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The missing identity of America

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San Jose State University, 1994

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THE MISSING IDENTITY OF AMERICA

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Political Science

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree

Masters of Arts

by

Linda Rae Curry

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ABSTRACT
THE MISSING IDENTITY OF AMERICA
by Linda Rae Curry

This thesis addresses the recent problems in America which are expressed in the increase in violence, corruption in government, loss of political power by the people, ethnic and racial divisions, etc. In searching for the causes of the weakened state of this nation's political system, it examines the goals and vision of the Puritan-Pilgrim colonist who first settled America and who laid down the values and practices that influenced the development of American democracy.

Research reveals that the Puritans came to this "New World" with a vision from God to create a community which would be "as a City upon a Hill," a light to the world of a benevolent and godly community created by God through a covenant with the Puritans. They valued love of God and neighbor above material or selfish interests. These values formed them into covenant-communities. This thesis also traces the causes of the loss of the covenant-community and seeks to find solutions to restoring America to the positive aspects of its heritage.

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Introduction

The goal of this thesis is to reveal the missing identity of America by exploring the major contributions of the Puritans-Pilgrims to the original political structure and ideals which formed the character and personality of America. Incorporated in this political analysis is an examination of the moral and spiritual values which cannot be separated from the theocratic, political theory of the Puritans. This thesis will seek to demonstrate that the Puritan-Pilgrim heritage is an essential and undeniable part of America's national identity and national health, and that having that heritage diminished and discredited has resulted in the ineffectiveness of American political institutions to solve this nation's numerous problems.

George Kennan expresses his concern for the powerless state of America and the condition of its political institutions:...

When problems arise in the life of a nation of such seriousness that they seem to jeopardize its very future and to undermine the confidence of a great many of its citizens in the soundness of its political institutions, and when the government confesses itself, explicitly or implicitly, unable to cope successfully with these problems, then one has no choice but to question the adequacy of Western democracy itself, as we know it, for responding successfully to the changing environmental conditions in which it is obliged to exist (158).

The deteriorated state of American political institutions today reflects a shift in the make-up of the American character or identity away from the identity on which the initial American democratic institutions were founded and preserved. The Founding Fathers of the Revolutionary period established a

government on principles and values handed down by the Puritans. Although influenced by Enlightenment thinking, the core of the American identity was formed by the influence of Puritan values and moral beliefs. This identity was instrumental in forming the democratic institutions that were particularly American.

Even the American Dream until the end of the nineteenth century reflected a Puritan viewpoint. Americans felt they had been called by God to fulfill a special destiny. John Winthrop expressed this purpose or destiny in the lecture, "A Modell of Christian Charity," delivered aboard the *Arabella* on arriving in the New World. He defined their relationship with God and with each other as a covenant relationship. He defined the American Dream as the goal of the Puritan-Pilgrim colonists to make their colonies to be "as a City upon a Hill": an example to the world of a godly, moral, and benevolent nation. Although all colonists desired material improvement, this goal did not transcend the more spiritual one until the end of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century the spiritual aspect of the American Dream has faded into the deep recesses of the national memory in light of the ascending dream for material improvement and a better life.

In order to understand the transition of America from one identity to another, it is necessary to first understand what is meant by "identity." Nations as well as people form identities. "Identity" is defined in the Funk & Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary as: "The distinctive character belonging to an individual." Although this definition is informative, further exploration is required of the complexities that form the "distinctive character" of a person and of a group of semi-homogeneous people that form a nation. A deeper look at

identity will give a more complete definition. The identity of a person is the result of family dynamics, generational influences, genetics, temperament; personality, social influences, environment (geography, society, and government), and talents and abilities. Character qualities arising from heart responses to life add a further dimension to identity, such as: honesty, dishonesty, forgiveness, unforgiveness, loyalty, disloyalty, wisdom, shallowness, patience, impatience, etc. All of these elements mysteriously work together to form the identity of each person, and when individuals are united by a common heritage and government, that of a nation.

To further explore the formation of identity, let us look more closely at the above influences in relation to some basic human needs. Four basic needs in mankind interact with these above influences to form one's identity: a need for survival (the most fundamental), a need for community (associated to some extent with survival), a need for individual development of potential, talents, and abilities (possible once survival is assured), and a spiritual need (which leads mankind to search for a god).

A person's need to survive causes him or her to interact with the environment either with strain and tension or with ease. If people are born into poverty or suffering, and survive, they develop qualities of self-reliance or self-pity or resentment or determination or any number of combinations of positive or negative qualities to form their personalities and character. If survival is guaranteed, then this need expresses itself in activities which lead to increased consumption of material comforts, objects, and wealth. This process of achieving survival and moving beyond survival to materialistic pursuits can lead to benevolent giving to those in need or to developing the negative character

qualities of avarice and greed.

Second, the effect on the identity of a person from the human need for community depends upon the kind of family, tribe or clan, school, city, state, or nation into which one is born. If there are strong, close-knit, flexible, and supportive relationships in one's social environment, a person will normally develop the ability to care for others. He or she will be able to move beyond self-centered interests to contribute to the support of others. A loving and giving social experience enables people to not only love those in their families, but also to love others outside their families. This capacity to love helps to form a stable, united country. Without close, social relationships, a person will more often form an identity that is more unstable and become less able to care for and help others. That is why healthy family structures are so important for maintaining a democratic society. When people care for each other, they can feel a responsibility to sacrifice their time and energy to assure freedom and justice for everyone.

Third, the need for the development of individual talents and abilities is manifested once a person has been assured of his or her basic survival needs. Further, a loving family and social environment adds to the person's ability to become a fully developed individual (An overly controlling community or family hinders individual growth). The healthy development of the talents and abilities of individuals contributes wonderful inventions, freedoms, artistry, and ideas to one's family and to society. The most distinctive part of one's identity is formed through individual development.

When individualism grows to excessive proportions, however, it will obstruct community development and can also lead to undermining the ability of

others to survive. Excessive interest in the development of self leads to a self-centeredness which desensitizes a person to others needs. " Me" and "self" absorb so much time and concern that a person's consciousness hasn't room for much else. "My rights" and "my happiness" swallow up concern for the rights and happiness of others. Even the conscience is weakened, since self-interest becomes the driving force at the cost of ethical controls on human behavior. Excessive individualism often unites with materialism to create destructive forces in society that undermine democracy.

The fourth and final need, the spiritual one, arises out of the deepest part of human beings. It can unite the community, temper the individual, and restrain materialism. The spiritual need expresses itself as a hunger to be one with something or someone above the material realm. This need is fulfilled through supernatural love. Spiritual commitments give life a meaning and purpose beyond what is material and temporal. Without them, the identity of a person lacks depth and the capacity to achieve one's fullest potential as a human being, which is the power to love unconditionally. Spirituality helps to develop important character qualities in people, such as: compassion, kindness, patience, self-denial, loyalty, faithfulness, honesty, wisdom, and understanding. But when spiritual development is not pursued, opposing qualities can develop. These qualities which produce division and not unity, include: dishonesty, lying, pride, betrayal, insensitivity, envy, jealousy, hatred, revenge, and selfish-ambition. When a person's identity is defined by these qualities, he or she will destroy, not build, the family and the nation.

In order for a person or nation to form a healthy and stable identity, it is necessary that all four of these needs be pursued in a balanced manner.

However, they need not be in equal balance to form a stable person or nation; most nations and people are in an ever fluctuating arrangement of need concern and fulfillment. Yet, in order to maintain a consistent identity, one need will be continuously emphasized without eliminating the others. This emphasis is the quality that makes each person or nation identifiable as unique. In order to change one's identity, it would be necessary to change the balance of involvement in community, individual, spiritual, or survival activities.

If one or two needs become an obsession and exclude the others, this can result in imbalance and instability in a person or nation. For example, some people become so absorbed with spiritual fulfillment that they neglect learning, relationships, and their physical needs. When spirituality is followed to this extreme, mental illness can result; it has become a means of escaping from reality. The Soviet Union under Communism is an example of a nation (or national leaders) pursuing community to the exclusion of spiritual, individual, and to a lesser degree survival needs. The violent stripping away of one national identity to be replaced by another, plus the extreme communal emphasis, of Marxism-Leninism to instabilities that eventually helped cause the Soviet Union dissolution. Two centuries earlier, France, during its bloody revolution, was an example of a people, who, although initially concerned with survival, came ultimately to be crazed for individual power. It took a dictator to reestablish balance.

Following the above model, the identity of America will be viewed in this thesis as it was in its earliest formation; shaped by the extensive influence of the beliefs and values of the Pilgrims and Puritans, especially in New England. In thus returning to the seventeenth century, the original values and beliefs of the

first Anglo-Americans--and the political principles and philosophies that grew out of these values and beliefs--will be rediscovered. The defining of American identity is made clear as one views the interwoven balance and relationship of the four needs described earlier: spirituality, community, individual development, and survival. These needs can be seen in their expression in the material, social, individual, and religious conditions of the first Puritan colonists. Further, these needs can be seen as threads of influence which were combined in a particular way to form the foundation of American identity. But emphasis on the fulfillment of and concern with some needs more than others has caused a shift in that identity, especially in the twentieth century. The fulfillment of spiritual needs through love of God and love of neighbor has yielded to an exclusive emphasis on individual and material needs. American capitalism will therefore be analyzed and examined. Consideration of this shift of emphasis will make it clear that the American nation today has lost its identity and vision.

In this thesis America's contemporary national identity will be examined in the first chapter. Next, in Chapters Two and Three, the two threads of love of God and neighbor, as these were understood and practiced by the Pilgrims and Puritans, will be explored. The study of the threads of individualism and capitalism will follow in Chapters Four and Five.

Chapter 1

The Condition Of America

At the present time, the 1990s, the United States is faced with national scandals: greed, drug abuse and drug wars, spiritual and economic poverty, family disintegration, excessive influence on government by powerful interests, racial division and tension, the Aids epidemic, the health care crisis, senseless killings, a crumbling educational system, weak national leadership, confusion, pessimism, lack of direction, and for some, despair. A sense of powerlessness can result from confronting the overwhelming dimension of our problems, leading to the belief that America is out of control. How can solutions to all these problems be found? They are so numerous and so vast. Should the number of police be increased on high school campuses? Should the sale of hand guns and automatic weapons be outlawed? Should education concerning Aids' prevention be increased? Should taxes be increased or reduced? Should the ethical guidelines for our government officials be strengthened? Should the police force in all of our cities be augmented? Should new shelters or training programs be created for the homeless? Should America seek to police the world or concentrated on domestic problems? Should the nation develop new sources of energy? Should the penalties for white collar crimes be increased? The list goes on and on.

Kennan has expressed his concern for the failure of our "Western democracy" to cure many of the nations ailments:

The list would include such things as environmental

deterioration; the decline of educational standards; crime; drug abuse; in general, the dreadful conditions in the urban ghettos; the national budget deficit; the continued inability of our government to meet its financial obligations without massive borrowing at the expense of future generations; the decline of personal savings; and, in general, the excessive dependence on credit to sustain both governmental and personal activity. And beyond these, there are also troublesome societal conditions: attitudes of hopelessness, skepticism, cynicism, and bewilderment, particularly among the youth--that have led many observers to characterize this society (and, I think, not unjustly) as a "sick" one (158).

Many of the answers to these problems have been sought by special interests groups which propose their solutions to their particular concern to governmental leaders. Although many Americans become involved in worthy causes, they often do so because someone they love was hurt by some social injustice or crime. However if an injustice involved someone they didn't know or care about, these citizens may have no long term involvement or concern. The main motivation for political or social action arises out of self-interest. For example, groups of citizens organize to stamp out drugs in their neighborhoods; organizations are formed to support rape victims, sexual abuse victims, alcoholics, and drug abusers; or organizations are formed to stop drunk drivers and child molesters. In all of these situations, a majority of the people involved in those causes have been in some manner personally harmed by the object of their concern. Although the concern is valid, it lacks the power that arises from disinterested actions to change injustices. In other words, moral responses to unjust treatment of a person or group unknown to the respondent draws its power from an unbiased, disinterested conscience. Such a response requires a highly educated and morally sensitive conscience in relation to universal

moral principles that apply to all humankind. The Civil Rights Movement of the 60's and the movement to end the Vietnam War were motivated by that kind of conscience. More recently there has been a failure of most people to concern themselves with issues that have not touched their lives personally. Self-love and self-interest have replaced the motivation of a universal, disinterested love for all people.

The Puritan-Pilgrim covenant-communities were based on a disinterested love of God and love of neighbor, which through the years grew into a universal love. But in recent years excessive interest in self-development and self-fulfillment have displaced a concern for the welfare of 'my' neighbor and 'my' community. Each person has become an isolated individual striving to fulfill his or her own destiny according to calculations of self-interest. Concern for the development of the personal power of each individual has caused neglect of the development of those character qualities that are necessary for a united community. Only recently, when people have become more concerned with corruption in government, have the terms honesty, integrity and even the word character been frequently bandied about in the media. Without honesty and integrity there can be no trust. Without trust there can be no community--political or social.

Honesty and integrity are, however, only two admirable character qualities. Many others are also being neglected, including goodness, mercy, kindness, perseverance, forgiveness, humility, and consideration. These qualities are sometime discussed, but there is a great lack of teaching in the family, schools and government about the need for good character. Families have to fight against the lack of moral values presented on television and in

films. Many educators in recent years have discovered that children going through their schools needed to be taught moral and ethical principles, saying that their students had difficulty knowing what is right and wrong. Morally uneducated consciences have difficulty discerning that lying and cheating--and even sometimes murder--are wrong. In a community that practiced the principles of brotherly love, there would be no such lack of moral and ethical knowledge.

Personal sacrifice for the good of another is another value of a covenant-community that has been lost. When emphasis is placed on the self, it is difficult to learn to give rather than receive. Many young people find it difficult to make the transition from the receiving position of childhood to the giving, sacrificial position of the adult. The ideals of society as taught by much of the media emphasize the importance of possessions and money. Parents are therefore constantly fighting against the ideal of the easy 'buck'. In a society where so much abundance exists, it is difficult to instill in children the perception that giving and sacrificing out of love for another gives one a sense of satisfaction that can outweigh the passing feeling of happiness one has when receiving a desired object or experiencing a drug high.

Emphasis on individual rights, self-development, development of personal power and materialism are only a few examples of the different direction America has taken since the time of the Puritans. This has meant a nearly complete transformation of the spirit of this nation. America was founded on the principles of love of God and love of neighbor. Today it has come full swing to be motivated by self-interest, self-love, individualism, materialism, and independence, which results in division rather than unity. With the lessening of

the covenant-communitiy experience, Americans experience an increasing inability to form the bonds of unity and love which encourage participation by citizens in the day to day governing of their lives. Without the concern for others that arises out of brotherly love, Americans lack motivation to involve themselves in consistent governing activities that do not affect their lives directly. Since their private interests are self-centered, the degree of participation and responsibility required to maintain a healthy democracy has been lacking. Without the participation motivated by the covenant experience and neighborly love, Americans have lost a significant amount of political power.

Although the majority of Americans are not always consciously aware of it, they can have an unconscious sense that they have lost most of their political power. American representative government has grown away from the people. The last time the people successfully exerted their power on a major issue was to cause the end to the Vietnam War. After that victory of the people, however, influence returned to the politicians and political action groups. By encouraging an increase in greed and self-interest, they were lulled back to sleep by their presidents and representatives. One of the writers of the American Constitution, Gouverneur Morris, expressed concern that the rich would use the weakness of the people to manipulate them out of their freedom and power. He therefore suggested that part of the Constitution include a protection for the masses against manipulation by the rich. Regrettably, this was not included (Smith, xxi).

