members of their households, equally with their own children, should worship and win God, and should come to that heavenly home in which the duty of ruling men is no longer necessary, because the duty of caring for their everlasting happiness has also ceased; but, until they reach that home, masters ought to feel their position of authority a greater burden than servants their service. And if any member of the family interrupts the domestic peace by disobedience, he is corrected either by word or blow, or some kind of just and legitimate punishment, such as society permits, that he may himself be the better for it, and be readjusted to the family harmony from which he had dislocated himself. . . . Since, then, the house ought to be the beginning or element of the city, and every beginning bears reference to some end of its own kind, and every element to the integrity of the whole of which it is an element, it follows plainly enough that domestic peace has a relation to civic peace—in other words, that the well-ordered concord of civic obedience and domestic rule has a relation to the well-ordered concord of civic obedience and civic rule. And therefore it follows, further, that the father of the family ought to frame his domestic rule in accordance with the law of the city, so that the household may be in harmony with the civic order.

<sup>40</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Chapter XVIII: Future Condition of Three Races- Part I (“The negro has no family; woman is merely the temporary companion of his pleasures, and his children are upon an equality with himself from the moment of their birth. Am I to call it a proof of God’s mercy or a visitation of his wrath, that man in certain states appears to be insensible to his extreme wretchedness, and almost affects, with a depraved taste, the cause of his misfortunes? The negro, who is plunged in this abyss of evils, scarcely feels his own calamitous situation. Violence made him a slave, and the habit of servitude gives him the thoughts and desires of a slave; he admires his tyrants more than he hates them, and finds his joy and his pride in the servile imitation of those who oppress him: his understanding is degraded to the level of his soul.”) See, also, Roderick O. Ford, *Labor Matters: The African American Labor Crisis, 1861-Present* (Tampa, FL: Xlibris Pub., 2015):

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”

-- 1 Corinthians 11:3 (KJV)

This practice of family government was in essence the English common law of the family as well as the ecclesiastical law of the Church of England— both of these laws were incorporated into the common law of the United States during the 1800s. Under both the Anglo-American common law and the English ecclesiastical law, the husband was the unquestioned head of the family and household. See, e.g., *American Jurisprudence (First Edition)*, “Head of Family” § 10:

### § 10 Head of Family

The husband, unless incapacitated from executing the authority and performing the duty, is head of the family. This is so, not only at common law, but under the Married Women’s Acts. It is not the purpose of these acts to depose the husband from the position given him by the common law as the head of the family. It is necessary to the unity and preservation of the family, which is regarded as the basis of the state, to have a single head with control and power, and the husband is made that head and, in return, is made responsible for the maintenance and, at common law, for the conduct of his wife. Such fundamental authority is necessary to his duty to protect and provide for his wife and children.

The authority of the husband as the head of the family gives him the right, acting reasonably, to direct the family’s affairs and to determine where and what the home of the family shall be, and thus, to establish the matrimonial and family domicile. The view has been taken that this right of the husband is not limited to

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Writing on this same point, **Frederick Douglass** observed that ‘[s]lavery had no recognition of fathers, as none of families. That the mother was a slave was enough for its deadly purpose. By its law the child followed the condition of its mother. The father might be a freeman and the child a slave. The father might be a white man, glorying in the purity of his Anglo-Saxon blood, and his child ranked with the blackest slaves. Father he might be, and not be husband, and could sell his own child without incurring reproach, if in its veins coursed one drop of African blood.’

Forced concubinage and the legalized rape black females were not uncommon during the period of American slavery. See, also, W.E.B. Du Bois, *Writings* (New York, N.Y.: The Library of America, 1986), p. 368. (“The red stain of bastardy, which two centuries of **systematic legal defilement of Negro women** had stamped upon his race, meant not only the loss of ancient African chastity, but also the hereditary weight of a mass of corruption from white adulterers, threatening almost the obliteration of the Negro home.”) *Id.* (“O Southern Gentlemen! If you deplore their [African Americans] presence here, thy ask, Who brought us? Why you cry, Deliver us from the vision of intermarriage, they answer that legal marriage is infinitely better than **systematic concubinage** and prostitution. And if in just fury you accuse their vagabonds of violating women, they also in fury quite as just my reply: The wrong which your gentlemen have done against helpless black women in defiance of your own laws is written on the foreheads of two million of mulattoes, and written in ineffaceable blood.”) See, also, Moynihan, Daniel P. *The Negro family: The Case for National Action*. Washington, DC: Office of Policy Planning and Research, U.S. Department of Labor (March 1965)(“**It was by destroying the Negro family under slavery that white America broke the will of the Negro people.**”)

the state or country in which the parties live at the time of their marriage, but in these days of easy communication between different countries and different parts of the same country, he may exercise it, where acting reasonably, in a way which will change his citizenship and allegiance. But he must act with due regard to the welfare, comfort, and peace of mind of his wife, and to her legal status as the mistress of his home, his companion, the sharer of his fortune, and not his servant. She is under duty to submit to such reasonable governance of the family by the husband.

A husband is responsible to society for the good order and decency of the household, and this is true under Married Women's Acts endowing married women with separateness and equality of legal responsibility.

The wife is the head of the family in so far as the husband is incapacitated from performing the duty.

Thus, paterfamilias was officially established in Anglo-American common law. This development took several centuries to complete. England's common law of family, estates, and inheritance had slowly evolved under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church since the days of William the Conqueror. In England, prior to 1534, the doctrine of paterfamilias had multifaceted elements of native Anglo-Saxon tribal culture, imperial Roman culture, and ancient Hebrew culture. Respecting each of these traditions, the Christian faith confirmed, substantiated, and reinforced the idea that the father was the head of the home and family,<sup>41</sup> and that the family was the cornerstone of society, the church, and the state.<sup>42</sup> To the Puritans and orthodox Anglicans, the family unit was considered to be "a church." "Therefore Christian families are called churches," concluded the Anglican-Puritan theologian Richard Baxter, "because they consist of holy persons, that worship God, and learn, and love, and obey his word.... [W]ell-governed families are blessed with the special presence and favour of God. They are his churches where he is worshipped; his houses where he dwelleth: he is engaged both by love and promise to bless, protect, and prosper them, Psal. i. 3; cxxviii."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> See, e.g., Richard Baxter, *A Christian Directory Or, a Sum of Practical Theology, And Cases of Conscience* (Part 2 Christian Economics)(reprinted in Columbia, S.C. on January 18, 2019), p. 61 ("The husband is to be the mouth of the family.... He must be as it were the priest of the household....").

<sup>42</sup> See, e.g., Richard Baxter, *A Christian Directory Or, a Sum of Practical Theology, And Cases of Conscience* (Part 2 Christian Economics)(reprinted in Columbia, S.C. on January 18, 2019), p. 29. ("the particular family relations are expressly sanctified. The family complete consisteth of three pairs of relations; husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants. Husbands must love their wives with a holy love in the Lord, even as 'the Lord loved the church, who gave himself for it, to sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church.' Eph. V. 25-27. 'Wives must submit themselves to their husbands as unto the Lord; and be subject to them, as the church is to Christ,' Eph. V. 22-24. 'Children must obey their parents in the Lord,' Eph. Vi. 1. 'Parents must bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' Eph. Vi.4.")

