



# F.A.C.S. REPORT

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## FOUNDATIONS OF EFFECTIVE CIVIL GOVERNMENT

by Otto Scott

**W**e are living in very strange times. Some are tempted to call them End Times, for our civilization seems to have lost the vision that was responsible for its rise to world dominance only a century ago, and seems now to have lost its direction. Some might even say that it has lost its soul.

This is odd, because other civilizations — and there *are* other civilizations — seem to have regained theirs. The Islamic world is rising again, thanks to the oil revenues the West has handed over to them. Islam is now arming with missiles containing nuclear warheads and the most advanced warplanes — all products of the West that the West is selling to anyone who pays the price.

China is rising. Its nuclear program is advanced, and again it is benefiting from what the United States, Britain and France and the West in general is supplying to it. Western technology is changing the world, and is creating new and formidable powers.

In the Middle East Israel is the fourth largest nuclear power in the world. It has nuclear field weapons as well as nuclear-tipped missiles and bombs. And in terms of civilization, Israel must be numbered among the nations not simply because of its position in the Middle East, but because of its influential Diaspora around the world, which maintains cohesiveness today, as in previous centuries, beyond its territorial presence.

When we look at Islam and Israel and China we are looking at civilizations where religion remains a dominant force. One might object that China has no religion, but that would not be true. The religion of socialism has risen in this century to challenge Christianity not from the outside, but from within.

Our educational system, a great many of our churches and clergy, our Government and its officials, even our private sector, is dominated by persons who are socialists — although many do not even seem to know it. So long as the label is not applied, they are content to accept all the socialist premises: the idea that the government should control what Lyndon Johnson called "the quality of life."

Within a century, more or less, our civilization has become almost completely secularized. Islam and Judaism and Socialism seem renewed. In this context it must be said that Socialism among us seems as strong as ever, despite the dwindling of the central government of the USSR. All these are faiths, while the West appears to be losing Christianity. For all practical purposes Governments are the gods of the West, and schools are their temples.

In the United States the schools teach the young that to get ahead they must go along, and the media breaks the reputations of all who disagree with official opinion. Christianity is publicized only by highlighting its traitors and churches are often described as parasites on the tax rolls. Attempts by

Christians to assert a presence on political issues are decried as a violation of Church and State, as though Christians do not have political rights equal to antiChristians in asserting their views and proposing social programs.

It is difficult for some to detect the totalitarian impulse in a government which distributes free milk to school children and free incomes to the poor, which constantly talks about lifting the underclass to a comfortable middle, which subsidizes minority students and orates about social justice around the clock, but the fact remains that a Government that determines to shape a society is, by that desire, embarked upon a totalitarian course. A society is everybody, and everybody is more numerous, has more ideas and desires, is far more capable, than a ruling minority. Governments are small enclaves compared to society at large.

Governments today bewilder citizens by a plethora of regulations, licences, rules, laws, statutes and technicians. Governments create an impression of omniscience; they seem to be everywhere at once: all-seeing, all-knowing, all-powerful.

They are not. Modern western governments have created a spiritual desert. People are in the condition they occupied in the first century, when they indulged in all sorts of experiments in an effort to find some sense, some meaning in life. Christians then were in a far worse position than they are today. They faced death: we face sar-

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casms and the loss of social and political influence.

If we look at previous periods where Christianity appeared to be helpless in the face of heavy political power, we find a handful of Reformers going up against the greatest western combination of their time: the Vatican, with all its cardinals and bishops and churches and palaces and network of priests, monks and nuns, collecting taxes and feeding the poor, vital at the top, the middle and the bottom.

Yet the Reformation changed the world. Not by force of arms, but by arguments and, especially, by print. The new technique of moveable type — created by unknown working men — seemed an instrument from God to unseat the learned Humanists who had assumed control of the schools, the bureaucracy of the time, and the government. Print enabled Luther's books to become the most popular available for a generation, all across Europe — even in Catholic Spain. Calvin followed, then Knox, and finally tens of thousands of others.

It was reason that prevailed: not demonstrations (although these appeared). It was the ability to out-think and out-talk and out-argue those who believed in tyrannical methods. In the end, these create an opposition waiting to be ignited.

I am reminded of the Reformers whose positions were outlawed by Elizabeth I. She was proud of her control of the church and the religion of the English. Some were called Separatists,

because they believed in the separation of Church and State.