The predominance of self-interest, self-love, individualism, independence, and materialism lead this nation to its current dilemma. It leads it to the dilemma it now finds itself in as a nation and as individuals. The loss of

its original Covenant values and deterioration of morals can be regarded as the results of loss of love for God and for one's neighbor. Without a prevailing sense of true community. Greed springs from excessive self-interest. Individual greed becomes reflected in greed in government. It is also manifested in the ghettos in urban areas. Children frustrated by a system that excludes them from its benefits are killing each other to obtain the money that represents power and importance in this nation. They are following prevailing cultural values and then blamed for their actions. In the process of this battle for money and importance, young people form gangs as a substitute for the families they lack. Parents who have suffered degradation, poverty, and humiliation find it exceedingly difficult to maintain family stability. A generation of African-American young men is being wiped out as the result of the insensitivity of most affluent Americans to injustices in the system, an insensitivity caused by an excess of selfishness and self-centeredness.

How can these problems be solved one by one? Their number and severity are overwhelming. Attempting to find solutions to them individually would be a superficial approach and ignore their root cause. Individual solutions could be likened to applying Band-Aid to festering wounds. For example, it would not be necessary to put more police on the streets and in the schools or need to outlaw the sale of hand guns and automatic weapons if American society and its families provided the moral, ethical, and loving environment in which each person is taught and shown how to love God and love and respect one's neighbor. It would not be necessary to fear the destruction of the environment if consumption were limited by the sense of thrift and stewardship that permeated the theological beliefs of America's first

founders. These beliefs restricted many excesses of greed until in the 1920's advertising began to seduce people into accepting a consumer mentality. The root cause of all these problems lies in the failure of the American people to continue to practice what St. James called "the royal law of love." This political, social, and economic crisis is a symptom of a deeper crisis of morals and values. America has fallen into a state of corruption and confusion as the result of corruption of its morals and a loss of spiritual values. This crisis of morals and values on the individual level has increasingly led, in the last thirty years, to a national crisis which is political.

Because its original Congregationalist influence has been criticized and suppressed, America is missing a part of its identity that once gave it moral and spiritual guidelines for private and public life. The Puritans instilled in this nation a sense of moral purpose. They taught the Christian principles of serving God, loving one's neighbor, and a covenant community that laid the framework for its morals, values, and political practices. Spiritual and community values have been diminished and discredited and the values of individualism and capitalism have become dominant. Because of this, America has had for considerable time a moral and spiritual vacuum. John F. Kennedy sensed this vacuum during his Presidency and made an effort to fill it by calling Americans to righteousness and unselfishness. Since his assassination and the assassinations of his brother Bobby and Martin Luther King Jr., many have seen the nation as floundering in a sea of confusion, immorality, and powerlessness. (A growing internal turmoil has been increasingly finding outer expression in the problems identified in this chapter).

Chapter 2

The Puritan Covenant-Community

The covenant-community was the unique contribution of the Congregationalists. It provided for the first colonies a healthy balance of the values of community, spirituality, material interest, and individual importance. This balance became the foundation of the American nation and gave it its uniqueness and stability, both socially and politically. The essence of Pilgrim and Puritan civil government was the action of entering into a covenant. Under this concept the government of each town was instituted by written covenants which all citizens signed, one for the church and one for the town. Through these covenants they were linked to God, each other, and the town. A covenant was more than a contract. As stated by Thomas Hooker, it was a: "Mutual covenanting and confederating of the Saints in the fellowship of the faith according to the order of the Gospel, is that which gives the Constitution and being to a visible Church (Miller, Joshua 34).

God's plan for church and civil government, as seen by the Puritans, was partially spelled out in a proclamation made by God through a human instrument at a religious meeting in England recorded by Edward Johnson in 1628:

How much more shall Christ who createth all power, call over this 900 league Ocean at his pleasure, such instrument as he thinks meete to make use of in this place, from whence you are now to depart, but further that you may not delay the Voyage intended, for your full satisfactin know this is the place *where the Lord will create a new Heaven, and a new Earth in, new*

Churches, and a new Common-wealth together,
 Wherefore, . . . At your landing see you observe the Rule
 of his Word, . . . search out the mind of God both in *planting*
and continuing Church and civill Governmment, but be sure
they be distinct, yet agreeing and helping the one to the
 other; Let the matter and forme of your Churches be such
 as werein the Primitive Times...to be neither Nationall nor
 Provinciaall, but gathered together *in Covenant* of such number
 as might ordinarily meete together in one place, and built
 of such living stones as outwardly appeare Saints by calling.
 You are to ordaine Elders in every Church,...their call to
 Office shall be mediate from you, but their authority
 and commision shall be immediate from Christ revealed in
 his work;...(Miller, Perry 143-144).

Johnson here describes many of the elements of the form of church and civil government instituted by the Puritans. (The italics are mine and highlight important concepts). There will be a new church and a new commonwealth (civil government), which are to be separate but harmonious and mutually helpful. Both should be created by a covenant among the number of people who generally meet together in one place. Further, leaders should be chosen by the people in the church who outwardly appear to be saints, i.e., regenerated. Although the election of elders is by the people, their authority comes from God.

Further study reveals that the magistrates are also elected by the people, who hold the same view concerning the divine source of their authority. For both the church and civil government, then, the people who vote are church members and therefore citizens. The power to elect lies in the hands of people who are saved. These regenerated Christians have entered into a covenant with God and with each other. Although those who are not regenerated are equal before the law and enjoy all of the benefits of the community, they have

no voice in the government or choice of magistrates or ministers. The power to rule resides in two prominent individuals, joined by that of other magistrates and officers: An elder rules the church with the influence and advice received from other elders, deacons, pastors, and teachers; a governor rules the civil government with magistrates sharing the responsibilities. Although the civil government is separate from the church, it nevertheless functions under the moral guidance of the church. Both the officers in the church and the magistrates in the town government, then, receive their power from God. They are limited dictators in that they must rule according to God's will and in harmony with his laws. If they fail to do so, the electorate can put pressure on them through public opinion and through the help of other ministers or magistrates (Miller, Perry 187-192).

It is clear that there are some elements of democracy in the Puritan form of government: the (sanctified) people elected their rulers. There was direct participation in both civil and church government. As a result of this participation, the people learned that "they possessed a share of power" (Miller, Joshua 28). This power was extended to more people as it became too difficult to distinguish between the regenerated and the unregenerated. These concepts of the franchise and of participation had considerable influence on the approach of the Founding Fathers in creating the American republican-democratic form of government.

Another element of democracy can be seen in the practice of restricting the authority of the church to its own members. The Puritans developed a form of local autonomy in resistance to the hierarchical institutions of the Anglican and Catholic churches. They tried to avoid a distinction between the institution

and its members in order to prevent the creation of a centralized power which could assert its will over the will of its members. The people are the church, not the building or the clergy. Each congregation consists of members who have covenanted together in their local community and each unit forms a part of the Body of Christ. Each local unit rules itself through its own elected officers (Miller, Joshua 33).

Both the election of officers and magistrates at town meetings and the creation of autonomous church-town units reveal the method used by the Puritans to retain power in the hands of their members. These Congregationalists did not intend to create democratic institutions. In fact, they were cautious towards democracy--in its purest form democracy appeared to be an unstable form of government. They fell into democratic practices as a result of their covenant relationship. The covenant experience is an equalizing one. All members of the local community participate in achieving one shared goal: to love God and to love one's neighbor. It can only be achieved through the sacrifices and actions of the community's members. In the lecture, "A Modell Of Christian Charity," delivered by John Winthrop in 1630, Winthrop expresses the equalizing or "levelling" nature of covenant commitment:

That every man might have need of other, and from hence they might be all knitt more nearly together in the Bond of brotherly affeccion: from hence it appears plainely that noe man is made more honourable then another or more wealthy etc., out of any perticuler and singuler respect to himselfe but for the glory of his Creator and the Common good of the Creature, Man; . . . (Miller, Perry 195-196)

To summarize: the covenant requires that all members and citizens

participate in the "Bond of brotherly affection." They are all to be knit together through the sacrifice of the individual good for the welfare of the whole. Every member is responsible for fulfilling his part as ordained by God: . . ."we must be knitt together in this worke as one man. . .wee must delight in eache other, make others Condicions our own, reioyce together, mourne together, labour, and suffer together, always having before our eyes our Commission and Community in the worke, our Community as members of the same body, . . . (Miller, Perry, 198).

No better description of a fully participating, united community can be expressed. John Calvin believed: "that a community rested on an active membership" (Wolin 191). He held that unity could be achieved through member participation, which contradicted the Catholic belief that unity could only be achieved through "the single will of the pontiff" (Wolin, pg. 191). The American Puritans demonstrated the truth of the conviction that unity could be achieved through mutual participation of its members. They also revealed other advantages to participation. Member participation led to an equalizing of all members and this in turn led to an increase of power in the hands of the participating members. It was not the franchise alone that gave them this power; power also flowed from their mutual activity, responsibility, and involvement in all facet of the community experience. Each person was responsible for the well-being of every other; this involvement established a feeling of shared power along with the shared responsibility. Universal participation was the key, not only to unity, but also to the possession by the people of spiritual and civil governmental power.

The source, therefore, of power for the Puritans was founded on a

covenant relationship with God, each other, and the civil government. Out of this covenant relationship arose a people who accepted the challenge to be responsible for each other and to participate in the commission given to them by God. In order to understand what the American people have lost, there needs to be an understanding of all that the Congregationalists gained through their covenants. What were the guiding principles that directed their covenant responsibilities? What was the result of their commitment to each other?

Chapter 3 - The Source of the Puritan Covenant

The covenant was the fundamental Puritan experience and concept which guided every part of their lives. The nature of this covenant and all it contained is, however, difficult to describe because its sum passes beyond the definition of its various parts. It has a spiritual aspect, which would still survive to some degree even if it did not include God. If Montesquieu were to define the original American character and the spirit of its laws, he would view the covenant as the main source of its moeurs and manieres. In the following section we will explore the covenant as it was understood and experienced by the Puritans and Pilgrims.

The covenant agreement most widely referred to by early American scholars is the one made by the Pilgrims on their arrival at Plymouth in 1620:

In the name of God, amen. We whose names are under-written, the loyal subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King James by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France, Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, etc.

Having undertaken, for the glory of God and advancement of the Christian Faith and honor of our King and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia, do by these present solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid, and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions and offices from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony. Unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod, the 11th of November, in the year of the reign of our Sovereign King James of England . . . Anno Domini 1620 (Marshal 120).

This was the first of many covenants that were made by congregations all over New England and in all other areas settled by Puritans or Pilgrims. In making these statements of their intentions to commit themselves to serve God and each other, they were following the scriptural example from the Old Testament and New Testament. In fact, the word "testament" can also be translated as "covenant." In other words, to them the Bible consisted of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The Bible represented the history of God's covenant with his people: first the Hebrews, and then the followers of Christ. These Protestant Christians in America derived both the spiritual and practical meaning of covenant from the Old and New Testaments. Let us look at the two Covenants in order to have a better understanding of their individual influence on these early American Christians.

To the Hebrews in the Old Testament, the covenant was the method God or Jehovah used to unite his people into one nation and to unite his people to him as his "chosen people." Their identity as God's "chosen people," and also their physical existence among stronger and larger nations, depended upon God's covenant commitment to them. He was their protector when they obeyed, and their disciplinarian when they disobeyed. God made three covenants with Israel. The first, to Noah, was a promise to never again flood the earth; it was a covenant God established through Noah with "all the life on the earth"(18; Gen., ch. 9,vv. 16-17). The second covenant was with Abraham and all of his descendants; circumcision was the requirement for obedience (30; Gen., ch.

17,v. 9). The third covenant was with Israel at Mount Sinai. There God spoke to Moses: "Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (114; Exod., ch.19, vv. 5-6).

With each covenant God more clearly defined his relationship, purpose, and promise to Israel. With Noah, there was no requirement of obedience. With Abraham, circumcision of all males was the required act of obedience necessary to maintain the covenant. With Moses, obedience to the Ten Commandments and further laws became the requirement for maintaining the covenant. God had therefore gradually enlightened the consciousness of Israel to receive his plan and the Mosaic covenant. Obedience to the Law became the main tenet of the faith of Israel. The Biblical books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy instituted moral, ceremonial and civil laws to complement and define the Ten Commandments. All of these laws were to be strictly obeyed by all of the people of Israel.

For the Puritans the Ten Commandments and the ordinances of God were seen as part of God's commission for obedience and of their covenant to obey God by obeying his Laws. If they failed to obey God's Laws, they would be judged by curses and caused to perish:

Beloved there is now sett before us life, and good,
deathe and evill in that wee are Commaunded this
day to love the Lord our God, and to love one another
to walke in his wayes and to keepe his commaund-
ments and his Ordinance, and his lawes, and the
Articles of our Covenant with him that wee may
live and be multiplyed, and that the Lord our God
may blesse us in the land whether wee goe to possesse
it: But if our herartes shall turne away soe that wee
will not obey, but shall be seduced and worshipp. . .

other Gods our pleasures and proffitts, and serve them; it is propounded unto us this day, wee shall surely perishe out of the good Land whether wee passe over this Sea to possesse it;. . . (Miller, Perry 199).

The Puritans saw themselves as God's chosen people as a result of their covenant with Him. They believed he had called them out of England to go to the promised land of America, just as he had called Israel out of Egypt into their promised land. They related to God much as the Israelites related to Him. They saw Him as a God of justice, vengeance, curses, and retribution. If they did not obey Him, He would send curses upon them and their children. If they did obey Him, He would bless them with peace and prosperity. If God sent curses, they believed He was just to do so. It was their responsibility to repent and obey.

Law, obedience, and fear of God were emphasized more than love. Although the Hebrew people became one people and one nation through their covenant with God, they were united more by their identity as God's chosen people than by mutual love. As the centuries progressed, their common laws, beliefs, sufferings, victories, and experiences in relation to their obedience or disobedience to Jehovah developed a cultural and spiritual unity. Closer to the time of Christ, however, the prophets of the Old Testament spoke more of the need to seek God by faith and from the heart: "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," ' declares the Lord,' "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people" (1177, Jer., ch.32, v. 4). Prophetic messages such as this give some foretaste of the teachings on love and grace to be found in the New Testament.

The Puritans related to God in a manner similar to that of the Israelites. They did not lack awareness of the mercy and forgiveness through Christ that

was unique to their covenant, but they could not grasp the New Testament concept of grace in its fullness. Enough time had not passed since the Reformation for them to rediscover those truths in the New Testament which in their view had been lost by the corruption and secularization of the Roman Catholic Church. In spite of this disadvantage, they were more successful in grasping the New Testament principle of the union of the regenerated people through the life of Christ than they were in grasping the principle of grace and love in their relationship with God. Although it was difficult for them to apply the New Testament principles of grace, love, and faith to their vertical relationship with God, they were more successful in applying these principles to their horizontal relationship with each other.

The heart and essence of the mutual covenant of the Puritans was oneness. It went far beyond the unity of the people of Israel. Individuals thought of themselves in terms of "we" and not as "I." In all their covenant statements they speak of being knit together, tied together and bound together. The fundamental reason for their oneness arose from the main tenet of their Christian faith as emphasized by Jesus: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (1475; Matt., ch.22, v. 37). Although Jesus was repeating an Old Testament Law, he goes beyond the Old Testament interpretation of love given in Chapter 5 and 6 of Matthew. He tells his disciples to love their enemies and to pray for them, to give to the needy in secret without show, to turn the other cheek, to give more than a person asks, and not to judge others. The only way to achieve this kind

of unity was through sharing in the love of Christ through regeneration. It is this concept of unconditional love that the Puritans desired to fulfil in their covenant. Winthrop saw this love, combined with their obedience, as the key to fulfilling God's desire that the colonies to a light of Godliness shining for all the nations of Europe to see and emulate. He expresses this desire as follows:

That which the most in their Churches (those churches in England) maintaineth as a truth in profession only, we must bring into familiar and constant practice, as in this duty of love we must love brotherly without dissimulation, we must love one another with a pure heart fervently we must bear one another's burdens, we must not look only on our own things, but also on the things of our brethren . . . Thus stands the cause between God and us, we are entered into Covenant with him for this work, . . . (for the work of loving one another) (Miller, Perry 198).

