

I. Introduction

Review: What is a covenant?

How does your view of God's Covenant with man affect your day-to-day life?

II. Non-Reformed views

A. Atheist

What is an Atheist's basis for morality? How does he set the boundaries of family vs. state vs. religion?

B. Papal administration

What is the Roman Catholic view of covenants in Scripture?

How can this view lead to the church having authority over other areas of life?

C. Dispensational

What is the dispensational view of the covenants in Scripture?

What is the dispensational view of the Mosaic covenant, compared with the New Testament covenant?

III. Classic Reformed View

One Covenant of Grace with various administrations. "I will be your God, and you will be my people."

A. Natural Law

What is it?

1. How does scripture speak of natural law?

Romans 1:18-23, Romans 2:14-15, Genesis 1:26-27

What does it mean to be "In the image of God?"

2. The usefulness of natural law

How is natural law useful to us? (both believers and non-believers)

How do we see natural law shown in creation? What are some examples?

3. The limits of natural law

Is natural law sufficient? Why?

Does the corruption of natural law mean it's now of no use? Why?

What examples do you see in cultures today where we've drifted further from correct recognition of the natural law? How/why do you think this has happened?

B. Law in Special Revelation

Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 19

1. Moral

James 1:22-25; Romans 3:21-31; Romans 13:8-10

Definition:

Applicability today:

2. Ceremonial

Hebrews 9:1-10:18

Definition:

Applicability today:

3. Judicial (Theocracy)

Deut. 25:1-6; 1 Cor. 9:3-12

Definition:

Applicability today:

4. Application Exercise

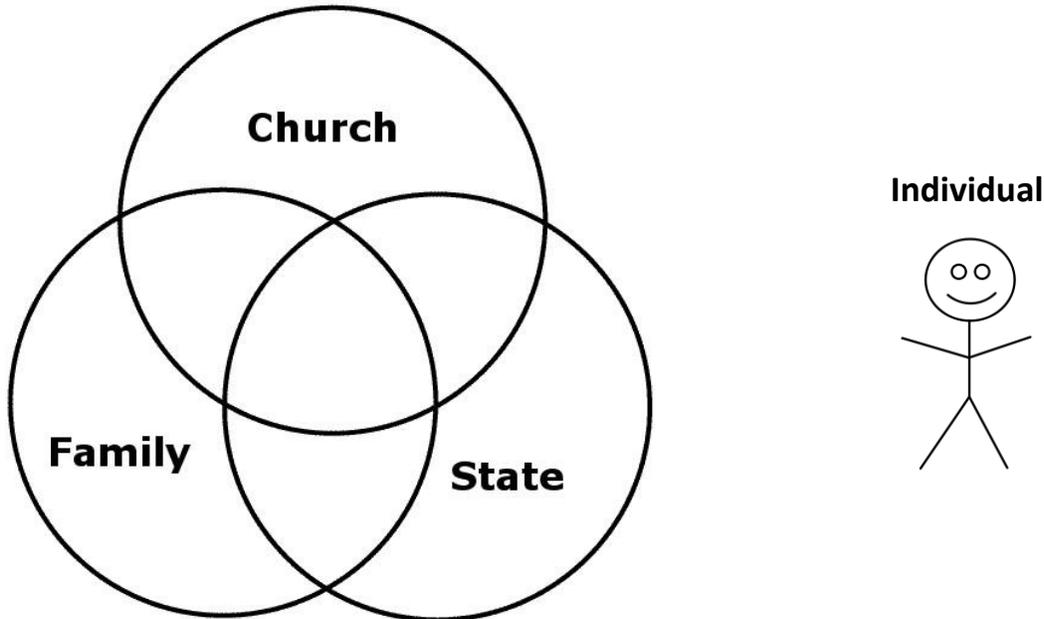
In which categories (Moral, Ceremonial, or Judicial/Civil) should we place each of the laws/commands given in these passages?

1. Ex. 29:15-26
2. Lev. 23:22
3. Lev. 23:23-25
4. Num. 35:6-28
5. Deut. 22:11-12
6. Ex. 22:2-3
7. Ex. 20
8. Others?

C. God's law in society today

How God's revelation through the Covenants shows us how his laws should be applied in the different areas of life.

Church, state, and family as three different institutions created by God, each with their own areas of responsibility.