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

**Manhood: A Priestly Function in the Church and Home (1 Corinthians 11:3)<sup>44</sup>**

Jesus Christ (Head of Church)	Father (Head of Home)
Priest/ Presbyter	Husband
Church	Home (Wife/ Children)
Obey/ Administer/ Teach the Law of Christ	Obey/ Administer/ Teach the Law of Christ

Hence, the influence of ancient Hebrew-Jewish theology upon Puritan and Anglo-American common law of family was quite significant but is almost absent from modern Methodism. Oxford Methodism’s message to the Black Church is that, until the institution of the family, and family law jurisprudence, with the father placed at the head of the family, be instilled into the *ecclesiology* of the Black Church (i.e., the family itself must be the cornerstone of the church), then it can only have a negligible influence upon the plight of the African peoples.

Heretofore, African Methodism has failed to honestly construe comprehensively the relations between white men and black men, between white men and black women, between white feminism and its impact upon black family relations, and the resulting “matriarchal” structure of the African American family that has emerged since slavery.<sup>45</sup> Its current policy of

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<sup>44</sup> (1 Corinthians 11:3, stating “[b]ut I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”)

<sup>45</sup> See, also, Moynihan, Daniel P. *The Negro family: The Case for National Action*. Washington, DC: Office of Policy Planning and Research, U.S. Department of Labor (March 1965) stating, inter alia, that

When Jim Crow made its appearance towards the end of the 19th century, it may be speculated that it was **the Negro male who was most humiliated thereby**; the male was more likely to use public facilities, which became segregated once the process began, and just as important, segregation, and the submissiveness it exacts, is surely more destructive to the male than to the female personality. **Keeping the Negro ‘in his place’ can be translated as keeping the Negro male in his place: the female was not a threat to anyone.** Unquestionably, these events worked against the emergence of a strong father figure....

In essence, the Negro community has been forced into a *matriarchal structure* which, because it is to out of line with the rest of the American society, seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole, and imposes a crushing burden on the Negro male....

A fundamental fact of Negro American family life is the often reversed roles of husband and wife. Robert O. Blood, Jr. and Donald M. Wolfe, in a study of Detroit families, note that ‘Negro husbands have unusually low power,’ and while this is characteristic of all low income families, the pattern pervades the Negro social structure: ‘the cumulative result of discrimination in jobs..., the segregated housing, and the poor schooling of Negro men’....

The President’s Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity, making a preliminary report on employment in 1964 of over 16,000 companies with nearly 5 million employees, revealed this pattern with dramatic emphasis.

In this work force, Negro males outnumber Negro females by a ratio of 4 to 1. Yet Negro males

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represent only 1.2 percent of all males in white collar occupations, while Negro females represent 3.1 percent of the total female white collar work force. Negro males represent 1.1 percent of all male professionals, whereas Negro females represent roughly 6 percent of all female professionals. Again, in technician occupations, Negro males represent 2.1 percent of all male technicians while Negro females represent roughly 10 percent of all female technicians. It would appear therefore that there are proportionately 4 times as many Negro females in significant white collar jobs than Negro males....

Negro females in skilled jobs are almost the same as that of all females in such jobs....

This pattern is to be seen in the Federal government, where special efforts have been made recently to insure equal employment opportunity for Negroes....

However, it may well be that these efforts have redounded mostly to the benefit of Negro women, and may even have accentuated the comparative disadvantage of Negro men....

Among nonprofessional Labor Department employees

- where the most employment opportunities exist for all groups
- Negro women outnumber Negro men 4 to 1, and average almost one grade higher in classification.

The testimony to the effects of these patterns in Negro family structure is wide-spread, and hardly to be doubted.

**Whitney Young:** “Historically, in the matriarchal Negro society, mothers made sure that if one of their children had a chance for higher education the daughter was the one to pursue it.”

“The effect on family functioning and role performance of this historical experience [economic deprivation] is what you might predict. Both as a husband and as a father the Negro male is made to feel inadequate, not because he is unlovable or unaffectionate, lacks intelligence or even a gray flannel suit. But in a society that measures a man by the size of his pay check, he doesn’t stand very tall in a comparison with his white counterpart. To this situation he may react with withdrawal, bitterness toward society, aggression both within the family and racial group, self-hatred, or crime. Or he may escape through a number of avenues that help him to lose himself in fantasy or to compensate for his low status through a variety of exploits.”

**Thomas Pettigrew:** “The Negro wife in this situation can easily become disgusted with her financially dependent husband, and her rejection of him further alienates the male from family life. Embittered by their experiences with men, many Negro mothers often act to perpetuate the mother-centered pattern by taking a greater interest in their daughters than their sons.”

**Deton Brooks:** “In a matriarchal structure, the women are transmitting the culture.”

**Dorothy Height:** “If the Negro woman has a major underlying concern, it is the status of the Negro man and his position in the community and his need for feeling himself an important person, free and able to make his contribution in the whole society in order that he may strengthen his home.”

**Duncan M. MacIntyre:** “The Negro illegitimacy rate always has been high — about eight times the white rate in 1940 and somewhat higher today even though the white illegitimacy rate also is climbing. The Negro statistics are symptomatic [sic] of some old socioeconomic problems, not the least of which are under-employment among Negro men and compensating higher labor force propensity among Negro women. Both operate to enlarge the mother’s role,

ordination women as deacons, elders, and bishops is laudable, insofar as it promotes holiness among women and follows the tradition of the order of holy women and prophetesses that are mentioned throughout the Sacred Scriptures; but, to the extent that such ordinations make no distinctions between fathers and mothers, or between men and women, and arraign the Apostle Paul's admonition that women not "usurp" authority of men (1 Timothy 2:12) or that man is the "head" of the woman (1 Corinthians 11:3), then, to that degree, I sincerely believe, African Methodism has fallen prey to modern-day American slave power which has always sought to destroy the African American family.<sup>46</sup>

Today, we find the absence of this Augustinian family-law theology in the United Methodist Church, which is trending towards same-sex liberalism, and also in African Methodism, which has a sort of strange tendency to overlook the matriarchal fact of the black family life. Reformed Methodist Theology, i.e., Oxford Methodism, is thus designed to caution both African Methodism and the Wesleyan-Arminian wing of Methodism against these liberal trends, and to suggest that they review their theological positions and practices, and consider the theological viewpoints of the orthodox Puritans regarding the institution of the family unit.