As a result of this love, John Winthrop goes on to predict that:

. . . we shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies, when he shall make us a praise and glory, that men shall say of succeeding plantations: the Lord make it like that of New England: for we must consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; . . . (Miller, Perry 198).

Winthrop goes on to say that the only way to achieve this goal is:

. . . to do Justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God, for this end, we must be knit together in this work as one man, we must entertain each other in brotherly Affection, we must be willing to abridge our selves of our superfluities, for the supply of their necessities, we must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekness, gentleness, patience, and liberality, . . . so shall we keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of

peace,. . ."(Miller, Perry 198).

This last sentence is taken directly from Bible. Here Winthrop is speaking out of the spirit of the New Testament. "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit. . ."(1795; Eph., ch. 4, v. 3). And: "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we are all baptized into one body: . . ."(1750-1751; 1Cor., ch.,12, vv.12-13).

Further, Paul writes that:

But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it. So that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. . . Now you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it (1751; 1Cor.,ch 12, vv. 24-27).

The New Testament spirit of love, which is the life of Christ, is the most prominent means of achieving unity in that covenant, in contrast to the unifying factors of Law and obedience found in the Hebrew covenant. There is an essential difference between being unified by God's choice and the Law and being unified by sharing the supernatural life of God through Christ. The Puritans believed they all shared one life, from and in Christ, which united them as members of one body. Everyone had a responsibility for everyone else, and everyone had a necessary function and work. All of these examples point to the conclusions reached above: that all members shared power in the spiritual and civil government of their church and town because it was necessary for every person to participate in order to fulfill the covenant. Everyone was supposed to

be motivated to participate out of commitment to brotherly love. Without brotherly love there would be no unifying covenant; without a covenant there would be no commitment to one another; without a commitment to each other there would be no participation; and without participation there would be no power.

Clearly, then this community spirit of the Puritans was more dependent upon the New Testament influence than that of the Old. However, their misapplication of the principles of the Law in the Old Testament can be seen as partially to blame for destroying their unique covenant-community. The Puritans were not able to discern the conflict between the Law and grace. That is also why they related to God in Old Testament terms and to each other through the love of Christ. The combining of the Laws of the Old Testament with the spirit of life of the New was the result of incomplete revelation still emanating from the unfinished Reformation. Protestants maintain that it has taken many centuries to discover the truths that had been lost or distorted during the Medieval period.

Summary

Before moving on to the explore the threads of influence of individualism and capitalism in American life, let us review the picture revealed through our study of the Congregationalist experience. If we were to see our nation in the beginning as if it were a tree, we would see that the trunk would express the main goal of these settlers: love of and obedience to God. Second, we would see a very large branch growing out of the trunk filled with many green leaves and fruits expressing love of one's neighbor. We will see through continuing

study of the colonial era that individualism was a small but strong branch filled with potential sprouts but fewer leaves and fruit. The smallest of the branches on the tree of values of the Puritan colonists was capitalism or materialism. Although individualism and materialism had existed from the beginning, they were feared more than welcomed by the leaders of the earliest settlers. As one historian concludes, "Winthrop soon found himself waging, along with John Cotton and others, a difficult battle against the combined forces of secularism, individualism, and materialism. From the beginning of the settlement there had appeared colonists who were prompted by other than religious and civic motives, and their number increased with the years" (Shi 14). In the next two chapters we will investigate the roots of individualism and capitalism as found in the Congregationalist community and follow some of their developments in order to understand their present consequence. As we probe these threads of influence, individualism and capitalism, we will continue to review the appearance of our national tree in light of their growing importance.

CHAPTER 4

The Rise Of Individualism

Individualism is not destructive or evil in itself. The need to develop human potential is an essential part of human nature. Individual power and talent often lies dormant, waiting for an opportunity to express itself. This has been an exhilarating experience for the common man since the Renaissance and Reformation. We have discovered that human potential--intelligence, creativity, reason, inventiveness--are common to all people. America has been in the forefront of the discovery and expression of individual, human power. The American pioneer, industrialist and self-made man, have given the world an example of the extreme competence and capacities of the common man and the rugged, independent, individualist has been a romantic notion of American national identity.

It is the excesses of individualism which are the concern of this chapter. In the last hundred years of American history individualism has become nearly all-consuming, second only to materialism, and has insidiously undermined spiritual values and civil liberty. Many in America profess a belief in God, yet their every-day lives manifest an increasing belief in a God which in fact is themselves. In American society today self-absorption has become dominant, to the exclusion of communitarian values of loving and caring for our neighbors. In this chapter we will discuss the influence of humanism on the Congregationalists, the origin of some encouragements to individualism in Protestant and Congregationalist doctrines, and the influence upon American

individualism of the geographical environment. We will examine how the branch of individualism on our symbolic, national tree has become greater than the branch of love of neighbor.

Since the beginning of time until the Reformation and Renaissance, the individual potential of the majority of people had been restrained and suppressed. The awareness of an individual person as a unique and talented entity was first expounded by philosophers during the Greek and Roman classical period. Even then, however, the discovery and exaltation of human potential and reason was limited to an elite. But the formation and dominance of the Church and the feudal system period buried that new consciousness for many centuries. Yet in the midst of the medieval period, the increase of commerce and a growing middle class, along with the Protestant Reformation, opened the door for a renewal and broadening of the consciousness of human importance and potential. As a result of these and other forces, the humanism of the classical period reemerged in the form of the Renaissance.

During the 17th century "reason" and the physical sciences were exalted as a means to unfold a new understanding of nature and natural laws. The Puritans were not against the the study of the classics or the discoveries of science or the power of human reason. They were, it must be remembered, not only a product of the Reformation, but also of the Renaissance. As we have seen, the democratic elements in their institutions reflected this new emphasis on the importance and worth of the individual. The Protestant Reformation had done much to encourage and increase the movement towards placing higher value on the individual. Luther's teaching of the "priesthood of the believer" is an example of a doctrine that had an equalizing influence on the consciousness

of people of his day, in spite of his own resistance to secular, political equality.

Because the American Congregationalists were a product of the Protestant Reformation and Renaissance, their own unique contributions flowed out of their unique situation. They combined the two influences in their political and theological theories. The early Puritans believed in the power of reason to discover natural laws which were not revealed by the laws of God. They saw the power of reason and the revelation of God as in harmony with each other. But if there were a conflict, God's revelation was supreme.

As time passed, this view of the sovereignty of God over reason weakened. The addition of the ideas of the Enlightenment to existing individualistic and scientific philosophies began to put stress on the Puritans' dependence on the Bible as their main source of knowing God's will. By the end of the eighteenth century, the time of pulling together in order to survive had passed, material comforts and security had increased, and fewer of the citizens were holy, saved Christians. As a result of these influences and changes, American citizens began to depend on human reason for the development of political theory. Perry Miller describes this process as follows: "the idea that God worked His ends through the covenant of the people grew vague and obscure, while the notion that all the people made the covenant for their own reasons and created the state for their own purposes took on more and more definite outlines" (192).

The emphasis on the worth and value of man above God was on the increase and credit was given to the people and to the power of man's reason for the discovery of the natural laws instrumental in the founding of our government. The power of God in the churches was not strong enough to stop

the move away from community and brotherly love. By the end of the nineteenth century, enlightened self-interest was generally regarded as the answer to man's problems. Capitalism, through the Industrial Revolution, was on the rise. Its proponents expounded the theory that when man follows his own self-interest, everyone benefits. Each community, then, became increasingly made up of independent individuals seeking their own self-interest.

Besides the humanism and rationalism of the time, doctrines in Reformed Protestantism also became a source of the liberation of the individual. Although they were not intended to place emphasis on self-centered concerns, when these principles were isolated from other balancing doctrines, they joined such secular ideas as capitalism to encourage excessive individualism. It will be recalled that one of these was mentioned above: Martin Luther introduced the revelation of the "priesthood of the believer." Why was that concept significant? Before his time the Church had placed the ordained priest between God and the individual believer. The ordinary lay person therefore could not reach God, plead his own cause, ask forgiveness, or die with assurance of salvation. He or she needed a priest to intercede in all eternal matters.

From the Protestant perspective, since the time of the Apostles layers of authorities and symbols had been introduced between the believer and God: the Pope, the priests, the Virgin Mary, the saints, candles, indulgences, and holy water, among others. In order to approach God, believers had to employ these various authorities' rituals and symbols to do what they could not do themselves. Believers had no authority or power of their own. They had no personal influence with God. It is easy to see in this context how liberating the doctrine of the "priesthood of the believer" was to the layman. Every convert

had access to God through his Son, Jesus Christ. No human or artifact stood between the believer and God. Jesus was the intercessor. This doctrine introduced a sense of power to the layman which had not been known since the time of the Apostles. Such power could not help but produce a new awareness of human potential and importance that contributed to the philosophical, theological, and political ideas of equality, liberty and individualism that have transformed the western world since the Protestant Reformation.

Besides the doctrine of the "priesthood of the believer," Protestant theology introduced another principle, sola fides, which also encouraged the rise of individualism. The principle of sola fides placed the center of authority and salvation in the soul of each believer. Every saved person was on a spiritual journey, of which the life of Christ was an example (Bercovitch 10). Although after conversion believers entered a covenant community, they were still responsible for the condition of their soul on this journey. The believer alone had the responsibility to obtain freedom from self.

The problem of self was central to the Puritans' concern for working out their salvation. The Puritans were influenced by Augustine's contrast between two cities: "Two loves have given origin to these two cities, self-love in contempt of God unto the earthly. . . (and) love of God in contempt of one's self to the heavenly" (Patrides 17). The self is an enemy because the love of God is seen in conflict with the love of self. Richard Baxter presents this contrast in his Christian Directory:

Man's fall was his turning from God to himself; and his regeneration consisteth in the turning of him from himself to God. . . . (Hence,) self-denial and the love of God are all (one). . . . Understand this and you will understand

what original sin is, and what grace and duty are. . . . It is self that the Scripture principally speaks against. . . . The very names of Self and Own, should sound in the watchful Christian's ears as very terrible, wakening words, that are next to the names of sin and satan (Bercovitch 17).

It would appear that this concern to bring death to self would decrease individualism. As the result of "self-nothingness," there would be no division between the believer and God or the believer and other believers in the body of Christ. Would not this unity overcome the self-centered focus of mankind? Surprisingly, this goal of self-denial had the opposite effect. Since the Christian was solely responsible for his own salvation, through death of self, he or she became introspective and self-analytical. In trying to run from self, one had to study all the activities and motives of the self. This subjective experience led to a dilemma: How to dissolve self while constantly observing self. In a poem by George Goodwin written in the 17th century, he expresses this dilemma in his repeated use of the words "I," "self," "alone," and "mine," while expounding on the conflict with self:

I sing my SELF; My Civil Warrs withi
The Victories I howrely lose and win;
The dayly Duel, the continuall Strife,
The Warr that ends not, till I end my life.
And yet, not mine alone, not onely Mine,
But every-One's that under th' honor'd Signe
Of Chist his Standard, shal his Name enroule,
With holy Vowes of Body and Soule (Bercovitch 18).

Since the time of the spiritual experience of the original Congregationalists, Americans increasingly lost sight of the means by which to accomplish the death of self. Therefore, an internal conflict arose. How can one live for others and be free of sin while plagued with an unruly and sinful

self? Confessing orthodox Christians became haunted with guilt from a self that would not die. By the nineteenth century this internal conflict produced a "nervousness" in many upper-class young Americans. One historian has observed that, "There again was that mysterious sense of unreality that one encounters again and again in the most intimate confessions of upper-class young Americans--Sidney George Fisher, Charles Francis Adams, George Templeton Strong, and a number of others--so often, indeed, that one must suspect it is a peculiarly American response to the world" (Smith 305). For example, the noted philosopher William James experienced "waves of terrible sadness" until the end of his life, and had many thoughts of suicide.

Subjectives and self-analysis without a resolution of the self problem forced an unconscious decision in Americans. They had to free themselves of the self problem, either by rediscovering the means to put self to death or by redefining self as good instead of evil. The majority of Americans unconsciously chose to redefine self. They broke from Christian principles and replaced them with secular ideas without knowing that these ideas conflicted with Christian doctrines.

The Romantics of the nineteenth century most clearly defined the new interpretation of self. Because they were steeped in Puritan symbolism and themes, they had to harmonize their new definition with the belief in the American destiny to lead the world into God's final victory of redemption. They subsumed the individual self into the American self. By this means they allowed for an exaltation of self that at the same time did not appear to be self-centered. Sacvan Bercovitch says that, "Emerson's essays set forth a doctrine of self-reliance, at a crucial post-Revolutionary moment, that lend a new symbolic

scope to the Puritan concept of American selfhood. . . . The Emersonian triad is American nature, the American self, and American destiny, a triple tautology designed to obviate the anxieties both of self-consciousness and the recalcitrant world" (178).

The step from the exaltation of the individual self as subsumed in the American self to the exaltation of self directly was a natural next step, especially since so many other influences were also leading in that direction. The American character began to be formed through self-reliance, self-trust, self-interest and self-love. It had moved from working out salvation through death of self to fulfilling salvation by building up the self. This shift was so slow and subtle, since it was couched in terms of earlier Puritan themes that Americans moved from one state of consciousness to another without knowing they had helped redefine the spirit and identity of this nation.

Page Smith speaks of two opposing ideas that formed the American consciousness: A "Classical Christian Consciousness " and a "Secular Democratic" Consciousness (909). The Secular Democratic ideas exalted human beings. They pointed towards belief in the perfectibility and goodness of humanity, in contrast to the Christian belief in fallen, sinful mankind. Secular thinking and individualism flowered in the eighteenth century. Thomas Jefferson's deism, the Jacksonian period of the rise of the common man and Emerson's essays in the Romantic period all exemplified the new perspective. A Smith concludes, "After the Civil War, as we have seen, "Science" and Darwinism sealed the victory of the Secular Democratic Consciousness" (909).

How did this new consciousness redefine the American dream and vision? Although the American dream had been secularized by the middle of

the 19th century, it still retained the themes of the Puritans. It poured new substance into an old shell. Salvation would be accomplished through Nature (which replaced God), the millennium would be instituted through the work of Nature on its American people, and America would lead the world into the redemptive millennium. America was still the "City on the Hill" as the first fruits of God's final act on this earth and Emerson reminded Americans that "they still have a 'moral wilderness' to traverse 'in preparation for . . . building a New Jerusalem'" (Bercovitch 160).

As Puritan as these images are in Emerson's writings, the substance is different. His new definition involves a harmony with nature, not a harmony with the will of God. Mankind is exalted and perfected through his harmony with nature. All that is required is the American's:

obedience . . . to the guiding of. . . (his) great rivers and prairies. . . . Never country had such a fortune, as men call fortune, as this, in its geography. . . . Resources of America! why, . . . "The Golden Age is not behind, but before you." Here is . . . the Genesis and the Exodus. . . . America should speak for the human race. It is the country of the Future. . . . (The) sublime and friendly Destiny by which the human race is guided . . . has infused itself into (our) nature. . . . Remark the unceasing effort throughout nature at somewhat better than the actual. . . . Nature works in immense time . . . to prepare new individuals and new races. . . . The population of the world is a conditional population; . . . there shall yet be a better, please God. . . . Which (state) should lead that movement, if not New England? Who should lead the leaders but the Young American (Bercovitch 160)?