How does our view of the covenant affect our view (or our very definition) of the institution?

How does our view of God's Covenant influence how we determine which of God's laws and commands apply to each institution?

1. Church

1 Cor. 5; Matt. 18:15-17

What kind of authority does the church have?

OPC BCO Chapter III: The Nature and Exercise of Church Power:

3. All church power is only ministerial and declarative, for the Holy Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice. No church judicatory may presume to bind the conscience by making laws on the basis of its own authority; all its decisions should be founded upon the Word of God. "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything, contrary to his Word; or beside it, if matters of faith, or worship" (Confession of Faith, Chapter XX, Section 2).

4. All church power is wholly moral or spiritual. No church officers or judicatories possess any civil jurisdiction; they may not inflict any civil penalties nor may they seek the aid of the civil power in the exercise of their jurisdiction further than may be necessary for civil protection and security.

5. Nevertheless, church government is a valid and authentic jurisdiction to which Christians are commanded to submit themselves. Therefore the decisions of church officers when properly rendered and if in accord with the Word of God "are to be received with reverence and submission; not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in his Word" (Confession of Faith, Chapter XXXI, Section 2).

How does our view of the covenant help define our view of the institution of the church? (WCF 25:2-3)

How does our view of the covenant give us a different view of church authority than either the Roman Catholic or the individualistic dispensationalist?

What kinds of Scriptural laws or commands would we generally see as being part of the sphere of the institution of the church?

2. Family

Eph. 5:21-6:4

How does our view of the covenant help define our view of the institution of the family?

What are some other views of the family, and how would our view differ?

What kinds of Scriptural laws or commands would we generally see as being part of the sphere of the institution of the family?

3. State

Romans 13:1-6

How does our view of the covenant help define our view of the institution of the state?

How is this different from some other views of the state?

What kinds of Scriptural laws or commands would we generally see as being part of the sphere of the institution of the state?

4. Individual

Matt. 5:27-28

How does our view of the covenant define our view of the individual in regard to:

- The Church?
- The Family?
- The State?

What kinds of Scriptural laws or commands would we generally see as being applicable primarily just to the individual?

5. Boundaries between the institutions

How does our view of the covenant help define the boundaries between:

a) *Church and Family*

In defining the boundary between these two, we can look at:

- Who the command is directed to (such as parents, children, church, believers)
- What the command concerns (such as familial relationships, salvation, corporate covenantal commands)

b) *Church and State*

In defining the boundary between these two, we can look at:

- Who the command is directed to (such as rulers, humankind in general, believers specifically)
- What the command concerns (such as civil relationships, rules regarding commerce, the way of salvation)

c) *Family and State*

In defining the boundary between these two, we can look at:

- Who the command is directed to (such as rulers, humankind, parents, children)
- What the command concerns (such as familial relationships, moral laws that can and should be externally enforced, relationships with other people)

6. Application Exercise

Categorize these Biblical commands in the different circles/institutions (church, family, state):

1. Rom. 13:6
2. Num. 35:16-25
3. Lev. 23:22
4. 1 Cor. 11:17-34
5. 1 Timothy 5:3-4, 16
6. Ex. 20
 1. *No other gods*
 2. *No images*
 3. *Don't use the Lord's name in vain*
 4. *Remember the Sabbath Day*
 5. *Honor your father and mother*
 6. *Don't murder*
 7. *Don't commit adultery*
 8. *Don't steal*
 9. *Don't bear false witness*
 10. *Don't covet*
7. 1 Timothy 2
8. Ephesians 4:29-32
9. Others?

IV. Theonomy

A. What is Theonomy?

From *theos* (God) and *nomos* (law).

B. History and Key Players

1. Rousas John Rushdoony (1916 – 2001)
2. Gary North (1942 -)
3. Greg Bahnsen (1948 – 1995)

C. Theonomic view of the covenant

Theonomy views the covenant in much the same way as the traditional reformed position, but there are some key differences in how it views Israel and the Mosaic Law.

Israel

Draws a clear distinction between Israel the *civil* nation and Israel the *religious* people of God.

Israel's Law (the Judicial Law)

Divides the law into only 2 primary categories: Ceremonial and Moral, with Moral being divided into 2 subcategories: God's everlasting moral standards and specific applications of it (also called judicial). Thus Theonomy views what we call civil or judicial law as a subcategory of the Moral law, rather than a specific application of it to a particular nation (Israel) in a specific circumstance (being God's chosen people in a theocracy).