I believe that the orthodox Puritan view of the institution of the family as a "church" reflects the original and the orthodox view of the first African Methodists. This view of the family as a "church" is the surest and safest path towards the liberation of African American and other oppressed peoples. In his article on the "Conservation of Races," for instance, W.E.B. Du Bois asked the following fundamental question, "What, then, is a race?" To which he answered: "It is a vast family of human beings."<sup>47</sup> When I first read Du Bois' article, while I was still in law school,<sup>48</sup> I could easily understand his idea of connecting race and family.<sup>49</sup> I then concluded that

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undercutting the status of the male and making many Negro families essentially matriarchal. The Negro man's uncertain employment prospects, matriarchy, and the high cost of divorces combine to encourage desertion (the poor man's divorce), increases the number of couples not married, and thereby also increases the Negro illegitimacy rate...."

<sup>46</sup> See, also, Moynihan, Daniel P. *The Negro family: The Case for National Action*. Washington, DC: Office of Policy Planning and Research, U.S. Department of Labor (March 1965) ("It was by destroying the Negro family under slavery that white America broke the will of the Negro people.")

<sup>47</sup> *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Reader* (New York, N.Y.: Holt and Co., 1996), p. 21.

<sup>48</sup> When I was a law student at the University of Illinois during the early 1990s, I concluded that civil rights, economic empowerment, and the stabilization of the African American two-parent household were important measures of racial progress. I emphasized that the race problem in the United States was centralized around the plight of the African American family, and around undoing the impact of chattel slavery, segregation, and discrimination upon the African American family unit.

<sup>49</sup> For I had had the distinct advantage of having had the privilege of knowing the rural African American farming communities, and large African American families who owned large farms since the late 1800s and early 1900s. Those black farmers were not formally educated in college or graduate schools, but they learned most of what is today taught at the university through their business transactions with leading white men who were elected officials, merchants, shop owners, traders and brokers, and politicians. Those black farmers were also churchmen, electricians, mechanics, brick masons, and members of great fraternal organizations! I had the privilege of listening at their conversation, and it was nearly always about business, politics, and religion—they were men amongst men, honored husbands, and honored fathers. In the rural South, African American farmers were highly respected and

the African American community needed Puritan-style “family government” in order to arrest the crisis of the historic, deep-rooted deterioration of African American family life.<sup>50</sup> My beliefs then, and now, was that no measure of civil rights would make any difference, until basic morals, character, and integrity undergirded a rebuilt, restructured African American family unit.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, the Reverend Algernon Sidney Crapsey has cited the decline in “domestic purity”<sup>52</sup> as one of the primary reasons for the decline and fall of the Roman empire. Hence, I have adopted the Augustinian conception of family-church-state as the first, and perhaps, most important element of Oxford Methodism.

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highly regarded by everyone, white as well as black;-- perhaps there was a comradeship of mutual respect that resulted from shared hardship between white and black farmers.

<sup>50</sup> See, e.g., W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Souls of Black Folk,” *Writings* (New York, N.Y.: The Library of America, 1986), p. 461, stating:

The plague-spot in sexual relations is easy marriage and easy separation. This is no sudden development, nor the fruit of Emancipation. It is the plain heritage from slavery. In those days Sam, with his master’s consent, ‘took up’ with Mary. No ceremony was necessary, and in the busy life of the great plantations of the Black Belt it was usually dispensed with. If now the master needed Sam’s work in another plantation or in another part of the same plantation, or if he took a notion to sell the slave, Sam’s married life with Mary was usually unceremoniously broken, and then it was clearly to the master’s interest to have both of them take new mates. This widespread custom of two centuries has not been eradicated in thirty years. To-day Sam’s grandson ‘takes up’ with a woman without license or ceremony; they live together decently and honestly, and are, to all intents and purposes, man and wife. Sometimes these unions are never broken until death; but in too many cases family quarrels, a roving spirit, a rival suitor, or perhaps more frequently the hopeless battle to support a family, lead to separation, and a broken household is the result. The Negro church has done much to stop this practice, and now most marriage ceremonies are performed by the pastors. Nevertheless, the evil is still deep seated, and only a general raising of the standard of living will finally cure it.

<sup>51</sup> See, e.g., “African American Family Structure,” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American\\_family\\_structure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American_family_structure)

The family structure of African Americans has long been a matter of national public policy interest. A 1965 report by Daniel Patrick Moynihan, known as The Moynihan Report, examined the link between black poverty and family structure. It hypothesized that the destruction of the black nuclear family structure would hinder further progress toward economic and political equality.

When Moynihan wrote in 1965 on the coming destruction of the black family, the out-of-wedlock birth rate was 25% among black people. In 1991, 68% of black children were born outside of marriage (where ‘marriage’ is defined with a government-issued license). In 2011, 72% of black babies were born to unmarried mothers, while the 2018 National Vital Statistics Report provides a figure of 69.4 percent for this condition.

Among all newlyweds, 18.0% of black Americans in 2015 married non-black spouses. 24% of all black male newlyweds in 2015 married outside their race, compared with 12% of black female newlyweds. 5.5% of black males married white women in 1990.

<sup>52</sup> Algernon Sidney Crapsey, *Religion and Politics*, supra, pp. 20-21 (i.e., “the **corruption of female virtue and the extinction of the family**”).

### III.

Oxford Methodism is thus concerned, first and foremost, with law and jurisprudence; family relations; church-state relations; and the reformation of the institution of the Christian Church.<sup>53</sup>

As such, Oxford Methodism is an ecclesiastical platform that is designed to help Christian law students, lawyers, judges, theologians, and pastors, senior pastors, elders, deacons, bishops, etc. (a) to *reconnect* to the rich heritage of Christian jurisprudence which formed and shaped western and Anglo-American constitutional law and jurisprudence over the course of two thousand years; and (b) to revitalize social holiness and the orthodox Christian faith; to remediate oppression and social injustice; and to establish justice in the earth.

Oxford Methodism is deeply rooted in the rich heritage of the Protestant Reformation and orthodox Puritanism.

Oxford Methodism’s ten major pillars are as follows:

<b>Ten Major Pillars of Oxford Methodism</b>	
I.	Augustinianism
II.	Presbyterian and Congregational Church Polity
III.	Extraordinary Call and Institution of Holy Women
IV.	Two-Tables Theory of Civil Government
V.	Covenant of Nature
VI.	Divine Providence
VII.	General Equity
VIII.	Sacred History of the Gentiles
IX.	Prophetic History of the Kingdom of England
X.	Constitutional Status of the Christian Religion

#### **I. Augustinianism**

Oxford Methodism’s “Augustinian” soteriological philosophy is based upon the theology of Augustine of Hippo—not Calvinism or Arminianism.<sup>54</sup> It acknowledges Augustine of Hippo

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<sup>53</sup> Oxford Methodism was developed at the Mount Olive African Methodist Episcopal Church (Gainesville, Florida) during calendar year 2020 while the undersigned was simultaneously enrolled as postdoctoral student at Whitefield Theological Seminary—and especially the African and African American churches throughout the Pan-African world, especially in the western hemisphere where the institution of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade most weakened familial, social, cultural, and economic relations.