In addition to the promotion of individualism by the Romantics and Transcendentalists, geographical reality also drew Americans away from community. Winthrop, in his "Model of Christian Charity," spoke of retaining the

status quo in social relationships. He knew of the social dangers that could arise from the vast possibilities of individual ownership of land. He believed that the civil and social hierarchy preserved a balance and mutual dependence that would increase the need for a mutual covenant. Because people would be settling at various distances, these geographical divisions among them could lead to community division and dissolutionment. Therefore, the colonists needed to have a strong sense of their interconnection and interdependence as a result of their different functions in a social and civil hierarchy.

This hierarchy was not based on belief in the superiority of the rich, but upon belief in the will of God. God owned all wealth and land. He distributed them with respect to His own glory, and therefore the distribution of worldly goods was not a result of the honor or superiority of the rich. Those who were rich were to share their wealth justly with the poor. They were responsible for distributing it wisely. And the poor were to give service to the rich as needed out of love for one's neighbor. All were to be united in mutual love and concern through the variety of their gifts (Miller 195).

When the colonists began to spread out to farm the land, what John Winthrop feared came true. Increasingly people and families were separated and independence began to undermine their covenants. Colonists had to depend on themselves to accomplish most tasks. Even their spiritual lives took on a more independent interpretation. (Revivals in the eighteenth century became very emotional and individualistic). Moreover, the West loomed up for many generations as the land of opportunity. The term "West" originally stood for at least six areas west of New England and Virginia, which offered the prospect of economic improvement to settlers. Later these lands invited

masses of peoples from Europe to seek their own fortunes. Individualism and independence arose in all settlers who felt the desire to conquer and inhabit this wilderness . In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries virtually all Americans felt as if access to new opportunities for creating security and wealth was never-ending. This sense of perpetual opportunity allowed for any failure to be overcome by moving on. It prevented human limitations from being tested and found wanting. It caused individual optimism and self-confidence to rise to unrealistic heights.

This aspect of individualism has, however, had to confront in this century the reality that there is no more land to explore or settle. The West no longer opens its arms of opportunity. This reality is just now sinking into the consciousness of Americans, and they have not yet dealt with the end of that myth-like call to freedom and independence. Although Americans have struggled to keep the rugged individualist alive through sports, cowboys, hunting, trucks, and other symbols, he is dying. Americans have come to the end of their "saving" geographically, and have not yet experienced its salvation as promised by the Romantics. The millennium looks further away than ever. The American self has not yet been perfected. The United States as a covenant community is not a reality and cannot claim to be the Puritan "city on a hill" reflecting God's glory through its covenant of love.

Summary

What is the effect of the victory of Secular Democracy or individualism?
How has it changed American identity? As recently as 1980, President Ronald

Reagan referred to America as the "City on a Hill." Although he made reference to the Puritan vision, he interpreted the meaning of the reference differently than John Winthrop. Instead of revealing the benevolent and just character of God, the "City" reflected the glory of democracy and free-market economy for all the world to see and emulate. Human accomplishments and economic success have become the major goals of the American Dream. As a result of the earlier dominance of the secular democratic ideas, the Capitalists in the nineteenth century were able to use the concepts of individualism and independence to manipulate Americans into accepting self-interest as superior to and more productive than brotherly love. The original American Dream has therefore evolved from the goal of providing a fruitful example to the world of a God-serving and neighbor-loving nation to the goal of being to the world the missionary of capitalism and democracy. The American Dream, as was repeatedly proclaimed in the recent 1992 presidential election, has become to provide every citizen with equal opportunity to achieve material wealth and abundance, not, as was the goal of the Congregationalists, to be a people who love God and are united by that love.

Following this analysis of individualism, it can be concluded that the American tree has changed. The original tree had love of and obedience to God as the trunk, and love of neighbor, the covenant relationship, was the largest and most fruitful branch. Individualism was a medium-size branch just beginning to bear fruit, and capitalism and materialism was the smallest branch. Today the analogous tree has been radically and essentially changed: The trunk is capitalism and greed, individualism is the largest branch with a combination of good and wormy fruit, love of and obedience to God is now a

shrunk and brittle branch, and the branch of love of neighbor is very scrawny with sparse leaves and fruit separated by many empty spaces.

Chapter 5

The Rise of Capitalism

Just as individualism in itself is not immoral, so also the desire for material wealth is not depraved. The desire for wealth arises out of a basic need for survival. As people satisfy their basic needs, other desires form for ease and comfort which are not altogether avaricious. It is the desire for material wealth unhindered by moral principles to regulate it, which makes it depraved. The American experience was unique because a strong moral foundation was laid in the nation's very beginnings. No other nation has had a similar opportunity. This religious, moral foundation allowed Americans to seek material well-being for two centuries without completely compromising their foundation. Although materialism has been a constantly increasing force since its beginnings, not until the Industrial Revolution did materialism ring the death knell of morality and religion. From that time on, the nation's foundation has been eroding. Capitalism and materialism have increasingly dominated the American consciousness. Since the end of World War II, the Capitalist Consciousness has surpassed and transformed the Secular Democratic Consciousness.

Alexis de Tocqueville, in Democracy in America, examines the tensions between religion, liberty and material wealth. He speaks of the necessity of religion to contain "natural liberty," the kind that is self-centered, anti-authority and corrupt. He goes on to say: "The other kind of liberty I call civil or federal; it may also be termed moral, in reference to the covenant between God and man,

in the moral law, and the politic covenants and constitutions, among men themselves. . . . This liberty is maintained and exercised in a way of subjection to authority; it is of the same kind of liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (44-45).

He compliments America for having combined the spirit of religion with the spirit of liberty. He then further defines the complimentary tension between the two:

Hence arose two tendencies, distinct but not opposite, which are everywhere discernible in the manners as well as the laws of the country.

Men sacrifice for a religious opinion their friends, their family, and their country; one can consider them devoted to the pursuit of intellectual goals which they came to purchase at so high a price. One sees them, however, seeking with almost equal eagerness material wealth and moral satisfaction; heaven in the world beyond, and well-being and liberty in this one(45).

During his journey in 1831-1832, Toqueville could still see the balancing influence on individualism and materialism provided by the moral principles of our Puritan ancestors and the living faith of present-day believers. He stated that the religion and morality provided by America's Congregational forefathers was the "best security of law and the surest pledge of the duration of freedom" (46). If Toqueville's conclusion is correct, American liberty and democracy are in trouble. As has been revealed earlier in this thesis, religion and morality in America have survived in word or form but the substance is missing; individualism and materialism have suppressed and replaced most of the internal depth and moral qualities of character created through spiritual development. It is neither possible nor necessary to trace here the history of

capitalism in the United States. The excesses of greed and avarice in American society have been criticized and confirmed by books, periodicals, films, and television. Therefore, it is commonly believed that greed is a problem in contemporary America, but no commonly accepted, viable solutions to it have emerged.

In order to understand the movement away from spiritual and community interests to the present day excessive materialistic interests, it is necessary to explore the sources of capitalism that can be found in our Congregationalist forefathers. We need to see the weaknesses in the initial moral and political foundation laid by the first settlers. The degree to which they failed to define and provide a virtuous social, moral, and spiritual code is the degree to which they failed to help provide the guideline needed by this nation to resist the seductive power of greed-the love of money. The following chapter will reveal the sources of the Capitalist Consciousness as found in the Congregationalist ancestors.

It would be difficult to justify placing the title of capitalists on America's Congregational forefathers. As has been seen, profit was not their motive for settling the New World: their motives were religious more than material. Assuredly, the many immigrants who followed them, were more highly motivated by the desire for material improvement. Their desire was understandable when one considers the poverty they were leaving behind. As these newcomers acquired their own land and improved their financial situation in America--a miracle to the dispossessed common man of Europe--many were converted to or influenced by the non-materialistic Congregationalist Christianity. Puritan values extended throughout the nation fighting against the

materialistic and capitalistic spirit that was on the rise. Although Puritan resistance to materialism and the profit motive is well understood, we still need to see those aspects in the original colonies that contributed either directly or indirectly to the rise of capitalism.

The greatest failure of the Congregationalist to restrain capitalism and set a moral example for their progeny was in their attitude towards African slavery and towards Native Americans. Their ethical failure in both of these areas helped to set Americans on a demoralizing path, one which stills haunts them today. The demoralization continues to this day, because white Americans are still plagued by the unconscious, racial perceptions that were developed to justify the practice of slavery and the colonization of all the territory on this continent. The ideology developed to justify African slavery is essentially the same, although varying in degrees, as that applied to the American Indians. It is an ideology that arose out of the evils of colonization.

Colonialism throughout the world greatly increased the rise and development of capitalism. It opened the land to private ownership by masses of people, and enabled some people to acquire great wealth through the expansion of trade. Colonialism opened and created markets as well as providing cheap or slave labor. Portugal and Spain led the way in exploring and colonizing the New World. They also initiated the selling of Africans, or Negroes, as they called them, into slavery. The enslavement of Negroes arose from a capitalistic motive. The increasing number of people who owned property needed laborers to increase their profits. Slavery had existed since the beginning of civilization, the most common form being the enslavement of soldiers and people defeated in wars. Traders' easy access to and the military

weakness of Africans made them a natural source for the laborers needed in the New World.

Interestingly, at the same time slavery and serfdom were being abolished in Europe, and foremost in England, slavery was on the increase in the New World. Largely as the result of the teachings of Christianity against keeping one's brother in Christ in bondage, a strong belief in liberty arose in England. This belief resulted in the end of slavery of Englishman by Englishman by the seventeenth century (Jordan 50). What remained was a lesser form of servitude, apprenticeships and indentured servants, which existed under the guidance of a contract and disallowed the complete loss of liberty. This kind of slavery, indentured servitude, was the most common kind in the American colonies. Indentured servants differed from Negro slaves, however, because their time of service or enslavement was a set period, not perpetual.

Africans first arrived in the southern American colonies in 1619. It is not clear whether they were free or slave. By the 1640's to 1660's there was a mention of Negroes being slaves in the southern colonies (Jordan 73-74). These colonists desired the financial advantage of slave labor over free. There is no mention of the majority of Congregationalists objecting to this event. Winthrop Jordan in, White Over Black, entitles the chapter on the enslavement of Blacks in the American colonies the, "Unthinking Decision." Although the Puritans did not promote slavery, their interpretation of Old Testament scripture caused them to allow it. There were laws mentioned in the Old Testament that made it wrong for Israelites to enslave their own, but they could enslave "strangers"--other people captured in battle from other nations. Jordan states that, "The Reverend William Gauge, in applying this principle to slavery in New

England, referred to 'such servants as being strangers were bond-slaves, over whom masters had a more absolute power than others.'" A distinction was made between a "beleeving servants" and "infidell servants"(56). Between 1640 and 1660 a distinction began to appear between English indentured servants and Negro slaves. The main distinction was the term of service: the English or European indentured servant continued to be set free after a certain period of service, while the Negro slave became increasingly seen as property for life and his or her progeny as well.

As we have seen, then, the Puritans did not promote or encourage slavery, but they did permit it to exist. It was not only their interpretation of the Old Testament that desensitized their conscience, but they were also strongly influenced by the generally accepted ideologies, practices, and myths of their culture concerning their image of themselves and of the Negroes and other people and nations of color.

Europeans had developed a sense of pride and superiority over other peoples because of their explorations, scientific discoveries, reasoning skills, belief they possessed a monopoly on religious truth and commercial advancement. In England the Protestant Reformation, and the part England played in it, gave Englishmen a sense of having been selected or chosen by God for a special task. This view, plus other military and technological successes, added another layer of belief in their superiority to their already existing Western mentality. They even treated other Europeans with condescension. Winthrop Jordan stated that: "While Englishmen distinguished themselves from other peoples, they also distinguished among those different peoples who failed to be English" (86). Although they had a missionary zeal

towards pagans, for most Englishmen their sense of brotherhood did not extend to these non-Christian peoples (It must be remembered that not all missionaries treated non-Christians from a presumed superior position; many saw all people as God's children). Since the Africans and American Indians did not have the Christian religion and the advanced technological and rational knowledge of the West, they were further seen as inferior. The English, then, developed an unchristian attitude of superiority towards non-Christian peoples.

Added to this feeling of superiority were other speculations concerning the possibility that Africans were the descendants of Ham, the son of Noah, who was punished by the enslavement of his descendants for his sin against his father (20; Gen.,ch. 9,vv. 24-27). These speculations connected evil within a certain group of people, such as Blacks, and thereby found justification for their "punishment" by enslavement. An additional justification for enslaving blacks, and also Indians, was the continued unconscious influence for centuries of the practice of enslaving the losers in battles.

Besides these influences, an additional one rooted itself deeply in the unconscious minds of Europeans and Englishmen. The very fact that Africans were referred to as "negro" or "black"-- although no African could be said to be truly black--set up a dichotomy between "black" and "white." The naming of Africans by color, and a color that had symbolic meaning that was nearly always negative and the opposite of good, set the stage for a distinction between peoples based on color. As Jordan observes, "White and black connoted purity and filthiness, virginity and sin, virtue and baseness, beauty and ugliness, beneficence and evil, God and the devil" (7). By the time of the American Revolution, the idea of race was partially formulated by Thomas Jefferson

based on recent scientific speculations concerning different species (Jordan 489). He did not clearly distinguish races as inferior and superior, but his speculations necessarily led to that conclusion. Color became the determining factor for the existence of positive or negative intellectual capacities and character qualities. Racial prejudice materialized and infected the unconscious mind and consciousness of Western society.

"White," "Christian," "Western," "rational," were all terms used to designate Western society and all pointed to superiority of intellect, morality, and character. Especially Negroes--and to a lesser degree people of other colors beside white, were considered inferior to the white--Christian European or Englishmen. All of these threads of thoughts, notions, and emotions have continued to affect American thinking and feeling up to the present day. The deepest root of racial prejudice lies in the unconscious fear that people of color and pagan background contain in their genes or blood a contamination of evil character and inferior intellect that will infect anyone who maintains too close a relationship or identifies with any one of them. This concept called, the "one drop rule," was initiated before the American Revolution. As the result of that rule, intermarriage and the "intermixing" of blood was felt to be the greatest cause of infection and contamination of the bloodline of any white person who had sexual intercourse and children by a colored person, blacks having the most "tainted" blood.

Andrew Hacker, in, *Two Nations*, gives a historical perspective of the development on application of the terms "black" and "white" to races:

To give the names "black" and "white" to races might seem, on its face, quite ludicrous. Clearly, no human beings have

skins of either color. Indeed, very few come even close to those tones. But then "white" and "black" stand for much more than epidermal coverings. . . But more is involved than color or facial features or skeletal structure. The terms also carry cultural connotations. In its basic meaning, "white" denotes European antecedents, while "black" stands for Africa. Since the human species began in Africa, we can say that black people are those whose ancestors remained on that continent, while whites descend from those who embarked on migrations to cooler climates. This has led some to the presumption that the races are at different levels of evolutionary development. For at least half a dozen centuries, and possibly longer, "white" has implied a higher civilization based on superior inheritance (Hacker 7).

Returning to our original question concerning the lack of moral reaction against slavery by the early Congregationalists, it can be concluded that their application of Old Testament laws towards "strangers" to Negroes blinded them to New Testament teachings on brotherly love. We have also seen that the secular influence from English and European attitudes and ideas blinded their moral senses from seeing the contradiction of the enslavement of Negroes with these Christian principles. Although they were not motivated by greed, the Puritans shared in the sense of national or racial superiority that justified enslaving black, so-called inferior, pagans for perpetuity. They failed to have the humility through which they could have come to knowledge of the truth that all of God's children were equal: no one nation or race was superior to any other. In fact, they would have known that there was only one race, the human race. They would have known that the achievements of the Western world and its Christian faith were not a sign of superiority. In fact, they would have seen the shortcomings in the Western emphasis on rationalism, individualism, and materialism to the increasing exclusion of intuition, community, creativity, and

spirituality. Although they saw the dangers of materialism, they were not able to prevent the branch of capitalism that was flowing out of the exploitation of Negroes. They were not sufficiently separated from their culture or filled with the mind of God to present a moral voice for the equality of all humankind.