D. Theonomic view of the judicial law and its application to today

Theonomy has a different view of how the Mosaic Law should be applied to society today:

"...We must recognize the continuing obligation of civil magistrates to obey and enforce the relevant laws of the Old Testament, including the penal sanctions specified by the just Judge of all the earth." (Rev. Greg Bahnsen, *By This Standard*, p.4)

"What is proposed here is that all civil governments, whatever their structure, should be encouraged to submit to and apply the standing laws of Old Testament Israel." (*BTS* p. 323)

This differs from the traditional reformed position that Israel's situation was unique (as a Theocracy) and its civil laws are God's moral law *applied concretely* to its unique situation.

Eschatological view: Postmillennial

V. Federal Vision

A. Introduction

“Federal” is used in this context to indicate “covenantal.” The word “Federal” derives from the Latin *foedus*, which means “covenant.”

B. History

1. Initial Exposure and Controversy (2002)

In 2002 at the Auburn Avenue Presbyterian Church (AAPC) annual Pastor’s Conference, Rev. Steve Wilkins (of AAPC) invited several men to join him in articulating what they had begun to call “the Federal Vision.” Participants included Rev. Steve Schlissel, Rev. Doug Wilson, and Rev. John Barach.

2. Wider controversy and more debate (2003-2005)

Further discussion between proponent and opponents of FV at the 2003 AAPC Pastor’s Conference, including critics of FV: Dr. Joseph Pipa (PCA), Rev. Carl Robbins (PCA), Dr. Morton Smith (PCA), and R.C. Sproul, Jr. (ARP). Retreat in Florida for dialogue drew more attendees (including some OPC ministers). Southern California Center for Christian Study (SCCCS) symposium addresses FV-related questions.

C. Concerns / Alleged Errors

Note that not all of these apply to a single person, and many who hold to FV deny that they hold these positions; these are concerns that the broader reformed community saw coming out of FV.

- Denial of the covenant of works
- Blurring the law/gospel distinction
- Denial of the imputation of the active obedience of Christ in justification
- Not affirming the definitive nature of justification in this life
- Merging faith and faithfulness as instrumental in justification
- Rejecting the distinction between the visible and invisible church
- A tendency to view the sacraments as efficacious in and of themselves
- Paedocommunion

D. View of the Covenants

Hyper-Covenantal

1. Visible vs Invisible church

But those who fall away will be cut off from the church And they will look back and discover that they were reprobate on that last day but they will also see that in history, and this is always God’s plan for them, that in history God did graciously, really bring them into his church, that he really made them a part of his chosen people, that he gave them genuine promises that are just as real, just as dependable, just as trustworthy as the promises he gave to people who do persevere to the end. He gave them real promises of salvation; he united them to Christ in whom alone is salvation....

--John Barach (AATPC p.12)

2. Confusing salvation/election with the covenant

The clear implication of these passages is that those who ultimately prove to be reprobate may be in covenant with God. They may enjoy for a season the blessings of the covenant, including the forgiveness of sins, adoption, possession of the kingdom, sanctification, etc., and yet apostatize and fall short of the grace of God.

The apostate, thus, forsakes the grace of God that was given to him by virtue of his union with Christ. It is not accurate to say that they only “appeared” to have these things, but did not actually have them—if that were so, there would be nothing to “forsake” and apostasy is bled of its horror and severity. That which makes apostasy so horrendous is that these blessings actually belonged to the apostates—though they only had them temporarily they had them no less truly.
--Steve Wilkins (AATPC p. 264)

3. Calling covenant = union with Christ

...We must maintain that there is a union with Christ that all baptized Christians share, whether those Christians are reprobate or not. – Doug Wilson (AATPC p. 225)

4. Confusing “faith” with “faithfulness,” or getting dangerously close to adding works as a requirement for Justification

But the covenant is not unconditional. It requires persevering faithfulness.
--Steve Wilkins (AATPC p. 266)

5. Summary

Being afflicted as we are, particularly in this land, with such a low view of the church, the proponents of the FV strike significant chords in being supportive of an ecclesiology that has a high view of the means of grace and of the visible church. The FV promoters eschew a view of the church that would stress the invisible at the expense of the visible and that would exalt the individual and the subjective above the corporate and the objective. They are undoubtedly not wrong when they observe that much of the church is afflicted with a low view of the means of grace (preaching and sacraments, especially), of the obligation to live holy lives, and of the inseparability of justification and sanctification.