<sup>54</sup> Augustine of Hippo held generally in *The City of God* that “all” men were born in a state of sin, but “need not remain” in that state. “For in each individual,” wrote Augustine, “as I have already said, there is first of all that which is reprobate, that from which we must begin, but in which we **need not necessarily remain**. Not, indeed, that every wicked man shall be good, but that no one will be good who was not first of all wicked; but the sooner any

as the founding father of the both the Western Church and the Protestant Reformation. Notably, Martin Luther and John Calvin were both “Augustinian.” But Oxford Methodism embraces the theology of the great Puritan theologian Richard Baxter, who was a Presbyterian, a “New Methodist,” and a sort of neo-orthodox Calvinist.

As previously mentioned, Oxford Methodism is deeply rooted in the Augustinian constitutional order of family, church, and state.<sup>55</sup> It follows closely to the Apostle Paul’s admonitions that women not “usurp” authority of men (1 Timothy 2:12) and that man is the “head” of woman (1 Corinthians 11:3). Within this system, however, women may be ordained to separate ministerial roles, in accord with their gifts. The Roman Catholic system of establishing

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one becomes a good man, the more speedily does he receive this title, and abolish the old name in the new.” *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 478-479. Also, Augustine’s theological statement “nor did His foreknowledge compel any one to sin... But God preferred to leave this in their power, and thus to show both what evil could be wrought by their pride, and what good by His grace,” completely contradicts the orthodox Calvinist doctrine of “limited atonement.” *Ibid.*, pp. 476-477. (NOTE: Oxford Methodism seeks to align the soteriological doctrines of Baxter and Wesley to the those of Augustine of Hippo, who is the spiritual father of both Luther and Calvin.) See, e.g., Kenneth Talbot and Gary Crampton, *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism, and Arminianism* (Lakeland, FL.: Whitefield Media Publishing, 1990), p. 114 (“The doctrines of these early years were further developed during the time of Saint Augustine (A.D. 354- 430), one of the greatest theological and philosophical minds that God has ever so seen fit to give to His church. Augustine was so strongly Calvinistic, that John Calvin referred to himself as an Augustinian theologian. Augustine’s theology was dominant in the church for a millennium.”)

<sup>55</sup> The term “ancient Augustinian constitutional order” means the synthesis of ancient Greek and Roman philosophy with the Christian religion, as reflected in Augustine of Hippo’s *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950). See, also, Ruben Alvarado, *Calvin and the Whigs: A Study in Historical Political Theology* (The Netherlands: Pantocrator Press, 2017), pp. 7-8:

In dating the origins of Western civilization, and consequently of its constitution, the publication of Augustine’s *De Civitate Dei* [*Of the City of God*] serves as well as any for a reference point. This book was perhaps the most important ever written in the West; for a thousand years after its publication it exercised an influence unrivalled by any other, besides the Bible itself. For good reason, one writer calls it ‘The Charter of Christendom.’

Augustine believed that the Providence of God was universal and governed all nations. See, e.g., *The City of God*, supra, p. 158 (“God can never be believed to have left the kingdoms of men, their dominations and servitudes, outside of the laws of His providence”). Augustine’s description of God’s Providence also includes a “covenant of nature,” which he sets forth in *The City of God*, supra, pp. 690-692, to wit:

God, then, the most wise Creator and most just Ordainer of all natures, who placed the human race upon earth as its greatest ornament, imparted to men some good things adapted to this life, to wit, temporal peace, such as we can enjoy in this life from health and safety and human fellowship, and all things needful for the preservation and recovery of this peace, such as the objects which are accommodated to our outward senses, light, night, the air, and waters suitable for us, and everything the body requires to sustain, shelter, heal, or beautify it: and all under this most equitable condition, **that every man who made a good use of these advantages suited to the peace of his mortal condition, should receive ampler and better blessings, namely, the peace of immortality, accompanied by glory and honor in an endless life made fit for the enjoyment of God and of one another in God;** but that he who used the present blessings badly should both lose them and should not receive the others.

separate orders for holy women (i.e., nuns) could serve as an appropriate model for Protestant or nondenominational churches.

## II. Presbyterian and Congregational Church Polity

Oxford Methodism duly notes that when Methodist leaders Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke agreed to change their official titles from “superintendent” to “bishop,” that John Wesley opposed these changes.<sup>56</sup> Also, the New England Puritans and the Anglicans of colonial British North America generally disdained the idea of a bishop in the Church of England relocating to the colonies, because they feared the totalitarian nature of the Anglican episcopacy. During 16<sup>th</sup> century, John Knox and the Church of Scotland rejected episcopacy and adopted the Calvinistic Presbyterian form of ecclesiastical government in order to promote the religious uplift of the common man. Knox promoted literacy and education, so that the common man could read and understand the Sacred Scriptures for himself. As a consequence of Presbyterianism, the quality of the training of Presbyterian ministers and cultural uplift of the Scottish and Scotland’s universities were superior to most of their European counterparts. Presbyterianism promoted high-quality education, ecclesiastical transparency, and democracy within both church and state. Moreover, Presbyterianism best promotes the Augustinian doctrine in the “priesthood of all believers.”

### “THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS”

According to St. Augustine of Hippo<sup>57</sup>

#### I.

“I desire to be a member, no matter what, or how small, of Thy priesthood. By the PRIESTHOOD he here means the PEOPLE ITSELF, of which He is the Priest who is the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. This people the Apostle Peter calls 'a holy people, a royal priesthood.'”

-- St. Augustine of Hippo, “City of  
God”  
(Book XVII)

#### II.

“Put me in a part of Thy priesthood, to eat bread,' is ... the Word of God who dwells in the HEART of ONE WHO BELEIVES.”<sup>58</sup>

-- St. Augustine of Hippo, “City of God” (Book XVII)

<sup>56</sup> Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2013) pp. 318 – 320, 334.

<sup>57</sup> See, generally, St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Library of America, 1950).

<sup>58</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 582.

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### III.

“For we see that priests and Levites are now chosen, not from a certain family and blood, as was originally the rule in the priesthood according to the order of Aaron, but as befits the new testament, under which Christ is the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, in consideration of the merit which is bestowed upon each man by divine grace. And these priests are not to be judged by their mere title, which is often borne by unworthy men, but by that HOLINESS which is not common to good men and bad.”

-- St. Augustine of Hippo, “City of God” (Book XX)

**\*\* All- Capital Letter Added to add emphasis**

Similarly, the Congregationalist church polity that was practiced in New England and among the General Baptists promoted a similar spirit of the “priesthood of all believers” among the Christian faithful as well as freedom from despotic ecclesiastical government.