Interestingly, what the Puritan Christians failed to accomplish, the Quaker Christians succeeded in accomplishing. The Quakers were convinced early on of the wrongness of slavery, and through much soul searching decided to set their slaves free. Then they became a voice for the nation towards the abolition of slavery. The Quakers were able to see past their culture and reject the parade of lies that had filtered into the unconscious of most Americans. The reason they could succeed where the Congregationalists had failed is found in a spiritual perception of mankind and of God's grace which was missing in the doctrines of the Puritans. The deeper spiritual reason for the failure of the Puritans will be discussed in the next section, on the reasons for the loss of the covenant-community.

Before moving on to another source of the Capitalistic Consciousness found in America's Puritan ancestors, we need to see the relationship between their attitude towards slavery and their attitude towards the American Indians. The Native Americans were also victims of the Western attitude of superiority. Their cultures were seen as primitive because they did not have the comforts, body of knowledge, science, technology, and Christian truths possessed by the English settlers. The Puritans lacked appreciation for their simplicity and community or tribal unity. Not that the Indians never committed a wrong act or an injustice. They were different nations with different qualities, good and bad, just as any other nations. What the colonists failed to see was the strength of

community in their tribal system and their more sensible approach of sharing the land. The West needed a tempering influence on its drive to individualism and capitalism, and the Native Americans could have provided that tempering, if the colonists had respected the wisdom the Indians had obtained through the many centuries of their existence. Of course, because of the increasing greed of immigrants, any justification for taking the land would have been found. Yet, if the Puritans could have originally seen the Indians as equal to themselves, they could have set for future generations a moral standard based on respect and compromise.

In relation to racial prejudice, the Puritans did not have as strong a sense of the inferiority of the Native Americans as they did towards the Africans. Although Indians were made slaves in the beginning, as time passed this practice was discontinued. The characteristic used to distinguish the Native Americans from Englishmen was "savagery" not color. Indians were not marked as inferior by the unchangeable color of their skin, as was the Negroes. William Bradford, in his journal, Of Plymouth Planation, 1620 to 1647, tells of a cobbler who slew an Indian. A poet, Samuel Butler, is quoted by Bradford as giving the reason for the slaying : "Not out of malice but meer Zeal, because he was an Infidel" (117). Some of the stories of savage behavior (cannibalism, etc.) were created by the Puritans for effect and others were true. When comparing their behaviors to the white, European Hitler, or some of the Indian fighters in the west, savagery appears to be in the heart of all people; it is not the monopoly of one people or nationality).

Although they were judged for their savagery, Indians were also respected for these same qualities when victorious in battle. The colonists

feared and respected their ability to fight and their refusals to submit to their invaders. They were hated and feared but also they were respected for their pride and courage. Additionally, Indians they were seen as a nation or many nations, not as chattels to be sold in the market place. The color of their skin marked them for the Puritans as being somehow less than the white man, but their lighter color preserved them from the strong feelings directed at Africans for their potential for "contaminating" the white race (Jordan 24).

The final solution of Americans for the containment of the Native Americans could not have been more successful in breaking their spirit and pride. Assigning these nations to different territories controlled by the victorious white man, and at the same time making them dependent on their victors, destroyed the very qualities of the Native Americans that gave them self-respect. They had lost their land, their skills, their independence and their traditions. Their source of pride was stripped from them. On top of that, they were encouraged to escape from this terrible reality by drowning their sorrows in alcohol, a further degradation of their proud nature. The United States has much to undo in this continuing policy of dependency and psychological destruction.

We can see how the development of capitalism dealt tremendous injustices to both the African Americans and the Native Americans. The removal of prejudice has not been accomplished yet in this nation, even though the slaves were freed and the Indian wars ceased. Racial prejudice increased to a monstrous size in order to justify the materialistic and capitalistic drive to take land from the Indians and to provide free labor for southern crops. Americans have created a monster which they have not had the willingness or

wisdom to destroy. Removing lies from the unconscious is the key to removing prejudice. The means to accomplishing this goal will be defined in the last chapter of this thesis, when solutions are presented.

Let us now look at one final source of the development of capitalism in the early Congregationalists. Capitalism began with the private ownership of property and the existence of personal capital to acquire personal wealth. Although the word capitalism, has not always existed to describe this economic phenomenon, the phenomenon itself has a long ancestry. Not until the last few centuries, however, has capitalism been able to fulfill its highest potential. Since the time of colonization leading up to the Industrial Revolution, because of fewer moral hindrances and the increased access to land and capital, capitalism has fulfilled its nature.

According to Max Weber, the form and development of capitalism in the United States became more excessive and successful than in other societies. He identified the Puritan and Calvinist strain of Christianity as the source of this increased development. Weber saw the asceticism of the Puritans as instrumental in providing an attitude towards consumption and acquisition which provided for the accumulation of capital:

. . . asceticism looked upon the pursuit of wealth as an end in itself as highly reprehensible; but the attainment of it as a fruit of labour in a calling was a sign of God's blessing. And even more important: the religious valuation of restless, continuous, systematic work in a worldly calling, as the highest means to asceticism, and at the same time the surest and most evident proof of rebirth and genuine faith, must have been the most powerful conceivable lever for the expansion of that attitude toward life which we have here called the spirit of capitalism.

When the limitation of consumption is combined with

this release of the acquisitive activity, the inevitable practical result is obvious: accumulation of capital through ascetic compulsion to save (Weber 172).

It seems likely that Weber was correct in his conclusion that the Puritan ethic unknowingly and unexpectedly encouraged capitalism. Puritans were to work hard, practicing self-sacrifice and self-denial, and give glory to God through their work. As a result, they acquired wealth. But they were not suppose to consume what they had acquired. Rather, they were to save their acquisitions, thereby creating capital for further investment, which in turn caused them to acquire still more wealth.

Although a capitalistic spirit resulted from this pattern, the initial motive for this capitalistic activity was spiritual. It arose out of the increased value given to work by the Protestant Reformation. As a result of the Protestant Reformation, the every day work of the common man took on a spiritual dimension. Before that time the only work or calling that had a spiritual quality and meaning was the calling of the religious, the priests and nuns. The new value given to all work done to the glory of God gave new respect and importance to the layman. In itself this was a very positive impetus towards acceptance the equality and importance of all people. The disadvantage arose out of the interpretation of this calling in relation to the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. Since some were chosen by God to be saved and others were not chosen, and one could never be sure who was chosen to be saved, future generations of Puritans began to look for outward signs of salvation. One outward sign of salvation became the successful acquisition of capital. People who obtained wealth were seen as blessed by God. Wealth became a sign of salvation. Although those who acquired wealth were seen to be more assuredly saved, they would lose

that assurance if they spent the money on themselves rather than in continued activity which would glorify God. That money should be spent on the less fortunate or saved for future reinvestment.

As time passed, the Puritans began to fall into the belief that hard work, which led to the acquisition of wealth or a comfortable living, was a means to obtain heaven. The doctrine of predestination moved the Puritans from seeing good works as a possible sign of salvation to seeing good works as a means of salvation. The final position of such a belief led back to the initial complaint of Luther towards the Church. His main disagreement was the buying of indulgences and the performing of certain activities in order to purchase or earn one's way to heaven. In his struggles against the corruption of the Church, he came to the realization that the Bible said that man is justified (saved) by faith and not works. The doctrine of predestination not only set up the work ethic that increased and encouraged capitalism, but it also set the stage for a loss of the main tenet of the Protestant Reformation: justification comes by faith and not by works.

Not every Puritan fell into this deception, but it was an influence on the general body of believers. Although this work ethic increased America's national obsession with acquiring wealth, the motive behind it was not the love of money. The Christian principles of the Congregationalists worked against the avarice and greed that have become such a common trait in the capitalist culture of our day. They believed in self-sacrifice, self-denial, self-control, charity to the poor, thrift and moderation in all things. They were very aware of the dangers of the love of money. And would be totally disapproving of the excessive capitalistic activity since the Industrial Revolution. Even more

disturbing to them would be the importance of consumption in our present economic system. The contemporary consumer economy is the opposite of all of the principles by which the Puritans lived. Although their Protestant ethic increased the success of capitalism, the ethic itself worked against the capitalistic spirit. As Americans have lost touch with the ethic of self-denial, self-control, charity, and moderation, they have gradually moved from acquisition for the glory of God to acquisition and material success for their own pleasure and glory.

Summary

As we have seen, the Congregationalists were not seeking personal wealth for themselves; they were not capitalists. Their reason for colonizing America was not mainly material gain but religious freedom for themselves and their children. Their attitude towards the enslavement of Africans and the expulsion of Indians from their land was a moral failure. They had absorbed some of the superior, prideful attitudes of their culture: they accepted the false notions that related superior intelligence and moral character to color and judged other cultures with less technology and rational thinking as savages or uncivilized. Although the Puritans did not actively promote slavery, they did allow it. And, although they strove at first to retain friendly relations with the Native Americans, their internal view of Indians as savages, less civilized than themselves, resulted in the eventual justification for warring against them. If they had viewed the Indians with more respect, they would have made a greater effort to understand their culture, and therefore been able to make treaties in

harmony with the Indian's relationship to the land. If the Congregationalists had possessed the quality of humility towards other cultures, they would have avoided accepting lies about the Africans and Native Americans. They could then have laid down a moral standard to prevent the capitalist exploitation of these people.

In analyzing the effect of the Protestant ethic on capitalism in America, it has been shown that the Puritan belief in the spiritual value of work and the doctrine of predestination combined to create an atmosphere conducive to the enhancement of capitalism. Although their thoughts and practices provided increased capital for investment, the greed and avarice associated with capitalism were anathema to the Puritans. In each situation in which the Puritans failed to be "as a City on a Hill" in relation to slavery, Indian lands, and the spirit of capitalism, the reason behind these failures resulted from their limited understanding of God's mind as revealed in the New Testament. Even though they had made a covenant with God and each other, their inability to move beyond the Old Testament Law to New Testament grace hindered their ability to apply the Christian principle of "love your neighbor as yourself" to their present moral dilemma concerning slavery and the colonization of Indian lands. Also, although they succeeded in living frugal and self-controlled lives, because of their failure to move from the Law to grace, their theology of good works failed to set up the spiritual and moral guidelines that could have more successfully restrained the materialistic and capitalistic spirit that followed.

The next chapter explores how the failure of the Puritans to understand New Testament grace caused the gradual demise of the moral and spiritual influence of the Congregationalists on America. As mentioned earlier, the

symbolic tree of the American nation looks completely different than in the beginning. The trunk is no longer love of God; it is love of money. The largest branch is individualism and self. Love of neighbor-community is a scrawny branch with little fruit. Love of God is now a small and brittle branch. In their history Americans have lost their sense of participating in a covenant with God and their community. They have thereby lost much of the democratic power they had obtained by participation in their community and in their government. How did the citizens of America lose community with its power for democracy, and how can they restore what has been lost?

Chapter 6

The Loss of Covenant-Community

As previously revealed, the growth of individuals and capitalism has changed the balance of concerns or goals which motivate the American nation. In the beginning Americans were motivated by religious and community goals more than individual and materialistic ones. Today their main interests are to fulfill self-indulgent and materialistic desires. This change in individuals' goal has caused a transformation of America's identity that is to its detriment. The weaknesses and shortcomings of the theology and practices of the Congregationalists cannot, however, be blamed for America's contemporary predicaments. If they had understood and applied New Testament principles more accurately, America would have fewer problems today. Yet, what they did contribute has restrained Americans from committing more evils than they would have otherwise committed in their three hundred plus years of history. Americans today should have the goal to glean the best of what they had to offer, while at the same time learning from their mistakes.

What were the mistakes of the Puritans which weakened the continuance of the covenant-community in the American experience? As established earlier, the Puritans believed that regenerated Christians were the only ones allowed to rule in the church and civil government. How to know who was saved and who wasn't became a problem, because people could do good works and deceive others into believing they were regenerated. Another problem arose as the numbers of colonists increased, many of whom were not saved. Their beliefs

began to influence the Puritan faithful, and their pressure to participate in civil government became too strong to resist. As a result, non-believers received the right to vote in the civil government, and the covenant that formed the civil government could no longer include God as the supreme governor. There could still be a covenant between the members of the community, but not between the community and God. By the end of the seventeenth century, New England was no longer a theocracy.

Without God as the head of the body politic, it was only a matter of time before the covenant between the people began to weaken. It was the passion of the Puritans to please and obey God that inspired much of their love for each other. Still, these obstacles did not necessarily destroy all possibility for the local towns to follow in the values of the Puritans. They could have continued, and to some degree they did continue, to be inspired and filled with the Christian ideals of love of God and neighbor, if the churches had continued to be a powerful and living example of that love. But the churches failed to provide that example because they lost their spiritual power.

The problem with their theology which most drastically weakened their example was not their belief in a theocracy. Although time and circumstances forced a compromise in the character of town government, this compromise could have retained some of the original sense of covenant, community, brotherly love, and participation. In order to retain that covenant-community, however, the Puritan-Christian faith needed to continue to be a living faith. It was a different element in Puritan theology that undermined the life of the Puritan churches. That element was legalism. As mentioned earlier, the Puritans allowed themselves to be brought under the Old Testament Law.

As a result of combining the two covenants, the covenant of love was undermined by the covenant of Law. We have already seen earlier how this covenant of Law supported the enslavement of Africans, who were considered "strangers" as defined by Old Testament Law. Because the Puritans saw the Old Testament as containing Laws that had to be obeyed, with punishments and curses resulting if it were disobeyed, they gradually lost the life of grace and found themselves in the position of the Jews--under the Law. Paul, in the New Testament, explains the difference between the two covenants:

The time is coming, declares the Lord,
when I will make a new covenant
with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah.
It will not be like the covenant
I made with their forefathers
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt. . .
This is the covenant I will make with
the house of Israel. . .
I will put my laws in their minds
and write them in their hearts.
I will be their God
and they will be my people (1867;
Heb., ch. 8, v. 12).

Further, Paul explains that, "He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant--not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (1765; 2 Cor., ch. 3, v.12).

The two covenants are distinguished by, in the case of the first, obedience to the 'letter' of the law and, for the second, obedience to the Spirit. The former is a set of rules and the latter a life-giving experience. As we can see in the following passage, John Winthrop combined the two covenants in the same

essay without sensing a contradiction. He threatens the Puritans with God's wrath if they fail to obey God's laws and exhorts the people to be knit together in a spiritual bond and oneness that can only be achieved by the Spirit:

. . .but if wee shall neglect the observacion of these Articles which are the ends which we have propounded,. . .shall fall to embrace the present world. . .the Lord shall surely breake out in wrathe against us be revenged of such a perjured people and make us knowe the price of the breache of such a Covenant.

Now the onely way to avoyde this shipwracke and to provide for our posterity is to followe the Counsell of Micah,. . . for this end, wee must be knitt together in this worlde as one man, wee must entertaine eache other in brotherly affeccion, wee must be willing to abridge our selves of our superfluities. . . mourn together, labour, and suffer together,. . . so shall we keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,. . . (Miller, Perry 198).

