

# Socio-Political Implications of Dispensationalism

Explanation for the presentation's order and the CD copy of the paper

The contemporary socio-political threat to the Christian faith and a generalized response

The contemporary socio-political threat to the Christian faith and a Dispensational response

# Examples of the Threat

**“This essay explores the choice many traditionalist Christian parents (both fundamentalist and evangelical make to leave public schools in order to teach their children at home, thus in most instances escaping meaningful oversight. . . .Society need not and should not tolerate the inculcation of absolutist views that undermine toleration of difference. . . .If a parent subscribes to *an absolutist belief system premised on the notion that it was handed down by a creator, that it (like the Ten Commandments)* is etched in stone and that all other systems are wrong, the essential lessons of a civic education. . . .often seem deeply challenging and suspect. . . .*Such ‘private truths’ have no place in the public arena, including the public schools.*”**

Catherine Ross, “Fundamentalist Challenges to Core Democratic Values: Exit and Homeschooling”, *William and Mary Bill of Rights Journal* 18 (May 2010) (She is professor at George Washington Law School)

# Examples of the Threat

**[There must be legal and constitutional limits on the ability of homeschooling parents “to teach their children idiosyncratic and illiberal beliefs and values”. . . [Government control must be exercised against] “parents [who] want to teach against the enlightenment. . . .**

***Parental control over children’s basic education flows from the state (rather than visa versa). States delegate power over children’s basic education to parents. . . .”***

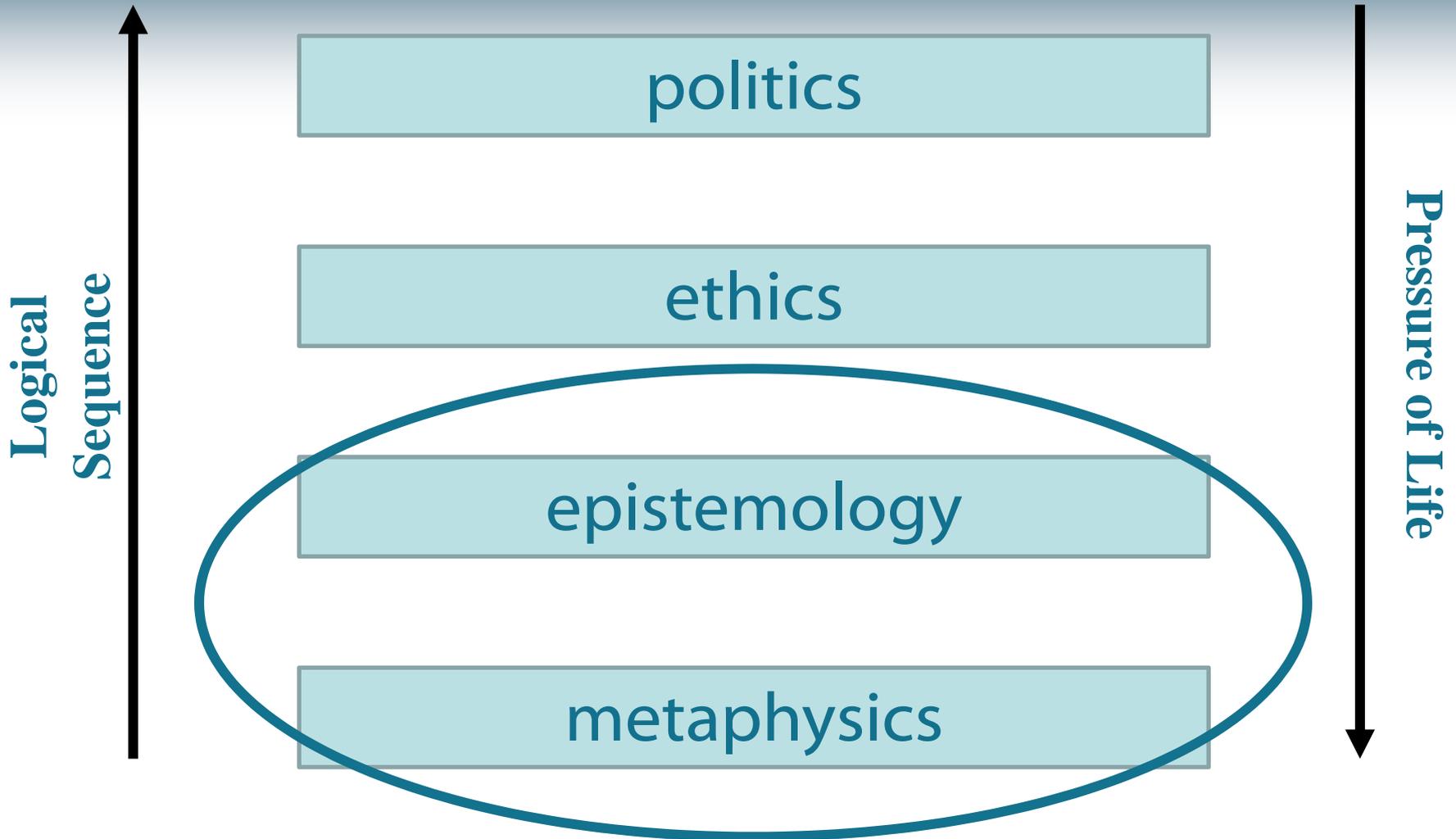
Kimberly A. Yurako, “Education Off the Grid...”, *California Law Review* 96 (February 2008) (She is a professor at the Northwestern University School of Law)