On the other hand, the episcopal form of church government, where one person exercises executive ecclesiastical authority over other elders is absent from the Book of Acts or the several letters of the Apostles, which describe local or provincial ecclesiastical assemblies that resemble presbyteries. For instance, in Jerusalem, the first Jewish Apostles met, deliberated, and decided important theological questions as a presbytery of elders. Understandably, the Christian Church needed to emerge and to adjust, as higher classes of pagan Gentiles—mayors, governors, nobles, and emperors—were converted to the Christian faith. And as the Christian Church was officially incorporated into the Roman empire, certain changes in ecclesiastical structure was to be expected and welcomed. The episcopal form of ecclesiastical government was, no doubt, developed and took shape within the Roman empire. Nevertheless, the explicit example of Jesus of Nazareth mitigates against the historical and modern-day abuses of episcopal authority. See, e.g., Matthew 23: 1- 39, stating:

Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,

Saying The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ.

But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant....

African Methodism and the Anglican churches in Africa are not exempt from the temptations of episcopal pride and clergy abuse, however laudable its stated objectives of serving the poor and the marginalized. The Anglican and Methodist episcopal structures are outdated and tend to retard the spiritual uplift and development of the common Christian. The Presbyterian form of church government is in keeping with the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, and of Christ's admonition that the "greatest among you shall be your servant." Accordingly, the African and African American churches that have adopted the episcopal form of ecclesiastical government should consider implementing the Presbyterian form of church government for the best development and the good of the African continent and the Pan-African would.

### III. The Extraordinary Call and Institution of Holy Women

Oxford Methodism joins with Rev. John Wesley in honoring the "extraordinary call" of certain special women with unique spiritual gifts to the ordained ministry.<sup>59</sup> Holy women and prophetesses are found throughout the Sacred Scriptures— but none were considered priests, rabbis, apostles, or presbyters. In ancient Israel, there were "Temple" women, who stood next to the door of the Temple, or the Tabernacle, and prayed, fasted, sang, etc. In the New Testament, the prophetess Anna is believed to have been one of those "Temple" women who, when she saw the baby Jesus, proclaimed the Good News. And when Christ came and called the twelve apostles, and later the seventy disciples, none of whom were women, there was a contingent of holy women who accompanied him, which included his own mother, Mary, and Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susana, and perhaps several other women. The Apostle Paul commended "Phebe our sister, which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you; for she hath been a *succourer* of many, and of myself also,"<sup>60</sup> and, later wrote that "[t]here is neither Jew nor Greek, there is

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<sup>59</sup> See, e.g., Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2013), pp. 276-277 ("Wesley accepted the argument of the 'extraordinary call,' recognizing that not only Methodist lay preaching but also 'the whole work of God termed Methodism' was an 'extraordinary dispensation' of God's providence. Therefore Wesley was willing, like Paul, to make exceptions to the ordinary rules of discipline.... Wesley's acceptance of the preaching of certain women, however, was only a private accommodation and did not change the normal discipline of the connection as contained in the Minutes. His careful control of the issue seems intended to soften the prevailing prejudices on this matter in the mind of the public in order to maximize the benefit of the grace and gifts manifest in the ministry of these women.")

<sup>60</sup> Romans 16:1-2.

neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”<sup>61</sup> I note that the definition of a “succourer” is one that gives help in times of great need or distress, and thus by definition the Apostle Paul uses this terminology to describe the function of the *deaconess*. And so, we are to understand that a special *office of the deaconess*, who assists a senior bishop or overseer, as the Apostle Paul certainly was during the days of the Early Church, was fully acknowledged in the New Testament. For the Apostle Paul sent this deaconess Phebe to a local church in Rome, and he admonished this church to receive and to assist her with whatever ministry work that she then had at her disposal.

As the prophetic office has clearly been bestowed upon women in both the Old and the New Testaments, and as this prophetic office entails direct commissioning from God himself, it is the duty of the church of Jesus Christ to likewise make special provision for the occasional “prophetess” who appears amongst them. In the Old Testament, the prophetess Deborah and Huldah were held in high esteem. The Prophetess Deborah, who was the *wife of Lappidoth*, judged ancient Israel. Here, Deborah’s description as a “wife” denotes that she had a male covering (i.e., a husband) as her spiritual head, and that her high office as the judge of Israel occurred only under the auspices of leave from her lawful husband. The Prophetess Huldah’s wisdom was highly sought after by both king and high priest in order she might interpret the Sacred Scriptures. And so clearly women, throughout the Sacred Scriptures, have been elevated to high positions of great significance; but in no case have they ever been permitted to usurp sacerdotal or spiritual authority over men. And today, this is the slippery slope in which the modern churches of Jesus Christ find themselves: how may we honor the spiritual gifts of women in the church, without permitting the usurpations of sacerdotal male leadership within the church?

The Apostle Peter assigned sacred but separate and subordinate roles to women, admonishing them to respect and to look up their husbands, as Sarah looked up to Abraham.<sup>62</sup> The Apostle Paul interpreted Genesis in such a manner that the sheer fact of Adam’s having been created first, and having not been deceived, made him superior in rank to his wife Eve.<sup>63</sup> Thus, Paul suffered that women do not teach men, or usurp authority over men, but should learn from their husbands in the privacy of their homes. Augustine of Hippo, in his *Confessions*, tacitly honored his mother Saint Monica and all women as the helpmeet to their husbands.<sup>64</sup>

Now the question of “ordination” is, to some extent and in my personal view, a manmade question, because if God calls a prophetess, what can any man say or do? “Christ ordained in the

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<sup>61</sup> Galatians 3:28.

<sup>62</sup> 1 Peter 3: 1-12 (“Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well....”)

<sup>63</sup> 1 Timothy 2:7-15 (“... But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve....”); 1 Corinthians 11:3 (“But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”).

<sup>64</sup> So that, as Deborah was granted leave to judge Israel by her husband who honored God’s calling upon her life, so shall holy women serve in special offices through leave of their husbands and male presbyters or elders.

sense of appointing his disciples to ministerial service by his own authority, and without employing any exterior ceremony.”<sup>65</sup> To be sure, Christ’s disciples later adopted traditions and canons regarding ordination, but Oxford Methodism holds that true ordination is a direct calling from Christ alone; and Christ directly calls women to divine service as “holy women.” The question is, what is the nature of such divine service? As prophetesses, deaconesses, and as church mothers (i.e., elders who teach women, young adults, and children), women may be commissioned as “holy women” within the church—remembering the fact that it is the woman’s status as mother and wife that provides the structure and form her divine service. Women who are called to divine service should be “ordained,” that is to say, “set apart for divine service.” To that end, Oxford Methodism holds that the Roman Catholic system of establishing separate holy orders for women is appropriately aligned with the Sacred Scriptures, wherein there are “holy women” of the Temple or Tabernacle— but who are not priests.