Their leader was a man named Barrow. A preacher, apparently. It was then the custom of the Crown to send spies into various churches to take notes on what was said (much as the Governments do today) and after evidence was gathered, those guilty of saying what the government disapproved would be summoned to the Court of High Commission.

The High Commission operated much as does the American Congress. It sends out subpoenas which must be answered in person, on pain of being arrested. Once before the High Commission, the individual had to swear to tell the truth, on penalty of being jailed. He would then be questioned about his statements and if he denied them, the government witnesses would appear with their notes. He would be convicted of perjury, and sent to jail. If he admitted them, he was admitting that he broke the law, would be found guilty and sent to jail. Heads I win, tails you lose.

Barrow refused to swear, until, he said, "I know to what I swear." In other words, what was going to be asked? The Archbishop of Canterbury, head of the Commission, was outraged, and sent him to jail at once. But Barrows' followers then made a fuss, saying he had been sent to jail without having been convicted of anything; that it was an outrage, and so on.

So the Commission called him back, and as a great concession, told him the nature of the charges against him. Barrow said, "That's serious. I want a lawyer." The Archbishop had a tantrum over that, and Barrow went back to jail. In the end, sorry to say, Barrow lost before all the assembled power of the Crown and the official Church of England.

But his back and forth with the Archbishop traveled throughout the realm with the speed of light. And the next men called before the High Commission took up his argument for representation, for the right to know the charges before a hearing, for the right to have a lawyer. And the prestige of the High Commission began to crumble before the ridicule it attracted and before the obvious injustice of its tactics.

## Gettysburg

*Gettysburg*, a film by Ronald Maxwell, starring Tom Berenger, Jeff Daniels, and Martin Sheen, 1993, rated PG.

Reviewed by Matthew Hodge

We're trying something slightly different this month, namely a film review. *Gettysburg* just happened to catch my eye in the newspapers, and, as I had nothing planned for that particular Saturday, I went and saw it. The movie absolutely staggered me. For so long, I had been used to seeing movies whose sole aim was to give the viewer a couple of hours of light entertainment in exchange for a bit of your hard-earned money. For most of these films there was no real point in watching them. So I had almost forgotten what a *good* film was. Until I saw *Gettysburg*.

The film is a dramatised version of the battle of Gettysburg, one of the most decisive battles, if not *the* most decisive battle, of the American Civil War. [As a purely parenthetical comment, some people don't like to refer to this conflict as the American Civil War referring to a war among peoples of one nation. Instead they prefer to call it the War Between the States, arguing that the United States, despite the fact that it had a central government, was not necessarily one nation.]

The battle of Gettysburg, which ran from July 1-3, 1863, involved huge losses, with a total of about 53,000 men lost on both sides in those three days. To make a film about this war must have been a huge undertaking, and the filmmakers pulled it off brilliantly. I read that about 5,000 re-enactors helped to recreate the huge battle scenes. Helped along by some brilliant acting (especially from Jeff Daniels as Colonel Joshua L. Chamberlain of the Union army, and Martin Sheen as General Robert E. Lee of the Confederate army), and a beautiful soundtrack (which I happen to be listening to as I write), *Gettysburg* is a film that will stick in your mind for a long time.

Of course, one of the most important questions with any Civil War film is "Which side is good, and which is bad?" The film tried to give both sides a chance

In fact, the High Commission was one of the issues in the English civil war, which — as you know — brought down the absolute authority of the monarchs of Britain.

Now, we have today many High Commission methods in action by many bureaus, branches and divisions of the Government. Where it sent in people with notebooks, we have the wiretappers and the long distance cameras and corrupted witnesses. They are only new in a technical sense: their use and purpose and the abuse of power remains the same.

We have, therefore, to produce Barrows. We have to insist that the State honor the rights of the citizenry, and beyond that, that the State behave in a Christian manner. I need not describe to you what that means; it would take too long and anyway it's unnecessary. At the bottom it means that Christians should not become beholden to the State in any way — and in that manner begin to free themselves from the State. And they should stand up for Christian rights, which in their totality argue for the limits on the State.

Not to replace the State: Caesar has his right to his sector. But to maintain the rights of Christians to have their rights separate from the State. On that rock, and on that alone, can the foundations of an effective civil government be restored.

With all its faults, the West remains the largest, most efficient, richest and most benevolent force in the world today. It rallies to feed the Somalians, who are busily destroying themselves; it is trying to salvage human lives in Ethiopia, it continues to send funds to most non-western nations, including many who harbor large numbers of rich people, resources and despicable governments.