Paul had said above that the 'letter' of the law kills. The confusion of the Puritans between the letter and spirit led to the gradual death of both covenants in America. The efforts to obey the covenant of Law squeezed the life out of the covenant of love. With less grace, it was necessary for the Puritans to make more laws to keep their members separated from the world. Fear of punishment and desire for the appearance of goodness became the motivations for obedience. In fact, Puritans used the ability of a person to obey the Laws as confirmation that a person was saved. Gradually, their religion became more of one of works than of faith. The Puritans became like the Phairisees that Jesus condemned. While in the beginning they exhorted one another with kindness and mercy, they increasingly judged each other harshly and self-righteously. Laws concerning the Sabbath, adultery, dancing, religious statues, and related matters took the place of their original living faith. They even added their own

laws to the Hebraic laws. The descendants of these, the so-called "blue laws," remained in Massachusetts as late as the 1950s. This legalism is the cause of the negative image that turned many Americans against their Puritan ancestors.

Therefore, it was legalism that robbed the the Puritans of the life of grace and love that guided their covenant relationship with each other. It is not, as is generally thought, that the worldly influences removed the 'saltiness' from the Puritan 'salt' (1449; Matt., ch. 5, v.13). Worldly influences would not have drawn people away from their original beliefs, if the life of Christ had not lessened first. Jesus never said the world was evil: the Bible says "be in the world, not of it." As the "yeast" of legalism grew, fear rather than love became the motivating factor for obedience. Because the Puritans lost sight of grace, the "yeast" of the Law consumed faith. This result was similar to the situation of the church of Galatia described in the New Testament. Paul speaks to this same issue by saying: "You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. . .The only thing that matters is faith expressing itself through love. . .A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough" (1786; Gal.,ch 5, vv. 4, 6, 9). Without the life of grace, and with the emphasis on control, judgment, condemnation, and fear; the following generations were gradually alienated. This alienation led to a loss of the initial ideas of covenant and brotherly love. Without human examples, Christianity lost the power to instill these principles in the minds of the American people, and therefore individualistic and capitalistic philosophies had a freer hand to affect their minds.

But all is not as bad as it appears. Throughout American history there have been periodic revivals, and the creation of new movements that

promised to return the people to the doctrines of free grace and brotherly love. To follow those spiritual events requires further historical study of the progression of this story of the struggle between individualism and community, and the history of spiritual renewals in this nation will be explored in a later chapter. At this point the main question to be answered is: How can America regain the much needed covenant-community, brotherly love, and citizen participation that has been gradually ebbing away for the last four centuries?

Chapter 7

Solutions To Finding America's Lost Identity

Although President Clinton has been very idealistic in his desire to restore power and economic prosperity to the people, he is fighting forces which have acquired tremendous power over an extended period of time. Many of those forces have helped finance his campaign. He will need courage and integrity to disappoint them, and he will need the constant and active support of the people to return this nation to its foundation. America has fallen too far away from its roots and original foundation for its citizens to be able to easily regain its political power. Besides its political problems, America's economic problems have been a much deeper source of corruption. Political and economic corruption are intertwined with moral and ethical corruption, much as was the case in the Soviet Union before it was dissolved. It is to be hoped that the corruption of America is not as deep or inclusive; otherwise, American institutions and character would need a complete overhaul. That overhaul would require years of instability and disorder before it could be accomplished as the parts of the former Soviet Union are now experiencing.

It is time to focus on the actual solutions to these problems. First, it is important to review the cause of the many problems facing American society and government. In the outset of this thesis it was established that the nation's identity had changed because of an extreme shift that had occurred in the factors that make up America's identity. In addition to social, environmental, temperamental, talent, personality, and genetic factors, identity is formed in relation to the fulfillment of the various needs of human nature. Individuals as

well as the people in a nation collectively form their character and values around their main goals and concerns. The amount of time and energy expended on material, spiritual, social or community, and individual needs determines what kinds of character qualities will develop.

The following is a review of what was presented in the introduction. (Re-reading that part may be useful at this time). A person or nation overly concerned with material needs and wants will develop values to justify the use of dishonest methods to obtain the material objects or financial success. A person or nation overly concerned with individual development and needs can become self-centered and uncaring about others. A person or nation overly concerned with spiritual development can become out of touch with reality and become rigid towards people or other nations not in agreement with them spiritually. A person or nation overly concerned with social or community relations can over-restrict individual freedom in the name of the good of the whole. When a person or nation retains a concern and interest in fulfilling all of these needs in varying degrees, however, a balance is created that helps to control many of the negative tendencies in human nature.

For centuries philosophers have developed doctrines that are consciously or unconsciously based on their views of human nature. Human nature can best be understood in terms like those of Montesquieu: it is neither exclusively good nor exclusively evil. All persons have within them a potential for good and evil. When healthy and loving circumstances exist, a person will usually develop many good desires and qualities. When unhealthy and unloving circumstances exist, most people will develop many evil desires or qualities, or have many weaknesses. Although environment, home, and family

are very important influences, these are not the only determining factors. There is more than one possible response to every situation, therefore free will does come into play. The final and essential influence on choices over time is the heart. If the heart of a person desires to be and do good, then that person will over time make more choices for good than evil. The opposite is true if a person desires to be and do evil. Good and evil exist in degrees in each person: there exist very few godly, holy people and very few evil people. Most people are a mixture of good and evil, which means that most people have a mixture of good and evil motives for why they do or believe something.

When one views human nature from a traditional Christian perspective, the tendency to evil exists because of original sin. But Christian theology also holds that there is a human desire to do good because one is created in the image of God. In regenerated-Christian theology grace is required for an individual to be able to act in any situation out of completely pure motives. If a person were to give to another out of human, not divine, love, there would always be some selfish motive in the act: a motive of pride for doing a good work, a need to feel good for having done a good thing, or a desire to receive the praise of others. Although an act motivated by human love is not as pure as an act accomplished through grace, or divine love, still, this world is a much better place when people want to love one another and give to one another rather than thinking only of themselves or competing for superiority.

In the colonial beginnings of America, it has been shown that love of God and love of neighbor were the central emphasis in the founding identity of America. These concerns were not to such an excess as to exclude individual development or materialistic improvement. As a result of this balance, most

Americans did not fall into the instability that invites the negative or evil elements of human nature to assert control and bring destruction and injustices. In those first colonies there was no crime: no stealing or murder occurred, and people chose to love each other and work together to help each other survive. If the very first colonists landing at Plymouth and in Massachusetts had not all been regenerated Christians, still the emphasis upon loving God and one's neighbor would have had a positive affect on all who lived in those communities. In fact, even as progressively fewer people in America were regenerated Christians, the Christian principles continued and still continue to have a healthy influence. The directive to love one's neighbor appealed to the desire in people, Christian or not, to be good.

As has been mentioned previously, presently Americans have fallen into an excessive concern with the fulfillment of self and the acquiring of material goods. In other words, self and money have become obsessions that exclude the balancing concerns for the fulfillment of spiritual and community needs. Montesquieu warned against the loss of virtue in a democracy. He concluded from his study of the history of governments that: "When virtue is banished, ambition invades the minds of those who are disposed to receive it, and avarice possesses the whole community" (21). The loss of virtue in the United States is reflected in the greed and ethical failures of elected officials, the racial divisions and tensions, loss of control by the people of the government, and a weakened economy. The transformation of virtuous values to selfish values has affected the economics, politics, socialization, and identity of America. There is no way to separate values, ethics, and morals from political and economic choices.

We must now consider solutions to our problems. What, then, is the

answer to the American moral, political, and economic dilemma? The answer is to return to some resemblance of the original balance: Americans need to return to their beginnings. They need to embrace the values of their Congregationalist ancestors. It is not necessary for these four needs to be fulfilled and emphasized in the exact relationship that existed with the Puritans, but there needs to be a reestablishment of their spiritual and community values above those individual and material values that presently consume the attention of most Americans. Machiavelli, in The Discourses, speaks of the same need for all religious groups or republics. He says:

The means of renewing them is to bring them back to their beginnings, for all the origins of religious groups, republics, and kingdoms contain within themselves some goodness by means of which they have gained their initial reputation and their first growth. Since, in the course of time, this goodness becomes corrupted, if nothing intervenes that may bring it up to the proper mark, that body is, of necessity, killed by such corruption. . . . This return to beginnings, in the case of republics, is accomplished either by an external event or as a result of internal foresight (351).

Some people may argue that America can be restored by reforming its institutions and laws, believing that corruption can be legislated out of existence. Again Machiavelli further comments on the problems facing a republic that has become corrupt:

. . . for neither laws nor institutions are to be found which suffice to check a universal state of corruption. For just as good customs require laws in order to be maintained, so laws require good customs in order for them to be observed. Besides this, institutions and laws established in a republic at the time of its foundation, when men were good, are no longer acceptable later when men have

become evil (225).

As Morgan has said, "The purpose of New England was to show the world a community where the laws of God were followed by the church and state--as nearly as fallible human beings could follow them" (180). The vision and goals of America were established "when men were good," which means, in the case of America, when the New England colonists desired to please God and to love their neighbors as themselves. Their goal was to establish a nation or colony that would be, as expressed by John Winthrop, "as a City on a Hill": an example to the world of a community that lived according to God's principles and succeeded in being good and benevolent (Miller 198). It is necessary to return to the innocence and idealism of these beginnings in order to fulfill the initial American dream. This will require what Machiavelli called "internal foresight."

To what degree should America return to its beginnings? As mentioned above there were some moral and theological weaknesses in the Congregationalist ancestors. Let us look again at America as if it were a tree. Should love of and obedience to God be the trunk, with love of neighbor, individualism, and materialism the branches? The restoration of this pattern would not fit America today. It cannot return to a theocracy; it is too diverse to place love of and obedience to God as its guiding principle. The Puritans encountered this problem themselves. The next closest pattern which could reflect a resemblance to the original symbolic tree would be to place love of neighbor, the covenant with one's neighbor, as the trunk, with the covenant with and love of God a large and fruitful branch, with individualism shrunk in size and fruit to a more reasonable proportion, and the branch of materialism being

the smallest, yet healthy and fruitful.

In further analysis of the original tree, it might be found that placing God as the trunk of the tree and instituting a theocracy were based on the teachings and laws of the Old Testament, not the New Testament. When God chose Israel to be his people, he instituted a theocracy. God or Jehovah was disappointed when the children of Israel wanted a King. The Puritans were looking at an Old Testament model. But the spirit of the New Testament and Jesus pointed to a separation of religion and government. Christians are exhorted to avoid the appearance of evil, which is very difficult in long established governments. They are told to be more of an example to non-Christians and a voice for justice, as was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Jesus tells his disciples to "give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" (1474; Matt., ch. 22, v. 21).

Only God knows with certainty whether he commissioned the Congregationalists to set up a theocracy or whether they followed that model because they looked to the Old Testament Law as a result of their incomplete understanding of the principles of the New Testament. As discovered earlier, some of the moral weaknesses of the Puritans resulted from the incompleteness of their understanding of the the New Testament revelation of God's grace. God works with whatever vessels are available to him; most often they are imperfect and still in the formative stage. What is most important is that the Congregationalists laid a foundation of values based on covenant relationship, which placed God and neighbor before money and self. That is the model to which America needs to return.

If the position of love of God, which was the trunk of the tree for the Puritans, is replaced by the covenant of love with one's neighbor, what form

should love of neighbor take today? For centuries people have been concerned with the question: "Who is my neighbor?" It was asked of Jesus when he referred to the Old Testament Law. The man asking the question wished to trap Jesus into including people who were unacceptable to most Jews. Then as now, people everywhere wish to exclude some people from the category of neighbor. As seen previously, Europeans and Anglo-Americans excluded people of color and "savages" from the category of neighbor: these people were regarded as sub-human. This Western attitude is an example of an iniquity in people that prevents them from finding the very obvious answer to that question. Even when the answer is given and even proven, people will still resist. Many have spent enormous amounts of time trying to explain and prove the equality of blacks. The Quakers and later the Abolitionists took every opportunity to show the intellectual equality of Africans. They argued that the state of the slave in the south caused any depraved behavior (Winthrop 284-285). But no matter what these advocates wrote or lectured, still, the same lies continued to be believed by many. How is that possible? Why are distinctions of race, ethnicity, and religion throughout the world used to cause and justify massive killings? How can people kill or reject each other based on a belief in the inferiority or malignity of a particular race or ethnic group? This is especially unreasonable since scientists have shown that race is not a classification based on intrinsic biological or genetic differences; it is based on outward distinctions (Gould 323).

In the search for the means to love one another, the most important question, then, is not who is one's neighbor, since most people will not give up accepting lies that divide them no matter what is proven. It is more effective,

then, to concentrate on the feelings in one's heart that makes one a bad neighbor. When those feelings are identified, individuals can see that the problem is in them, not in the unacceptability of one's neighbor. Therefore, the most important question is: What makes a person a bad neighbor? A bad neighbor is any person who does not allow his heart--not only his mind--but his heart, to know the truth about all people, whatever their color, race, or nationality. Although many people in America believe in the equality of all people with their minds, they have not admitted to themselves the existence of prejudice in their hearts. For example, the majority of people in the nation harbor racial prejudice at some level, and, therefore, are bad neighbors in this sense. The strongest prejudice is towards African Americans. Andrew Hacker, in, Two Nations, expresses the double-minded approach of most white Americans:

To the minds of most Americans, the mere presence of black people is associated with a high incidence of crime, residential deterioration, and lower educational attainment. Of course, most whites are willing to acknowledge that these strictures do not want to have to worry about trying to distinguish blacks who would make good neighbors from those who would not. To which is added the suspicion that if more black families arrive, it would take only one or two undesirables to undermine any interracial amity (38).

and:

If you are black, these white reactions brand you as a carrier of contaminations. No matter what your talents or attainments, you are seen as infecting a neighborhood simply because of your race. This is the ultimate insult of segregation. It opens wounds that never really heal and leaves scars to remind you how far you stand from full citizenship (Hacker, pg 38).

Americans have been born into generational transmitted, unconscious

lies that building one upon the other. These are the lies mentioned earlier that associated blackness, with primitivism, savagery, inferiority and immoral character. These beliefs were created in the hearts of earlier generations who allowed the evils of asserting their own superiority and greed to grow in their hearts. The present generation, in turn, has participated in this evil because it has given silent agreement in their own hearts or unconscious minds to these lies. This silent agreement is not a passive act; it is an active one. White persons who are honest with themselves will have to admit at least a tinge of prejudice, an uncomfortable feeling, or strong aversion towards African Americans or other races when they see them in certain situations of material success, sexuality (in television or movies), or intellectual accomplishments. They have, therefore, allowed the lies applied to different races concerning their alleged intellectual or moral inferiority, sexual prowess or looseness, depravity, or criminality to grow in their hearts by means of their silent, yet active, agreement. Hacker further illuminates the phenomena of denial and self-deception when he says:

Guilt is often associated with fear. In particular fear of those aspects of ourselves we would prefer not to confront. This is why white people devised the "nigger" and gave it so charged a meaning. As was indicated earlier, it implies a creature so debased and degraded, that such a person must represent a lower level of humanity. There was a need for such a term to justify slavery. And its current use rationalizes much of segregation and subordination today. James Baldwin, In The Fire Next Time, saw that the word served a further purpose. White people "need the nigger," he wrote, because it is that any person of any race can be a "nigger." The capacity is there, waiting to be released (61).

This statement reveals the hidden agenda in the hearts of Americans to hide their own degradation and debasement by applying the emotionally charged word, "nigger" to African Americans. It reveals the wickedness in people's hearts which makes a person a bad neighbor. In order for people in America to begin to love their neighbors again, they will first need to face the racial judgements and superior attitudes in their own hearts. Greed, hatred, envy, pride are the kinds of emotions that lead to believing lies about others, which can justify unfair treatment. These emotions are rooted in the heart and are veiled by the pretense that racial prejudice is derived mainly from ignorance, not evil. Americans need to face the evil within themselves and allow the moral shame that judges that evil work in them to change their hearts.