A holy woman may prophesy, sing, praise, and even preach within the church— i.e., to edify the church as succorers! But according to the Sacred Scriptures, holy women have not been called to exercise spiritual authority over men. Therefore, the title or labels assigned to holy women should be carefully designated so that their unique spiritual and ecclesiastical roles do not become confused with those unique spiritual and ecclesiastical roles of the male elders of the church. Holy women should be ordained to leadership roles requiring leadership over other women, young adults, and children. As deaconesses, these holy women may even be rightfully called “reverend” and “very reverend” and “sister” and “mother,” according to church customs; but under no circumstances should ordained holy women be given spiritual charge as pastors or bishops over adult males over the age of 30 within the church.<sup>66</sup> There should be, instead, two tracks of ecclesiastical or sacerdotal leadership: one for the sacerdotal leadership of women, and another for the sacerdotal leadership of both men and women. The latter form of sacerdotal leadership is exclusively male, while the former is exclusively female. If, under exigent circumstances, a female minister is given charge over a congregation of both men and women, that charge ought to be categorized as an “extraordinary call,” whereby the female minister has met certain strict criteria of holiness,<sup>67</sup> has been categorized as a “prophetess” or as an elder who is a “mother of the church,” has been appointed as a special assistant (e.g., deaconess or archdeacon) to a bishop or to a presbytery of elders, and has been exempted from providing spiritual supervision, spiritual guidance, or pastoral counseling to individual male members who are over the age of 30.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> <https://www.biblicalcyclopedia.com/O/ordination.html>

<sup>66</sup> Under ancient Jewish custom, a male became an adult at the age of 30, and an elder at the age of 50.

<sup>67</sup> Typically, a woman over the age of 50, married or widowed. In ancient Israel, the “Temple” or “Tabernacle” women were generally elderly women—either widowed or unmarried.

<sup>68</sup> I believe that Pastors Joyce Meyers and Shirley Caesar and Helen Johnson-Ford (my wife) have received this “extraordinary calling” to serve the church as a “prophetess” or as the “church mother”—both offices permit preaching or prophesying or proclaiming the Good News. These women have special gifts and special callings. Though competent to assume leadership over a church congregation, such women must not be given authority to exercise direct pastoral counseling to males over the age of 30. Instead, congregations, where such women are placed at the helm, should establish a panel of male elders who will assume the sole responsibility for the moral development and spiritual guidance of all males over the age of 30. That panel of male elders must remain loyal to the ministerial work of the female ministers who have been sent by either a male bishop or a presbytery of male

In general, and under most circumstances, female ministers will not exercise that “extraordinary call,” but would instead serve as deaconesses, archdeacons, assistant pastors, etc., and would only exercise pastoral leadership primarily over all children, all women, and all young adults up to the age of 30. It is important to note here that through these specialized ministries, women pastors may exercise great power and influence, at every level of ecclesiastical authority, within the church, but without usurping the sacerdotal leadership of male clergymen.

In summation, Oxford Methodism holds that the church must accommodate and ordain the God-given callings of holy women, but it must always be on guard against the usurpations to male ecclesiastical authority and responsibility which the Apostle Paul spoke against.<sup>69</sup>

#### IV. Two-Tables Theory of Civil Government

Oxford Methodism’s conception of the civil polity is rooted in the Anglican theology of Rev. Dr. Richard Hooker’s *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1594);<sup>70</sup> in the political philosophy of Lord Bolingbroke’s *The Idea of a Patriot King*;<sup>71</sup> and in American Founding

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elders to provide ministerial leadership. The said female ministers should be considered as “royalty” within their churches, as persons who are worthy of the utmost and highest respect. They may be denominated as “reverends” “most reverends,” “elders or mothers,” “prophetesses,” “deaconesses” etc., but never as “priests,” “presbyters,” or “bishops.” To facilitate this objective within ecclesiastical government, a separate sacerdotal order of female ministers is indispensable and must be recognized and established; for instance, a “church mother” may operate at the same ecclesiastical level as a male bishop, but under no circumstances should the duties of female ministers be confused with the general sacerdotal duties of male presbyters and male bishops—otherwise, the female usurpation of male authority will occur. The generic term “pastor” deals with nature of the ministry work, and since women may provide spiritual counseling to other women, children, and all young adults up to the age of 30, they may be called “pastors” in a limited sense. Again, each church would need to work out the details for how this is carried out.

<sup>69</sup> I recommend that a “special order” of ordained female clergy be set apart and developed for specialized and limited-purpose ministries within the Black Church, and indeed all churches.

<sup>70</sup> See, e.g., Bishop John Jewell, *The Apology for the Church of England: And a Treatise of the Holy Scriptures* (Vol. III) (New York, N.Y.: N.Y. Protestant Episcopal Press, 1831), pp. 219-220 (“For, besides that a Christian prince hath the charge of both Tables committed to them by God, to the end he may understand that not temporal matters only, but also religious and ecclesiastical causes pertain to his office.”) Hence, the British Monarch is the Head of Church and the Head of State. See, e.g., “Supreme Governor of the Church of England,”

The Supreme Governor of the Church of England is the titular head of the Church of England, a position which is vested in the British monarch. Although the monarch's authority over the Church of England is largely ceremonial and is mostly observed in a symbolic capacity, the position is still very relevant to the church. As the supreme governor, the monarch formally appoints high-ranking members of the church on the advice of the prime minister of the United Kingdom, who is in turn advised by church leaders, such as the Lords Spiritual.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supreme\\_Governor\\_of\\_the\\_Church\\_of\\_England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supreme_Governor_of_the_Church_of_England)

<sup>71</sup> Lord Bolingbroke’s new Tory philosophy, expressed in *The Idea of the Patriot King*, ushered into British politics a new conservative ideal of Anglicanism that incorporated Dr. Richard Hooker’s conceptualization of Church and State as being two sides of the same coin, as well as the idea of a limited monarch who served as a vicegerent of God.

Father Thomas Paine's honest critique that the United States Constitution is a copy of the British model.<sup>72</sup>

At the same time, however, Oxford Methodism also holds that certain peculiar adjustments to the British “two crowns” or “two swords” theory were incorporated into the American Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution— peculiar adjustments which reflect the Puritan ideals of the Rev. Roger Williams (Puritan-Baptist) and William Penn (Puritan-Quaker). According to these Puritan conceptions of constitutional law and theory, all civil polities upon earth are Noahic church-state and that all civil magistrates are “God’s ministers.” (Romans 13:4, 6). Thus, all civil polities have been ordained by God to decree general equity, just laws, and just judgments. All civil polities are “Christian” and need not officially embrace a particular kind or denominational form of the Christian religion. Under this system, there should be justice and equality before the law, liberty of conscience, and freedom of religious practice and faith. Oxford Methodism holds that the Declaration of Independence reflects this natural religion, and that Christianity is a republication of natural religion.<sup>73</sup> Thus, Oxford Methodism holds that natural religion supports religious freedom and allows for the separation of church and state, while, simultaneously, the civil polity always

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A Patriot King will see all this in a far different and much truer light. The constitution will be considered by him **as one law, consisting of two tables**, containing the rule of his government, and the measure of his subjects obedience; or as one system, composed of different parts and powers, but all duly proportioned to one another, and conspiring by their harmony to the perfection of the whole. He will make one, and but one, distinction between his rights, and those of his people: he will look on his to be a trust, and those of his people: he will look on his trust, and theirs a property. He will discern, that he can have a right to no more than is trusted to him the constitution: and that his people, who had an original right to the whole by the law of nature, can have the sole indefeasible right to any part; and really have such a right to that part which they have reserved to themselves. In fine, the constitution will be revered by him as **the law of God and of man**; the force of which binds the king as much as the meanest subject, and the reason of which binds him much more.