There is no longer any openly religious rationale mounted in favor of these efforts, although their main-springs are clearly religious: but a religion without name, without focus, and essentially without purpose. Most people call it liberalism, unaware that liberalism is simply a false name for Socialism: the doctrine that if there is any suffering anywhere in the world,

any shred of poverty, it is not only the duty of government to redress it, but the duty in particular of the American government.

The political motive for this flood of philanthropy was announced many years ago by President Truman, who declared that the United States would combat not only Communism, but poverty everywhere. The motive, therefore, was initially defensive: to combat the menace and influence of the Kremlin.

Well, the Kremlin is only a splinter of its old self; it is the center of a shrunken Russia and a crowd of newly emancipated, self-styled "republics" have appeared. Some of these are armed with nuclear weapons and allied to the new expansion of Islam — a free, Latvia, Estonia and Armenia favor the West and want to be allied to it, but are receiving virtually no help.

Western charity appears to be focused upon black Africa and the Caribbean; relatively little is left over for the Middle European nations gutted by the Soviets and left to scramble. That may be better for them, in the long run.

But foreign aid is not really political any longer. It is semi-religious, and is based upon some very serious misapprehensions about the nature of Man and the world. Calvinists believe Man is essentially depraved, and can be regenerated only by the Grace of God.

But one need not be a Calvinist to see that the world is not an ideal place. When St. John said "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" he did not mean in the physical sense nor in the temporal power of governments, but the world created by those whom God has not regenerated: by human animals motivated by fear and lust and ambition and pride and self-interest responsible for what Christopher Dawson called "the bloody road of history."

The fact is that all the foreign aid in the world cannot change the essentials of human life, "or what Augustine called the torrent of custom, or change the city of God into the city of Man."<sup>1</sup> That is an illusion: an illusion of the modern Humanists, who believe they can basically change the world and the essentials of human life. This is a dan-

to voice their opinions, without passing any judgment over which viewpoint was right or wrong. The Southern army seemed to be fighting for the right to determine for themselves how they should live, whereas the North would say they were fighting either to free the slaves, or to preserve the unity of America.

If you read the history books, the real issue wasn't slavery. When Abraham Lincoln became President, many of the Southern states were afraid of what he might do to the institution of slavery. Therefore, they seceded from the Union and formed the Confederacy, electing Jefferson Davis as President, and making their new capital at Richmond, Virginia. The North obviously weren't terribly impressed by this, because Abraham Lincoln is quoted as saying, "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is *not* either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that." (1862) So really the Confederacy was fighting to defend its right to secede.

Although both viewpoints are presented, in the film the main emphasis seems to be centered on a group of men who did not like the idea of fighting against their fellow countrymen, but stood for what they believed in despite the great cost. *Gettysburg* displays these men as tragic heroes, having to fight a war that would pit them against old friends and comrades, but not hesitating in their duty. Unfortunately, the Australian reviewers seemed to have missed the point, describing the film as ". . . a stirring indictment of the sheer insanity of war. . ." (Sun Herald) or a film that ". . . confirms that war is madness . . ." (Courier Mail).

Also interesting is the way General Lee is portrayed. One of the film's most memorable scenes shows General Lee sitting on a horse, while his troops are cheering for him. Yet at the same time, he has a worried look on his face, as if he knows he's sending these men out to get killed. Also difficult to understand is why 15,000 men were sent on a charge that was so obviously going to fail. In the film General Longstreet (played by Tom Berenger), Lee's second-in-command, warns Lee that he thinks the charge will fail. Lee ignores him and goes ahead, and as a consequence most of his men are

1. Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1935), p.117.

gerous illusion, because it gives a quasi-religious character to forces that are neither spiritual nor religious.

In black Africa, for instance, aid has propped up the most odious tyrannies, responsible for the brutal butchery of hundreds of thousands of people. Foreign aid has, in effect, subsidized up human sacrifices, made at governmental altars.

The Christian answer to the suffering of the world, to poverty and distress, has through the ages been completely different: it offered the Cross, which seemed foolish to the Greeks and scandalous to the Jews. But it was the Cross that altered, for centuries, the human condition. Not aid, but a new faith. Not "Rice Christians," but a new hope.

Jesus did not launch an abolitionist movement: our own Unitarians did that, and succeeded in creating a Civil War at a cost of 600,000 lives and a million casualties. What a triumph! The worms had not finished their work before other nations ended slavery with a stroke of the pen, because industrialization had made it no longer profitable or necessary.