*Much of the critique in which the FV engages, however, seems either to apply more broadly to evangelicalism or to tiny pockets within Reformed churches. While it is true that “easy-believism” has been a problem within American evangelicalism, it has not been the same kind of problem within Reformed communions. It has been rightly observed that if Reformed churches have a tendency to err in a certain way, it is in the direction of nomism, not antinomianism. To be sure, older hyper-Calvinism tended toward an antinomian position, but few would hold to such today. FV proponents seem concerned as well about the kind of morbid introspection that one found among some of the Puritans and other experimental Calvinists and some of their contemporary descendants, who excessively emphasize *ordo salutis* (the order of salvation, the application of*

Christ's work to the individual believer) and who require either a narrative of grace or something like it for communicant membership in the church. But few today are guilty of such morbid introspection. Few also, as noted above, follow Gordon Clark in his insistence that faith consists of intellectual assent alone. While the FV proponents do raise concerns that affect the church more widely, some of their weapons seem to be wielded against positions that few hold, and in their making of and attacking straw men, they tend to over argue their case, stressing the objective, e.g., at the expense of the subjective, and thus tending toward a formalism that would not prove beneficial for the life of the church (tending, as Charles Hodge noted in another controversy, to reject rationalism only to embrace ritualism). Rather than heading in that direction, we need a full orb ed ecclesiology that teaches us to hunger for the means of grace, that fully employs them, and that then waits on the Lord in his blessing of them.

-- OPC Justification report, p. 119

E. Eschatological View Postmillennial

F. Denominational Responses

1. OPC's Report on Justification – 2006

Rather than taking further space in this summary to explain at any length the difficulties that we believe the FV to have, perhaps it would be better simply to enumerate the ways in which we believe that the FV is misguided. All of these points are developed within the body of our report. The committee believes that the following points that are held by one or more advocates of the FV are out of accord with Scripture and our doctrinal standards:

1. *Pitting Scripture and Confession against each other.*
2. *Regarding the enterprise of systematic theology as inherently rationalistic.*
3. *A mono-covenantalism that sees one covenant, originating in the intra-Trinitarian fellowship, into which man is invited, thus flattening the concept of covenant and denying the distinction between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace.*
4. *Election as primarily corporate and eclipsed by covenant.*
5. *Seeing covenant as only conditional.*
6. *A denial of the covenant of works and of the fact that Adam was in a relationship with God that was legal as well as filial.*
7. *A denial of a covenant of grace distinct from the covenant of works.*

8. *A denial that the law given in Eden is the same as that more fully published at Mt. Sinai and that it requires perfect obedience.*
9. *Viewing righteousness as relational, not moral.*
10. *A failure to make clear the difference between our faith and Christ's.*
11. *A denial of the imputation of the active obedience of Christ in our justification.*
12. *Defining justification exclusively as the forgiveness of sins.*
13. *The reduction of justification to Gentile inclusion.*
14. *Including works (by use of "faithfulness," "obedience," etc.) in the very definition of faith.*
15. *Failing to affirm an infallible perseverance and the indefectibility of grace.*
16. *Teaching baptismal regeneration.*
17. *Denying the validity of the concept of the invisible church.*
18. *An overly objectified sacramental efficacy that downplays the need for faith and that tends toward an ex opere operato view of the sacraments.*
19. *Teaching paedocommunion.*
20. *Ecclesiology that eclipses and swallows up soteriology.*

2. PCA's Report on FV, NPP, AAT – 2007

PCA study committee's report condemned (or declared contrary to the standards):

- a single-covenant view (denying the covenant of works)

- viewing an individual as elect by virtue of church membership (but that the individual can lose his election if forsaking the individual church)
- denial of both Christ's active and passive obedience and the imputation of his merit to us
- the view that baptism effects a covenantal union with Christ through which each baptized person receives regeneration, justification, and sanctification (vs. sanctification being a process!)
- the view that some can receive the saving benefits of Christ's mediation (such as regeneration and justification) and not persevere.
- The view that justification is based in any way on our works (or anything other than the merit of Christ)