Henry St. John (Viscount Bolingbroke), *The Idea of a Patriot King* (New York, N.Y.: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965), p. 32.

<sup>72</sup> See, e.g. Thomas Paine, “Letter to George Washington”, Paris, 30 July, 1796, *In The Writings of Thomas Paine*, ed. Moncure D. Conway, (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1967), Vol. IV, 252. (“As the [American] Federal Constitution is a copy, not quite so base as the original, of the form of the British government, an imitation of its vices was naturally to be expected.”)

<sup>73</sup> See, e.g., Joseph Butler, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature*, supra, pp. 152, 155, 158 (“the Author of Nature”); p. 159 (“...the Author of Nature, which is the foundation of Religion”); p. 162 (“... there is one God, the Creator and moral Governor of the world”); p. 187 (“Christianity is a republication of natural Religion”); p. 188 (“The Law of Moses then, and the Gospel of Christ, are authoritative publications of the religion of nature....”); p. 192 (“Christianity being a promulgation of the law of nature....”); p. 243 (“These passages of Scriptures ... comprehend and express the chief parts of Christ’s office, as Mediator between God and men.... First, He was, by way of eminence, the Prophet: that Prophet that should come into the world, to declare the divine will. He published anew the law of nature.... He confirmed the truth of this moral system of nature....”); see, also, the writings of the Latitudinarian Anglican and Chancery Lawyer Matthew Tindal (1657 - 1733), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew\\_Tindal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew_Tindal). See, e.g., Matthew Tindal, *Christianity as Old as the Creation, or the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature* (Newburgh, England: David Deniston Pub., 1730) [Republished by Forgotten Books in 2012], pp. 52, 56, 61, 64, 72-74 (stating that Christianity is a republication of natural religion).

remains subordinate to God's divine providence and laws of Nature, as set forth in the Declaration of Independence (1776).

## V. Covenant of Nature

The Two-Tables theory of civil government includes the Noahic "Covenant of Nature." The "Covenant of Nature" is a political theory developed by the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Puritans to help understand the nature of God's sovereignty and providence.<sup>74</sup> Under this Covenant, all human laws and governments on earth are subordinate to certain principles of natural law or the laws of Nature. The unwritten constitution of England evolved over several centuries under this theory of God's sovereignty over nature and human laws. The Church of England adopted this viewpoint as per John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (1159) and Dr. Richard Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1594). The American Declaration of Independence (1776) manifests the express principles of this Noahic dominion covenant of nature. Oxford Methodism thus holds that the Christian religion is inherently manifest within secular human laws through the laws of reason and nature (i.e., equity jurisprudence and fundamental law).

## VI. Divine Providence

Oxford Methodism's conception of God is that he is a divine Personality who governs the affairs of mankind and in the destinies of nations through his divine Providence. This idea is explicitly endorsed in the American Declaration of Independence, which states, "[a]nd for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."

## VII. General Equity

Oxford Methodism's legal theory holds that all human or civil laws must implement the law of general equity (i.e., natural law, law of reason, justice, just judgments, fairness, equality, natural justice, etc.). The laws of general equity have not been hidden from mankind nor revealed only to a limited group. The laws of general equity have been revealed to all peoples and nations of the earth. These laws of general equity are also called the laws of Nature, natural law, and the law of reason. Aristotle of the ancient Greeks expounded upon the definition of

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<sup>74</sup> See "Herman Bavinck's 'Covenant of Nature,'" <https://www.puritanboard.com/threads/herman-bavincks-use-of-the-covenant-of-nature.85494/>, stating, "Bavinck sees the 'broader' aspect of the Covenant of Grace as the universal covenants made with everyone whereby common grace is offered to all. He labels this the **Covenant of Nature**, and includes the Adamic Covenant and the Noahic Covenant within it. In the Adamic Covenant "lies the origin and guarantee of continued existence, the expansion and development, the struggle and victory of humankind as a whole... In the long period from Adam to Noah, all of them develop under the influence of God's common and special grace... [As a result, religion] survived the fall and acquired fixed forms in sacrifice (Gen. 4:3), prayer, and preaching (Gen. 4:26). Culture got started with agriculture, cattle breeding, and the construction of cities (Gen. 4:17); the arts and sciences began to flourish (Gen. 4:20ff.)" (vol. 3, pp. 216-217)."

general equity. Cicero of the ancient Romans expounded upon the definition of general equity, moral law, and justice.

The Apostle Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* describes "nature" in the same manner as the ancient Greeks and Romans. And it was through Paul's letters that pagan Greco-Roman natural law became the established Christian law of the church. Thus, Oxford Methodism holds that Greco-Roman natural law (i.e., general equity) is in essence a form of "Christian" jurisprudence. (Of course, Christ fulfills this law of nature, as Christianity is made part and parcel of secular legal systems through the implementation of general equity.)

Oxford Methodism also holds that within Anglo-American jurisprudence, the Christian religion has been thoroughly sewn into secular jurisprudence through the various doctrines of equity, such as equitable remedies; equitable principles that govern the various rules of procedure; and constitutional doctrines such as substantive and procedural due process of law.

The Covenant of Nature has been made manifest to all peoples and nations upon the earth, and it requires all human laws and governments to implement the principles of general equity. The American Declaration of Independence is an exemplification of the Covenant of Nature.

- General equity is the "law of God."<sup>75</sup>
- General equity is the "law of Christ."<sup>76</sup>
- General equity has been called by different names by different peoples and nations around the world, such as the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, etc.; but it means the same thing: "justice, and judgment, and equity." Proverbs 1:3.
- Lawyer and Reformed theologian John Calvin (1509 - 1564) fully endorsed the view that all civil governments and human laws must implement "general equity" as its fundamental law.
- The *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647) and the *London Baptist Confession* (1689) hold "general equity" to be the fundamental law for all civil laws.
- Therefore, Oxford Methodism holds that "general equity" is mandated in the Noahic "Covenant of Nature" and, as such, it is the principal foundation of Anglo-American constitutional law and jurisprudence.

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<sup>75</sup> See, e.g., Genesis 18: 18-19; Leviticus 19: 17-18; Proverbs 1:3.

<sup>76</sup> The Law of Christ is to "love ye one another" (John 15:12); to do justice and judgement (Genesis 18:18-19; Proverbs 21: 1-3); to judge not according to appearance but to judge righteous judgments (John 7:24); and to do justice, judgment, and equity (Proverbs 1:2-3).