In order for Americans to enter into a Covenant of Love with their neighbors, they will need to admit the evil that is in their hearts and want to change. As was mentioned above, human nature has the capacity for good or evil. As greed and attachment to self have increasingly consumed American society, the environment has been conducive for the increase of the evil potential in human nature. The heart has become a hotbed for prejudice, pride, superiority, avarice, hatred, selfishness, envy, jealousy, and selfish ambition. The increase of these evils have made many Americans bad neighbors. In order to become good neighbors again it is necessary for Americans to confront the evil in their hearts. But it has been very difficult for the recent generations to accept the concept of evil. The word "sin" has become a threat and arouses tremendous defense and opposition. With all of the evil and wickedness that is seen daily on television, it is surprising that the existence of evil and sin in oneself is denied. Evil exists, and so therefore does

sin. Sin means to err or do wrong. Everyone errs or does wrong; the only way to undo wrong is to admit it and feel badly for the wrong one has done.

Jesus said: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean' (sinful or wicked). For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean'" (1507; Mark., ch. 7, v. 20). Superiority, pride, selfishness, and greed are the sins in the hearts of most Americans that keep them from being good neighbors to people of color. The Abolitionist movement brought about the end of slavery through awakening the moral conscience of people in the north. Martin Luther King Jr., through the use of the moral shame that proceeded from nonviolence, led the movement for African-Americans to obtain their civil rights. Now, the American nation is faced with the challenge of the step of freedom to obtain human rights, through a change of heart, for blacks and other minorities. This is a step of freedom which can only come from the willingness of people to be touched again by moral shame, and moral shame arises out of the exposure of the evil that is in the heart. As difficult as it is to look at the evil within, with the exposure and moral shame comes a promise: the promise is the victory of the forces of good over the forces of evil. For the African -American, it will be freedom from the hidden lies in the hearts of whites that bear down on them every minute of their existence, and for white Americans it will be freedom from the burden of an unclean, corrupt heart.

Of course, concern for one's neighbor is not limited to the problem of prejudice. There are many other problems in America that need to come under scrutiny in order expose the root cause for being a bad neighbor. To apply the

Covenant of Love towards everyone, it is necessary to see how the corruption of greed and selfishness has made citizens increasingly uncaring, insensitive, self-centered, separated and neglectful. These qualities need to be seen as a national trend, one which varies from area to area, but that has been increasing for many years. The "pursuit of happiness" has been associated increasingly with economic success and self-gratification to the neglect of preserving high moral standards, and, even worse, there has been a failure to place an emphasis upon high moral standards for the next generation. Part of the reason for this failure is that many want to gratify their own desires at the expense of their own values. The need for immediate self-gratification has caused many people, young and old, to justify stealing, lying, sexual immorality and murder. Sex is increasingly being presented as solely a pleasurable act rather than an act of commitment and love. Films and television are seen by many as encouraging sexual intercourse outside of marriage, as if it were on the same scale of importance as buying a new suit or dress. Young people are told to be monogamous in order to avoid contracting Aids, or at least use a condoms, while abstention is considered by many to be too difficult and abnormal to practice. When a pregnancy results from the sexual act, abortion is encouraged by many groups. Most proposed solutions suggest that the easiest way, not the responsible way, is the right way.

Resistance to anything that smacks of pain or suffering is probably one of the most devastating trends in our society. Responsibility always carries with it a sense of pain or sacrifice, although its rewards far outweigh the disadvantages of momentary self-denial. If children are not able to experience that satisfaction, how can they become responsible, caring adults who are

willing to sacrifice their own desires in order to meet the needs of another? Since self-gratification, personal happiness, and self-love are given highest value, this excludes any value to be found in sacrifice, self-denial or suffering out of a sense of responsibility to another human being. These moral failures need also to be admitted and confessed in order to establish a Covenant of Love of Americans with each other.

To love one's neighbor means to covenant with that neighbor as did the Congregationalist covenant with each other. What is love and how can the Covenant of Love help in solving America's problems? To love means to see others as more important than oneself, to want to do others good and not harm, to sacrifice to fulfill others' needs, to be willing to lay down one's life for another person, to be willing to forgive and not seek revenge, to be determined to fulfill a higher will than one's own. There is a tremendous gulf between the the self-centered interests of much of American society and that definition of love. Some would probably be concerned that by loving according to that definition, they would become victims. Many have discovered that they have been trained to always sacrifice their rights to any authority or to allow themselves to be abused. In recent years, women and minorities have been seeking freedom from their training to be victims: in marriage, on a job, and in dating relationships. The movement towards that freedom is valid, and should not be reversed.

Let us analyze love more thoroughly in order to see how it will not cause a person to become a victim. There are two sides to love: one side is full of mercy and understanding, and the other side is just and powerful. To know which side of love should be exercised at which time, requires a life-long

learning process. Anyone who can exercise love properly at all times is a very wise person. In practice, it is most easily understood by the way most parents exercise love towards their children. There are times they give them what they want or let them do what they want, and other times they have to deny them for their own good. Parental love wants the best for one's children, but the best sometimes results in a showdown of wills. When love is just, a parent must not back down. When love is merciful, a parent leaves room to see beyond the first impression and seeks to find the hidden need in the child. Mercy is willing to look for the information that is missing in order to see from the child's perspective. Love more often expresses itself in mercy, but when justice is necessary, it must not be neglected or loss of parental power will result.

A wonderful definition of love is provided by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 13 Verses 4-6: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." This kind of love was the the powerful tool of the part of the Civil Rights movement led by Martin Luther King. He called it *agape* love. King said that *Agape* was a word used by the Greeks to express:

. . . understanding, creative, redemptive good will for all men. Biblical theologians would say it is the love of God working in the minds of men. It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. And when you come to love on this level you begin to love men not because they are likable, not because they do things that attract us, but because God loves them and here we love the person who does the evil deed while hating the deed that the person does. It is the type of love that stands at the center of the movement that we are trying to carry on in the

Southland--*agape* (Washington 13).

The Covenant of Love needs to be guided by this kind of love. Although perfect expression of this love by everyone cannot be expected, emphasis on *agape* love will help love to work its way into the hearts of Americans, just as greed and selfishness have worked their way into hearts of Americans over the centuries. Love will begin to diminish the power of evil that has been growing in people's hearts. Ideas are very powerful, and at this time in American history the nation has a moral and spiritual vacuum that is hungry to be filled. The call to return to the Covenant of Love (*agape* love) will be a call to the desire and potential in human nature to be good. Americans will be able to care and feel for others in a deeper way again.

With the above definition of love in mind let us apply these principles to the political problems facing America. The return of political power to the people depends on the actions and vision of the people, not the leaders or governmental officials. The first step to restoring power to the people in the United States is for Americans to commit themselves to loving their neighbors, everyone in their community, with *agape* love. They need to realize that the needs of others are just as, if not more, important than their own. When people care about others first and themselves second, they begin to form into communities again. Americans need to see themselves as necessary and contributing parts, similar to the parts of a physical body, in their families, towns, cities, states, and nation. The Puritans knew that they were one body with many parts. They realized that every part needed to function in order to achieve the goals of the whole society; this realization encouraged public as well as private responsibility.

The emphasis on *agape* love expressed in a covenant will also re-establish the value of honesty, endurance, patience, self-sacrifice, unselfishness, giving, long-suffering, peace, kindness and mercy. As a result of the practice of these virtuous values, people will begin to dictate new values and morals to their governmental representatives, just as they are presently dictating materialistic, selfish values to them. Also, just as the representatives have obediently expressed these values in their actions, so also will they in time express the more virtuous ones. When honesty is valued above wealth, the pressure asserted upon elected officials will gradually turn them away from betraying the welfare of the people for the benefit of those selfish interests which entice and control them.

The values and responsibilities that flow from the Covenant of Love have been revealed in earlier chapters. Political participation arose out of the religious personality that colored the very nature of colonial America. The forms of Protestantism in America were one factor that predisposed it to political freedom and the participation of the citizen in the government. By the Revolutionary War the colonies had taken on a unique character of political and religious freedom. Edmund Burke expressed this reality in a speech in Parliament, which William Warren Sweet paraphrases as follows:

In America, he said, religious beliefs and practices were in advance of those of all other Protestants in the world. In America the people were accustomed to free and subtle debate on all religious questions, and there was among them little regard for priests, councils or creeds. Their church organizations were simple and democratic, as were those of the Congregationalists and Baptists, or republican as the Presbyterians, and they were accustomed to elect and dismiss their own religious leaders. In short, in America at the end of the colonial era there was a larger degree of

religious liberty than was to be found among most of the people of the world, and possession of religious liberty naturally leads to a demand for political liberty (173).

President Clinton can be helpful in returning the nation to its original values and restoring political power and liberty to the people, but to do so he will need to see that the nation's economic problems are a symptom of a deeper moral and spiritual disease. At the present the nation and its leaders are focused on the symptom, the economic problems. Most of these problems have resulted from the influence and power that wealthy interests have obtained over many years. Much of their influence and power was given to them as a result of excessive desires and consumption that have been stirred up in Americans, especially through improved advertising techniques. Any successful economic solutions will therefore be temporary, because the underlying disease has affected the inner core of America, its character. To restore the government to the people will take consistent and disciplined pressure applied to Congress, the President, and, also, to economic interests which have disproportionate power. Power is not easily retrieved. Those who have it can use it to maintain their positions. Although there are many practical steps that will have to be taken to reinstate the people to their rightful political position, these steps are not the answer to regaining popular control of government. The first and most important step is the actual return of America and Americans to their initial values, expressed through a Covenant of Love with commitment and enthusiasm.

Chapter 8

Spiritual Renewal

Since the covenant with God is to be a branch and not the trunk of the analogous tree, what role does God and religion play in America during this transformation process? Although the nation consists of many different religions and religious beliefs, its strongest spiritual heritage is Protestant Christianity. While most immigrants retain their traditional religion, the great majority become gradually socialized into accepting a Western, Protestant world view. Although America has been formed by a Protestant Christian world view, that does not necessarily mean that Protestant and Christian spirituality is the only acceptable movement towards spiritual recovery. Most people in America need spiritual revitalization in order to restore a healthy balance to their lives and most religions provide spiritual practices that can quiet the soul and establish in it discipline and self-control. All people need a spiritual dimension in their lives, even atheists. This message needs to be preached and taught so that all people will be encouraged to return to embrace some form of spirituality to counteract the materialistic spirit. As people return to spiritual principles and a belief in the reality of the supernatural, these will reinforce their choice to love their neighbors.

Although the call to embrace spiritual values is applicable to all religions, it is also essential that many in the nation return to the initial regeneration experience of the first colonists. To restore the nation to its roots will require a return and renewal of the original covenant with God by some Americans. The original moral "salt" and "light" arose out of an experience of regeneration. It is

through the regeneration experience that that people established a personal relationship with God. According to the Puritans it was this relationship that guaranteed blessings and not curses on America. It was their covenant relationship with God, not their knowledge of the Bible, that gave Pilgrims and Puritans the initial courage and vision to settle in this land. Their covenant with him that formed and vitalized their covenant with each other. The continuance of the Christian spirit of America is an essential part of its identity. It cannot be ignored or neglected. Without it a new foundation would have to be laid, which would cause great social and political upheaval and instability, worse than what the nation is experiencing at the present time. Tocqueville noted that in America, religion and freedom, the cornerstone of democracy, go hand and hand:

Liberty regards religion as its companion in all its battles and it triumphs, as the cradle of its infancy and the divine source of its claims. It considers religion as the safeguard of morality, and morality as the best security of law and the surest pledge of the duration of freedom (46).

How can the increase of regenerated Christians help to spread the message to love one another? The message mentioned above is even more comprehensible and obtainable when people experience a personal, spiritual rebirth. Jesus said that there were two Laws or Commandments which were one and the same: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and, love your neighbor as yourself" (1519; Mark., ch. 12, v. 30). In other words if you love God you will love your neighbor. The Bible goes on to clarify the need to love one's neighbor when John wrote: "If anyone says, 'I love God,' yet hates his brother,

he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother (1912; 1John, ch. 4, vv. 19-21). When a person is a regenerated Christian, he or she has the power to unconditionally love God and his or her neighbor. The Christian message accepted by many new believers would reinforce the movement to love one another.

America needs a strong, holy body of regenerated or born-again believers. Jesus calls Christians in this world a "light" and "salt" that keeps people moving towards the truth and living good lives. They are to be an example of love, kindness, holiness, and humility. But at this time in American history this light has grown very dim, and the salt has nearly lost its power. Many people who call themselves Christians have brought shame rather than glory to God's name. They have fallen into the same greed and sexual immorality that has been destroying the nation. Yet other nominal Christians put themselves above others and see themselves as superior to unsaved people. They are no better than the Pharisees who killed Jesus.

The Bible teaches that God passes judgment on Christians who have fallen into sin. Further, He judges the self-righteous ones who have the deception of false holiness. He counts them as hypocrites who say they love God and hate their brothers. He has gone even further in his judgment: He has removed his Spirit from them and from their churches. Christians in this nation would in these terms be judged severely, because they failed to be powerful examples of brotherly love and holiness to their country in a time of great need. There is only a remnant of completely committed Christians left, and God is

crying out for a new people who will become true believers, seeking holiness and truth. His Spirit then stands poised to blow the winds of revival across the nation.

Another advantage to the presence of a strong branch of love for God is the knowledge of the doctrine of death to self, and the possibility for believers to receive the power to put the self to death. As we have seen in Chapter 4, "self" caused a conflict in the descendants of the Congregationalists. They professed a belief in the same doctrines as their forefathers, but most Americans who professed to be Christians lacked the power to accomplish these spiritual exercises. Because of the rise of individualism, death to self was an especially tension-filled doctrine. It felt good to the common man to have a sense of importance and power over his own life. But it was also difficult to hold on to living a life of self-denial and self-control while there were so many opportunities for self-indulgence in the consumption of new products and in individualistic endeavors. Without the common experience of regeneration, the knowledge of self and the spiritual power to control self were lacking. As seen earlier, the tension between the exhortation of death to self, along with the inability to accomplish that goal, resulted in the resolution of this conflict by "self" becoming a thing to be praised rather than denied.

As a result of this self-glorifying trend, today self-absorption has caused many Americans to have a confusion of priorities. Much too often children are sacrificed for the sake of increasing income, and money and possessions become a substitute for personal time and attention. Often more time is spent keeping fit, in fear of death and the unknown, than is spent in reading books that can answer eternal questions. Society is bombarded with commercials creating

new desires and providing new products to buy that aren't necessary. Enormous amounts of time and money are spent on products to make people younger, because growing old has become thought of as repugnant and unsatisfying. Rather than spending time passing on wisdom to the younger generation, many of the elderly are spending their retirement separated from their children and grandchildren in RV's or retirement communities. The list of examples of self-absorption goes on and on.

Obviously, something has to be done about "self." Before considering the solution, "self" needs to be defined. The word is used to refer to two different parts of ourselves. One part is our being: who we are: spirit, soul, and body. That self is good, because it is our being, or personhood. Self-esteem, when applied to this self, is very necessary and important. It is the acknowledgement that man (male and female) is created in God's image and likeness, and that nothing God created is bad. The spiritual part of this being-self can possess eternal life.

But there is another part of us that is referred to as "self" that has an entirely different meaning. The colloquial use of "ego" is another term for it. Someone is said to have a "big ego" or thinks too much of himself. This self, the ego-self, grows larger the more it satisfies its desires, yet it is never satisfied. The ego-self never has an unselfish motive. For example, when this "self" is in control it causes people to buy a product don't need, purchase goods solely to make an impression, speak in order to be noticed and admired, be driven by the need for approval, fear losing prestige, love power, do what is right in order to appear good, use weakness to avoid responsibility, envy what others have, feel jealousy in relationships, seek revenge when hurt, lie to get ahead, use sex for

power, be unfaithful, use people, deceive, seduce, steal, hate, and murder.