Christianity is not a reform movement. It was not launched on a demand for peace with Parthia. It left Caesar on his throne, and Pilate and Galileo to their opinions — and continued to change the world. All that Rome had: with its power and wealth and corruption faded before the message of Christ and the Apostles.

What has happened is that Christians have forgotten why and how Christianity rose and triumphed and outlasted. They have forgotten the promises of God of their ultimate and complete victory — if only they believe.

For those who consider themselves Christian to fall into step with political efforts that use the methods of the old Church without the faith, is to forget what the faith did without the politicians. When the Church in its great power in the late Middle Ages sought to direct society it became instead a mirror of society, with all its ambitions, frailties and vices.

It lost the allegiance of the Reformers first, and then millions in the north of Europe. But it's worth noting that

neither Luther, Calvin or Knox made themselves the heads of anything: they did not become Dukes or Princes or, for that matter, Cardinals — though all those were within their grasp. Political influence, like happiness, is seldom obtained by a direct pursuit. Ministers and priests are not noteworthy for political leadership: we have worldly men for that, men well acquainted with the realities of power.

Religion should not contend with Caesar: Jesus made that clear. What Christians need to do is to recall society to spiritual realities. Our faith tells us this; so does history. Early in the 1700s, when France was turning toward Humanist goals, England was threatened by the rationalism of the Deists, the secularism of the Whig State, by popular materialism and the brutalization of the masses. John Wesley changed that situation by changing the subject — and England avoided the trap into which the French fell.

Religion, someone said, is the sphere of the absolute, while business and politics belong to the sphere of the relative. Religion is the fixed pole on which human life revolves, and to which all its parts must be related.

This may sound too remote from everyday life to be practical when discussing a government, but it is not. What I am saying is that we are in a situation comparable to the first century, when the Christian community was subject to ridicule and contempt — and worse. We are not yet being openly persecuted, but if we continue to shrink from the realities of our faith in terms of our environment, we shall certainly experience open persecution in times to come.

If, on the other hand, we strengthen the Christian community, if we increase our numbers but more importantly, if we refuse to approve anti-Christian programs that sound idealistic but which wreak havoc, we shall gain not only in numbers, but in social presence and influence.

The faith, in other words, cannot be defeated — if we have faith, if we keep the faith. For it is only a society made aware of larger issues that can keep a civil government within effective bounds.

wiped out. Now I am not sure how much of this is historically accurate, though I have read in history books (and saw on the film) that General Lee did say, as he saw his shattered forces return "This is all my fault."

General Lee seemed to be an unusual leader. He was obviously a very religious man (this even comes through in the film, which is surprising, considering the way Hollywood treats most Christians now). Another interesting aspect is that he never seemed to lose his temper. Even when he was criticizing someone for their wrong actions in the war, he didn't really do it in a harsh way. As a result, all the Confederates had the greatest respect for him. You would never hear a bad word spoken about General Lee. (The same could not be said for the Union Generals.)

Because of this more human look at the battle, the film rises above the level of other action war films. But for those who like a bit of musketfire and cannonballs, there's certainly plenty in this film which seems to have gone into great detail to get it accurate. You'll see everything, from Colonel Chamberlain's bayonet charge on the second day that saved the Union army, to General Pickett's famous charge on the last day, known as the high water mark of the Confederacy, where 15,000 Southerners marched across a mile of open ground getting smashed apart by Union artillery.

I highly recommend this film. In fact, to paraphrase a famous quote that occasionally appears in ads in this newsletter, "If you only see one film this year, *Gettysburg* should be that film." Unfortunately, there is only one copy of this film in Australia, possibly due to the fact that *Gettysburg* is filmed in 70mm and there aren't too many 70mm projectors in Australia. So you'll need to check the newspapers carefully to find out where it will be screened. However the 70mm film means it is extra-wide on the big screen, providing a lovely clear picture, and some beautiful panoramic shots of the field of Gettysburg (the film having been shot on location at Gettysburg in Pennsylvania). So if you do hear of it coming to your state, make every effort to see it.

By the way, make sure you put aside plenty of time if you're planning to see it. Running at 4 hours 21 minutes, it is literally "bigger than *Ben-Hur*." (Unlike *Ben-Hur* and *Ten Commandments*, however, *Gettysburg* does not drag in the middle. It actually manages to keep a solid pace all the way through the film.)