## VIII. Sacred History of the Gentiles

Oxford Methodism joins with the Quakers and hold that there is an inward light and that of God in all human beings, and that all peoples and nations of the earth are heirs to the divine Covenant of Nature and, as such, their histories tell a divine story of good and evil and constitutes “sacred” history called general revelation. This sacred history of the Gentiles is reflected in the *Book of Job* and in Paul’s *Epistle to the Romans*. This sacred history does not contradict or displace the revealed religion of the Sacred Scriptures. God’s “Covenant of Nature” has been bestowed upon all peoples and nations. It is the foundation of political science, political theory, and constitutional law. The *Book of Job* is clear evidence that the history of the Gentiles is also Sacred History. Edward Gibbons’ *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and St. Augustine’s *The City of God* (which addresses the same subject) demonstrate God’s divine Providence over Gentile nations. The revelation of God’s divine Providence is ongoing, and not restricted to, or in conflict with, the Sacred Scriptures.

## IX. Prophetic History of the Kingdom of England

Oxford Methodism holds that the kingdom of England arose out of the Roman Empire as a Christian nation,<sup>77</sup> as one of the ten kingdoms that was prophesied in the *Book of Daniel*.<sup>78</sup> For nearly a thousand years, the Sacred Scriptures were treated as “law” in England. See, e.g., Richard Hooker’s *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1594). The Christian religion was sewn into the English Common Law over the course of several centuries. Thomas Wood’s *Institutes of the Laws of England* (1720) and William Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765) plainly demonstrate that the revealed religion of Christianity attained the status of “law” in Great Britain.

England’s common law and law of equity were transported intact to the colonies of British North America. These laws are Christian in both their origin and essence. Although conditions in North America mandated that these laws evolve, their Christian nature and objectives have not been modified. Therefore, the United States of America (and perhaps North America) has, inter alia, a prophetic purpose that is fundamental to its constitutional genetics.

One of the greatest prophetic voices to restate the prophetic purpose of both England and the United States of America was that of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., an African American Baptist preacher. According to King’s general philosophy (which Oxford Methodism has adopted): if England and the United States acknowledge and fulfill their prophetic purpose they will thrive and remain as great nations, but if they elect moral degeneracy, imperial expansion, and oppression, then their empires will precipitously decline.

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<sup>77</sup> Goldwin Smith, *A History of England*, supra, p. 11-12.

<sup>78</sup> Isaac Newton, *Observations Upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (United States of America: Renaissance Classics, 2012), p. 33.

The American Declaration of Independence (1776) is a continuation and extension of the Christian jurisprudence that had developed in Europe, England, and Great Britain since the 7<sup>th</sup> century, including Magna Carta (1215), the Petition of Right (1628), and the English Bill of Rights (1689). Therefore, Oxford Methodism holds that the Christian religion is deeply rooted in Anglo-American law and jurisprudence. And Oxford Methodism is committed to promoting the Christian practice of law and the support and professional development of Christian law students, lawyers, judges, theologians, and pastors.

## X. Constitutional Status of the Christian Religion

Finally, Oxford Methodism holds that Christianity is unlike any other religion within the western world. Unlike, e.g., Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, etc., the Christian religion has a special constitutional status within Anglo-American constitutional law and jurisprudence. The Christian religion has been thoroughly sewn into every fabric of Anglo-American constitutional law and jurisprudence. See, e.g., Woods' *Institutes of the Laws of England*, below.

### Thomas Woods in *Institutes of the Laws of England* (1720)

“As Law in General is an Art directing to the Knowledge of Justice, and to the well ordering of civil Society, so the Law of England, in particular, is an Art to know what is Justice in England, and to preserve Order in that Kingdom: And this Law is raised upon ... principal Foundations.

1. Upon the Law of Nature, though we seldom make Use of the Terms, The Law of Nature. But we say, that such a Thing is reasonable, or unreasonable, or against the....

2. Upon the revealed Law of God, Hence it is that our Law punishes Blasphemies, Perjuries, & etc. and receives the Canons of the Church [of England] duly made, and supported a spiritual Jurisdiction and Authority in the Church [of England].

3. The third Ground are several general Customs, these Customs are properly called the Common Law. Wherefore when we say, it is so by Common Law, it is as much as to say, by common Right, or of common Justice.

Indeed it is many Times very difficult to know what Cases are grounded on the Law of Reason, and what upon the Custom of the Kingdom, yet we must endeavor to understand this, to know the perfect Reason of the Law.

Rules concerning Law

The Common Law is the absolute Perfection of Reason. For nothing that is contrary to Reason is consonant to Law

Common Law is common Right.

The Law is the Subject's best Birth-right.

The Law respects the Order of Nature....”

Source: Thomas Wood, LL.D., *An Institute of the laws of England: or, the Laws of England in their Natural Order* (London, England: Strahan and Woodall, 1720), pp. 4-5.

[REDACTED]

Through the Declaration of Independence, natural religion undergirds the United States Constitution and an general American jurisprudence. For this reason, Christianity— general Christianity as natural religion—is far *superior in rank* to any other religion and controls the “First Table” the American civil government. It acknowledges and establishes the “laws of Nature and of Nature’s God,” but prescribes no particular religious form of worship. For this reason, in the United States, the First Amendment permits Christian churches to fulfill their “prophetic” missions which includes chastising the civil government or civil magistrates whenever they violate the natural moral laws of God. To that end, Oxford Methodism is organized around revitalizing and nourishing the Christian character of Anglo-American constitutional law and jurisprudence.

Oxford Methodism is also committed to promoting the Christian practice of law and the support and professional development of Christian law students, lawyers, judges, theologians, and pastors. Oxford Methodism seeks to encourage all Christian lawyers to practice law with a zeal towards God, truth, and justice, as was explained by the great chief of the Puritan schoolmen, Rev. Richard Baxter (1615 – 1691), to wit:<sup>79</sup>

- a) “Put the Laws of Man in their Proper Perspective and Relation to the Laws of God.”
- b) “Be not Affixed to Money-Making at the Expense of Justice”
- c) “Be Advocates for God, Justice, Truth, and the Innocent”
- d) “Take-Up the Cause of the Oppressed and the Innocent”
- e) “Resist Worldly Temptations”

I believe that this legal invitation to American bar associations and law schools should be spear-headed through the Black church, because the victims of legal injustice are disproportionately found among the African and African American communities. I also believe that the Black church desperately needs a wholesome legal and constitutional theology, together with the ordination of lawyers as chancellors, presbyters, and ministers, that will anchor its pastoral stewardship in this twenty-first century. Finally, if this is not done, then other-worldly fatalism and a dangerous faith in current systems of law and government, leading to false optimism, neo-enslavement, and neo-imperialism, will remain inexorable.

REV. RODERICK O. FORD

Mount Olive A.M.E. Church  
Gainesville, Florida  
August 18, 2022

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<sup>79</sup> Rev. Richard Baxter (1615 – 1691), “Directions To Lawyers About Their Duty to God,” Chapter IV, *Christian Directory* (Part 4)(1665).