# Examples of the Threat

The state claims that Christian vocation cannot exist in a pluralist society:

- *Masterpiece Cakeshop, Denver, CO (Jack Phillips)*
- *Arlene's Flowers, Richland, Washington (Barronelle Stutzman)*
- *SweetCakes by Mellissa, Gresham, OR (Aaron & Melissa Klein)*
- *Hands on Originals, Lexington, KY (Blaine Adamson)*

# A BIBLICAL "CONCEPT" MAP



# Shall I Bow To My Creator?

- **YES!**

- ancient monotheism
- ancient Israel
- Bible
- fundamentalism

- **CREATOR/creature**

- God || man | nature
- everlasting distinctions

- **PERSONAL SOVEREIGN**

- ultimate responsibility

- **NO!**

- ancient myths
- eastern religions
- western philosophy
- modern theology

- **Continuity of Being**

- nature > gods > man
- transmutation / evolution

- **IMPERSONAL FATE & CHANCE**

- ultimate victimization

# JOURNEYS OF SUPPRESSION

## Early Greek cycle:

*Optimism:* “The early Greek philosophers proceeded with preposterous boldness on an entirely unproven assumption. They held that the universe is an intelligible whole [and] that we are able to comprehend that order.” pg 5, fn 8

*Pessimism:* “[The Sophists] were not interested in natural science, nor in the logical and epistemological problems it raised....What the young man needed was vocational training....Life is a matter of willing a goal, and success is the standard of wisdom.” pg 5, fn 9

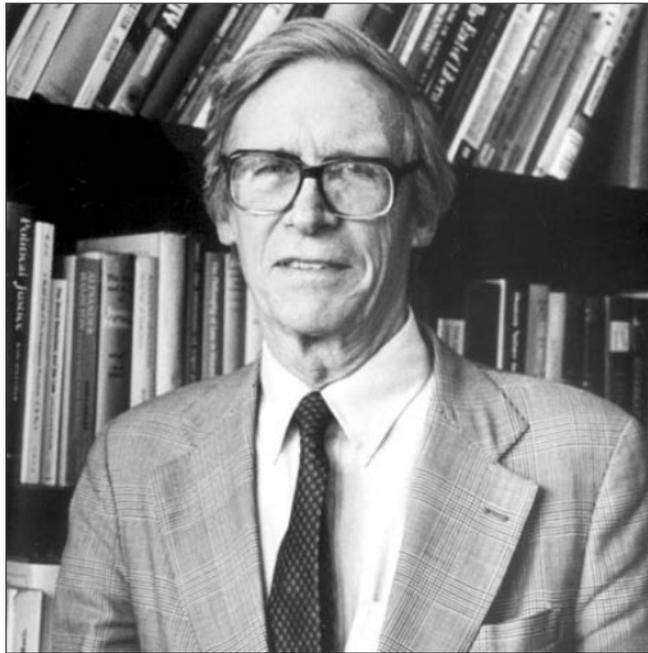
# JOURNEYS OF SUPPRESSION

## **Modern European cycle:**

*Optimism:* The Enlightenment = “unaided” Reason was sufficient to discover all truths and to lead society toward a common core of beliefs about reality, truth, and conduct.