3. URC's Report on Federal Vision – 2010

The URC study committee report listed a number of FV areas that it found concerning:

In our judgment, the following FV themes have implications that are inconsistent with the Scriptural and confessional view of justification:

- a. The FV insistence upon the close connection, even coincidence, between election and covenant, which leads to the unqualified claim that all members of the covenant community enjoy the gospel blessing of justification in Christ.*
- b. The FV claim that all members of the church are savingly united to Christ, even though some do not persevere in the way of faith and obedience and lose the grace of justification through apostasy.*
- c. The FV emphasis that the obligations of believers in the covenant of grace parallel the obligations of Adam in his fellowship with God before the fall, thereby undermining the sheer graciousness of the believer's justification and salvation in Christ.*
- d. The FV denial of the meritorious character of Christ's work as Mediator, who fulfills all the obligations of the law on behalf of His people and secures their inheritance of eternal life.*

- e. The FV tendency to reduce justification to the forgiveness of sins, which is based upon the imputation of Christ's passive obedience alone.*
- f. The FV emphasis upon a "living" or "obedient" faith in the definition of its role as the instrument for receiving the grace of justification in Christ.*
- g. The FV teaching that the sacrament of baptism effectively incorporates all of its recipients into Christ, and puts them in possession of all the benefits of His saving work, including justification.*
- h. The FV insistence that all covenant children be admitted to the Lord's Supper without having professed the kind of faith that is able to discern the body of Christ, remember His sacrifice upon the cross, and proclaim His death until He comes again.*
- i. The FV attempt to resolve the problem of assurance by an appeal to the "objectivity" of church membership and the sacrament of baptism, while insisting that some believers may lose their salvation because of a non-persevering faith.*

G. How FV affects practice

1. Paedocommunion
2. Overemphasis on the church
3. Overemphasis on the family

The true Church is the Church in history, the gathered throng of all professing households, assembled in covenant around the Word and Christ's sacraments. –Doug Wilson (TFV p.269)

4. Tendency towards legalism

For further reading:

- *The Auburn Avenue Theology Pros and Cons; Debating the Federal Vision* (2004; The Knox Theological Seminary Colloquium on the Federal Vision; edited by E. Calvin Beisner) [AATPC]
- *Justification: Report of the Committee to Study the Doctrine of Justification* (2007; The Committee on Christian Education of the OPC) [Justification]
- *The Federal Vision* (edited by Steve Wilkins and Duane Garner, 2004)
- *Reformed is Not Enough; Recovering the Objectivity of the Covenant* (Douglas Wilson, 2002)

VI. Republication / 2 Kingdoms Theology

For further reading:

- *The Law is Not of Faith: Essays on Works and Grace in the Mosaic Covenant* (Estelle, Fesko, VanDrunen [editors], c. 2009)
- *Merit and Moses: A critique of the Klinean Doctrine of Republication* (Elam, Van Kooten, Berquist, c. 2014)
- *Living in God's Two Kingdoms; A Biblical Vision for Christianity and Culture* (VnDrunen, c. 2010)

A. What is Republication?

1. Summary

The Covenant of Works is republished, in some sense, in the Mosaic Covenant.

Mosaic Covenant as a typology of the Covenant of Works.

2. Origins

Meredith G. Kline (1922 – 2007) Professor at Westminster Theological Seminary, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Westminster Seminary California. Ordained minister in the OPC.

3. Why a controversy today?

Kline taught at WTS from 1948 – 1977, and then at WTS-CAL from 1981 – 2002.

2009 publication of *The Law is Not of Faith*

Since the doctrine of republication highlights the need for a true son of Israel to accomplish this righteousness, and ultimately does make manifest the obedience of Christ as the fulfillment of that demand, a misunderstanding of the Mosaic economy and silence on the works principle embedded there will only leave us necessarily impoverished in our faith. We will see in only a thin manner the work of our Savior.

In short, the doctrine of republication is integrally connected to the doctrine of justification. The Mosaic Law was necessary to make manifest a works principle that Christ the Messiah would have to fulfil.