When the Puritans spoke of death to self, they were referring to the ego-self, the one that is ruled by selfishness. All people have the potential to act out all of the evil ego-self can conceive. Most people do not act out all of their evil potential in their lifetime. The problem remains that the potential exists, and often does assert itself and causes all people to commit wrong or self-centered things acts. It causes people to do things their other self does not want to do. When one lives in ego-self, one cannot give to anyone else or live for God. Therefore, the Bible says a person needs to "die in order to live": "Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who love his life [ego-self] will lose it, while the man who hates his life [ego-self] in this world will keep it [being-self] for eternal life" (1621; John., ch. 12,vv. 24-25) (square bracket mine).

How is it possible to shrink and control the ego- self? There are other answers besides Christian ones which can have some effectiveness. A person can learn to use his or her will to establish discipline and self-control. If a person follows a code of moderation and a certain amount of self-denial, he or she can keep control over many of their excesses. Also, as mentioned above, when religious or other virtuous values are taught and venerated, they have a controlling affect on the carnal desires of human nature. The Stoics in ancient Greece and Rome are an example of the positive affect of a disciplined life. Besides these efforts, various religions have practices in which a person is trained to lose self in a greater power. These exercises also bring some success, although the being-self can lose some of its identity.

Although the ego-self is shrinkable and somewhat controllable, only the

power of God, or grace, can bring it to death. When it dies, being-self is filled and perfected rather than lost in a greater power: i.e., when we die we live. The Christian answer to the problem of self can satisfy a person who is seeking union with God, which is the most intimate experience one can have with God on this earth. Every regenerated Christian can begin and travel on this journey of death to self. All Christians should be on this journey. Anyone on the journey, no matter how far they have come, will enter heaven when they die. The only Christians to miss heaven are those who forsake the journey. There are also those who live long enough and are exceedingly determined who achieve union, death of ego-self, in this lifetime. They are those whom tradition calls saints or mystics (although in the Bible the word, "saint" refers to all Christians). These people exist as an example and a hope for the joy and peace which is to come for all who "overcome." In the Bible God always uses various people and nations as an example or "light" to show the righteous way for others to follow.

Since America's root values are from Protestant Christian experiences and beliefs, this nation needs a strong body of believers who have a living covenant with God. As a result of their covenant with him and their prayers, they can help restore this nation to stability and goodness. In fact, they can surpass the goodness of the original Congregational colonists, because they know of the equality of all cultures and races. Further, the Christian revelation concerning grace has matured in understanding. Present day regenerated Christians can avoid the pitfalls of the Puritans, if they proceed with humility and grace. God has blessed this nation from its beginnings; there are times he has been pleased with it in spite of its imperfections. But there have been times He

has judged it for its failure to live up to His plan for it. Yet, he has never judged it with invasion. In order to return to their nation's beginnings, to restore its character to a semblance of its original form, Americans need not only to restore the Covenant of Love with one's neighbors, but they also need a significant number of authentic believers to love and covenant with God.

Chapter 9

How To Return

The next question to answer is: What are the steps that should be taken to return America to its original values? The history of America is replete with movements whose intent is to return America to purer times. Some of these movements have been quite successful. Others slowed the progress of materialism, while still others had only a minimal effect on the majority of Americans. Such movements followed two main streams of thought: one was the Secular Democratic Consciousness spoken of earlier, and the other was the Protestant Christian Consciousness. The ongoing concerns of the Secular Democratic strain of thought were the reversal of materialism with a return to simplicity and the desire to establish equity for all Americans. The Christian themes focused on a return to God and spiritual interests and an improvement of the human condition. These two strains of consciousness intermixed and influenced each other, producing the various reform movements in American history. In order to know the steps that need to be taken to return America to its roots, it is therefore important to review other similar secular and Christian efforts that were made throughout the nation's history.

The Secular Democratic Consciousness in America produced many movements to return it to "the simple life" and to direct increased activity towards gaining equity for all. These movements were the product of both Christian and Enlightenment thinking. After the Great Awakening of the early to middle eighteenth century, "anxieties about the course of events were no longer the monopoly of the clergy. The pamphlets, correspondence, and

diaries of concerned laymen were filled with disturbed accounts of an increasing preoccupation with luxury and a diminishing sense of civic virtue" (Shi 50).

At the same time laymen were becoming more involved in seeking to improve society, many of their ideas were influenced by the recent revival called the Great Awakening. Warren Sweet describes its religious influence on all Americans:

One of the immediate by-products of the great colonial awakenings was the rise of a new social consciousness and a broad humanitarianism, which manifested itself in a greater concern for the poor and the alleviation of distress and suffering the central emphasis in the revivalistic theology of Samuel Hopkins was disinterested benevolence, or complete unselfish-ness in the interest of others (171).

The Secular Democratic movements that followed through the centuries carried on the concerns for simplicity and democratic equity through the Revolution, Republicanism, Transcendentalism, Romanticism, Progressivism, Utopian experiments, the Labor movement, and most recently, the Hippie movement of the 1960's. The Protestant Christian concerns for spiritual renewal and humanitarian improvement were carried forward by the Puritans, the Quakers, the First and Second Awakening and through various evangelists and revivals throughout the years, the most well known of these in recent years being, Billy Graham. Together, through the Secular Democrats and Protestant Christians, the conscience of America continued to be softened and sensitized to godly and human concerns.

The two most politically, sociologically, and morally transforming movements in the United States combined both the secular and religious

strains of consciousness. These two movements were the Abolitionists and the Civil Rights movement. In the Abolitionist movement Evangelical Christians joined in sentiment with such notables as William Cullen Bryant, Emerson, and Garrison. Page Smith expresses the Evangelical Christian approach to abolition in these terms: "At the heart of the abolitionist policy then lay an assumption and a strategy. The assumption was that hearts could be changed and Americans converted to abolitionism-Christianity" (603). The scope of Christian movements always reached beyond immediate concerns to seek to affect and change the soul of America. Secular Abolitionists expressed their concerns through journals, newspapers, and poems. John Greenleaf Whittier, for example, published a popular anti-slavery poem entitled "The Hunters of Men":

Oh! goodly and grand is our hunting to see,
In this "land of the brave and this home of the free."
Priest , warrior, and statesman, from Georgia to Maine,
All mounting the saddle--all grasping the rein--
Right merrily hunting the black man, whose sin
Is the curl of his hair and hue of his skin" (Smith 623).

The Civil Rights movement was similar to the Abolitionist movement in that Christians joined with secular liberals to influence society. Black churches led the way in unison with civil rights organizations and liberal northern whites. Martin Luther King Jr. was the driving force and visionary of the movement. He was able to unite Christians and non-Christians with his vision of desegregation through the use of nonviolence driven by *agape* . He saw that the power of moral shame in nonviolence could change hearts. His message united

Christians and non-Christians because he appealed to a sense of justice that was universal, regardless of one's belief in a personal God. He explained it as follows:

I am quite aware of the fact that there are persons who believe firmly in nonviolence who do not believe in a personal God, but I think every person who believes in non-violent resistance believes somehow that the universe in some form is on the side of justice. That there is some unfolding, unconscious process, or whether one speaks of it as some unmoved mover, or whether someone speaks of it as a personal God. There is something in the universe that unfolds for just struggles, and we had cosmic companionship. And this was one of the things that kept the people together, the belief that the universe is on the side of justice (Washington 14).

The vision of King and other civil rights advocates did a mighty work in a short period of time. Today, thirty years later, America is feeling rumblings within itself to take another step towards justice. It has digested and implemented certain laws of the Civil Rights Movement, and is now time to move on to greater national justice and unity. A movement needs to begin which again unites Christian and secular forces. such a movement should be motivated by *agape* and have as its goal bringing African-Americans and other minorities into a place of equality in the hearts of White Americans. This movement needs to reach beyond racial issues in order to restore the nation not only to the love of racially or nationally different neighbors, but also to restore Americans to the goal of loving all people as one's neighbors.

Certain steps are necessary in order to accomplish this above goal. First, a movement must begin to describe and expose the unsavory, internal state of people's hearts. Second, its messengers and visionaries need to be free from

bigotry and racism in order to be a living example of *agape*. Third, it is necessary for the people of America to enter a time of soul-searching and purging. As mentioned above, they need to look at the sins or wrongs in their own hearts and feel contrition for what is seen. Americans need to grieve for their moral failures and unloving acts. There is a message to be spoken to this nation: "Turn back, America, from greed and selfishness, and the divisions these excesses have caused, and return to love of neighbor." The fourth step is to call people back to brotherly love. America needs to be brought to a rebirth of its original values of a Covenant of Love with one's neighbor in order to reestablish community values. It is time to commit to a covenant relationship with each other. The fifth step is to call people back to spiritual concerns. This goal is necessary in order to restore the spiritual balance to the national character. It should take two forms: First, Americans of all religious faiths should renew their spiritual commitment to their God. Second, many people in America need to renew the initial Covenant of Love with God which was signed and accepted by the Puritan colonists. These steps can restore America to a resemblance of its initial identity.

Many times in its history America has come to a point at which a movement has been created to fight the moral and ethical corruption caused by materialism and individualism. A tension has always existed between the original Christian values and the ever increasing materialistic and individualistic goals. Something more complete needs to occur at this time. There needs to be a reversal of this trend that has never been reversed since America's founding. This materialistic and individualistic trend has been slowed, as mentioned above, by various historical movements, but never reversed. This

time there needs to be established a balance of attributes that can consistently restrain the materialistic and individualistic excesses that have ever been on the increase. Every nation reaches a point in which its rottenness so far surpasses its fruitfulness that it will self-destruct. America needs a rebirth before it is too late.

This movement must be more realistic in its methods than many in the past. Moreover, it must be well thought-out and wisely planned. There should be some kind of unity of idea, if not organization, throughout the nation. The last movement against materialism, that of Hippies, was based on an idea, that of "dropping out." It comprised "that small, but significant segment of the nation's youth who explicitly rejected the consumer culture and all that it implied" (Shi 251). Although they expressed a feeling against the "plastic" quality of American society, the Hippies had no real leadership or organization to accomplish their desire to move society away from materialism. Although they were reacting against the affluence which became the national goal during the 1950s and 1960s, because of their individualism they were unable to create a united, organized effort to change the hearts and behavior of Americans. In the end, therefore, the power of the capitalism won the day by commercializing and making trivial the Hippie ideas and lifestyle. The style, long hair, and drug use of the Hippies was turned into profit for enterprising capitalists.

To accomplish a real change in America, a movement has to avoid the power of capitalism to absorb, disparage, or trivialize every virtuous person or idea that enters its domain. Television has to be used sparingly and mainly as a means of education. Radio, the written word, preaching, and lectures need to be the main sources for the communication of ideas and truth. It needs to begin

at the grass-roots level with converts who can accept the truth about the condition of their hearts and who are willing to enter into a Covenant of Love with other people, no matter what their social standing, material condition, and skin color. Those who are part of the movement need to commit time and money to spread its message. Many of the other details will necessarily unfold as the movement progresses.

The goal of the movement would be to change the hearts of the people of America: first towards African-Americans and other people of color, and second towards all groups of people in the nation that have been stigmatized in order to retain the status quo. These injustices are of primary concern because they are the most insidiously divisive. The particular falsehoods that have infiltrated the unconscious about race, gender, children, the elderly, and religion must be rooted out in order to be brought into the consciousness. A second goal would be to expose the divisive and unjust consequences of selfishness and greed. This need not be done in a hateful, judgmental, overly sensitive, or self-conscious manner; rather, it needs to be done in a spirit of love, conviction, and justice. Exposure of the corruption in people's hearts would prepare them to receive the message of agape love. Their change of heart would be a change from self-love to brotherly love and from love of money to love of family, friends, neighbors, and all people, who are created equal by their Creator. The lies that have been planted in the hearts of Americans for centuries will need to be exposed and purged in order to remove the corruption that causes division, neglect, and bigotry.

Of course, this movement could not be completely successful. Complete success is not necessary to accomplish a change in the spirit of this nation; a

change that will enable children, elderly, women, and minorities to know what it is to be accepted as valuable and equal. But it is difficult to know how many people will have to be affected and changed in order to return the spirit of America to its beginnings. The power of an idea when its time has come will accomplish the necessary transformation as long as there are faithful messengers. If Americans could settle their racial and minority problems, as well as restore unselfish values to their way of life, it could be an example and encouragement to other nations that are being torn apart by similar divisions and strife. If America could escape from the compulsions that force it to associate with scoundrels and unscrupulous dictators, it could lead the way to tempering the evils of greed. If Americans could be willing to sacrifice in order to improve the lives of the homeless, elderly, orphans, and the abused, they could help to turn the tide of self that has caused a seared conscience towards injustice and neglect. If Americans would do all this, they could fulfill their original Covenant with God: to be "as a City on a Hill," an example to the world of the power of godly love to establish a just and benevolent society.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

When this nation was founded by the Puritans-Pilgrims, they established the foundation for its identity based on love of God and love of neighbor. If seen analogously as a tree, the trunk of America was formed by a love of God. The largest branch was love of neighbor, and two smaller but fruitful branches were materialism and individualism. This identity placed personal responsibility for one's neighbor as a high priority. As a result of the value of mutual responsibility, the people entered into participating in the political make-up of the community. Every person felt the need to participate in the decisions of the community in order to fulfill the commission to covenant with God and one's neighbor. As a result of the impetus for personal responsibility and participation, the peculiar form of American democracy evolved.

As revealed earlier in this thesis, America's identity has changed. The analogous tree has been transformed in that the trunk has now become greed, the largest branch is individualism, and the love of God and neighbor have both shrivelled and bear little fruit. As a result of this transformation, America has deteriorated morally, politically, and economically. As greed and self-interest absorbed the consciousness of its citizens, America lost its vision. Without a strong sense of love of God and neighbor, Americans lost much of their motivation from civic virtue and benevolent disinterest to participate in the ruling of their nation.

The solution to this deterioration resides in returning Americans to their

initial values and identity. The restoration cannot be an exact replica of the first colonists' value system, but it can correspond in spirit to their original intention to establish a nation that reflects good rather than evil. Instead of restoring the trunk to love of God and spiritual concerns, love of neighbor would replace love of God; and love of God would become a large healthy branch bearing much fruit. Materialism and individualism would diminish to a more moderate level of importance.

To accomplish the return, Americans would need to do some soul searching in order to discover the selfish, greed-filled lives to which they have given themselves. This self-revelation will result from a grass-roots movement or movements that will bring moral conviction and shame through an example of *agape* love. It will require many people to participate in a Covenant of Love with each other. People at the local level will need to show love for each other by committing to improving the situation of the poor, homeless, people of color, and young gang members. People will need to give themselves unselfishly and unconditionally to aid those who have suffered injustice and abuse to become equal members of society. Opportunity for economic, political, and social participation must be created. When all participants enter into a covenant to love and sacrifice for the good of each other, communities will begin to revive. These communities will be a light, or morally powerful example, to other communities. This in turn will inspire others to follow the example. The accumulation of many morally powerful examples of *agape* will call to the desire in people to be good to follow those examples. Moral power can therefore restore this nation to its original roots of love, when a seed group of people invest their energies to establish *agape* where they live.

Besides a Covenant of Love with ones' neighbor, many Americans will also need to enter into a Covenant of Love with God. Beyond the positive effect of citizens desiring and choosing to love their neighbors and of non-Christians renewing their own spiritual experiences, the original spiritual influence by regenerated Christians is a significant and necessary part of the original American identity. There is even a question of whether true *agape* love, love that is completely unselfish and disinterested, can be accomplished without the grace of God. Therefore, besides secular efforts to restore America's identity, there will also need to be another awakening or revival, as has been necessary throughout American history. A combination of these factors will work to restore and return this nation to its original identity, which in turn will draw people back into the political process with the participation and civic virtue which are required to preserve a democracy.

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