-- TLNF

B. View of the Covenant

1. Republication of the Covenant of Works at Sinai

This view involves more than what is traditionally taught in Reformed circles, namely, that the moral law given to Adam was reaffirmed – summarized and republished – at Sinai. In the [Klinean] version, the nation of Israel is viewed as undergoing a merit-based probation with respect to their retention of temporal blessings in the Promised Land. This probationary arrangement echoes or reenacts the arrangement first made with Adam, and is analogous to the original covenant of works. More than republishing the same law that Adam was given, the covenant of works itself was republished in some sense at Mt. Sinai.

(M&M)

2. Israel as a Typological Adam

Traditional Reformed view:

| Adam | Christ |
|--|--|
| Personal, perfect obedience required for salvation | Personal, perfect obedience required for salvation |
| Result: Failed | Result: Success |

Republication view:

| Adam | Israel | Christ |
|--|---|--|
| Personal, perfect obedience required for salvation | National sincere but imperfect obedience required for earthly blessing (staying in the Promised Land) | Personal, perfect obedience required for salvation |
| Result: Failed | Result: Failed | Result: Success |

Note that Republication view does NOT believe that Israel (or anyone under the Mosaic Covenant) could merit salvation: the works principal is only temporal (earthly) and typological (of Adam and Christ).

3. Redefinition of “Merit”

Definition of “Merit”

On what basis does God reward humans after the fall?

WLC Q. 193: What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

A. In the fourth petition, (which is, Give us this day our daily bread,) acknowledging, that in Adam, and by our own sin, we have forfeited our right to all the outward blessings of this life, and deserve to be wholly deprived of them by God, and to have them cursed to us in the use of them; and that neither they of themselves are able to sustain us, nor we to merit, or by our own industry to procure them; but prone to desire, get, and use them unlawfully...

Israel a “corporate Adam” at a typological level

| | Covenant of Works | Mosaic Covenant (Repub. View) | Covenant of Grace |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Typology: | | | |
| Meritorious work: | | | |
| Reward: | | | |
| Meritorious work by: | | | |

Can God make a covenant of works with sinners where he lowers the bar of righteousness by accepting *imperfect* obedience as the basis of earning his blessing?

4. Applicability of covenant administrations to us today

Covenant with Adam → Covenant with Moses

Covenant with Israel → New Testament Covenant

5. Problems/Questions with the Republication view of the covenant

Creator/creature distinction

Was man created in covenant, or did God condescend to covenant with man?

Instability /schizophrenia

| | Foundational Level | Typological Level |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Reward: | | |
| Requirement: | | |
| Who can do it? | | |

Reduces the need for Christ’s active obedience

If God can justly accept imperfect obedience as meritorious in the Mosaic covenant, can he justly accept imperfect obedience as meritorious now?

Confusing typology

The type should point to the reality.

Affects the 3-fold use of the law

Review: What are the 3 uses of the law?

- 1:
- 2:
- 3:

Effects on the 2nd use:

Effects on the 3rd use:

Blurs grace and works

Are imperfect works a meritorious action or a response to grace?

C. Republication in Practice (Two Kingdoms framework)

Definition?

1. Basis

a) *Salvific covenant with Believers*

Also known as the *Redemptive Covenant*

b) *Common covenant with all of humanity*

Also known as the *Common Kingdom*

This covenant is about the preservation of this world (for a time), not salvation.

c) *Mosaic Covenant*

Where does the Mosaic Covenant fit in?

2. Result

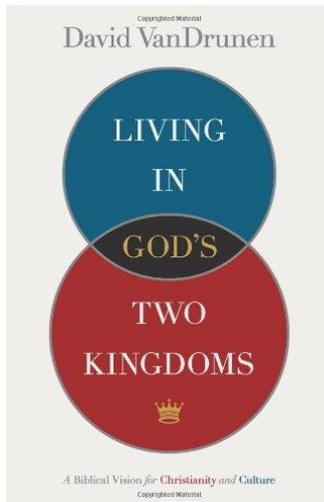
Redemptive Kingdom

God's kingdom of believers

Common Kingdom

How God rules the common world, of both believers and unbelievers.

3. Effect



a) *Church*

Redemptive Kingdom institution (instituted with Abrahamic covenant)

How would 2K affect who church targets for diaconal work?

b) *Family*

Common Kingdom institution (instituted at Creation)

Who is primarily responsible for children's education?

c) *State / Culture*

Common Kingdom institution (instituted with Noahic covenant)

Can you have "Christian" activities like "Christian auto repair?"

Summary