*Pessimism:* Post-Modernism = “unaided” Reason proved too subjective to lead society toward a common core of beliefs about reality, truth, and conduct so....a “neo-Sophism” has appeared in which academic and political elites impose what they think should be a common core of beliefs

# REDUCTION IN SCOPE OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE



1921-2002

“These deflated expectations for reason are reflected in the ‘political liberalism’ of the most celebrated political philosopher of our time, John Rawls. [His] ‘public reason’..is Reason’s nemesis.. whose task is to keep Reason under control and out of sight when important public functions occur.” Steven Smith, *The Disenchantment of Secular Discourse* (Harvard University Press, 2010), 13.

# REDUCTION IN SCOPE OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE

“No one expects that anything called ‘reason’ will dispel [society’s] pervasive pluralism....So a central function of ‘public reason’ today is precisely to keep such matters out of public deliberation....Citizens practice Rawlsian public reason when they refrain from invoking...their deepest convictions...and consent to work only with a scaled-down set of beliefs...that claim the support of an ‘overlapping consensus’” Smith, 14f.

# A BIBLICAL "CONCEPT" MAP



# “SMUGGLED IN” WORLDVIEW NOTIONS

“Our secular vocabulary purports to render inadmissible notions [such as] a purposive cosmos...or a providential design. But if our deepest convictions rely on such notions, and if these convictions lose their sense when they are divorced from such notions, then we have little choice except to smuggle such notions into the conversation...under some sort of secular disguise.”

Smith, 14f.

# THE EMPTY IDEA OF “EQUALITY”

“EQUALITY” smuggles in the *appearance* of an ethical standard

= LIKE cases should be treated ALIKE

Case: Blind Person & Seeing Person

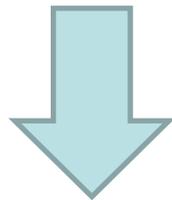
Treated ALIKE for VOTING? Why?

Treated ALIKE for DRIVING A CAR? Why?

Did “EQUALITY” determine your answer? What did?

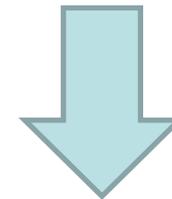
# "THE SIN of JEROBOAM" & THE SECULAR STATE

SEMI-BIBLICAL WV  
(from 600 to 1700)



|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>CHURCH<br/>(GOD)</b>                | <b>STATE<br/>(CAESAR)</b>              |
| <b>Jurisdiction<br/>from the Bible</b> | <b>Jurisdiction<br/>from the Bible</b> |

NEO-BABEL WV  
(since Enlightenment)



|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>CHURCH<br/>(GOD)</b>               | <b>STATE<br/>(CAESAR)</b>                      |
| <b>Just another<br/>citizen group</b> | <b>The supreme<br/>sovereign<br/>authority</b> |

# COUNTER-STRATEGY #1: CONSTANT DISCOURSE PRESSURE



# COUNTER-STRATEGY #1

“That Man is the product of **causes which had no prevision** of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hope and fears, his loves and beliefs, are but the **outcome of accidental collocations of atoms**; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can **preserve an individual life beyond the grave**; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius are **destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system**, and that the whole temple of Man’s achievement must inevitably be **buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruin** – all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy that rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul’s habitation henceforth be safely built.” Bertrand Russell, “A Free Man’s Religion” (1903) essay in Mysticism and Logic (1917) pg. 45-46.

# COUNTER-STRATEGY #1 (cont'd)

Can you give me a reasoned out argument why I should care for the environment?

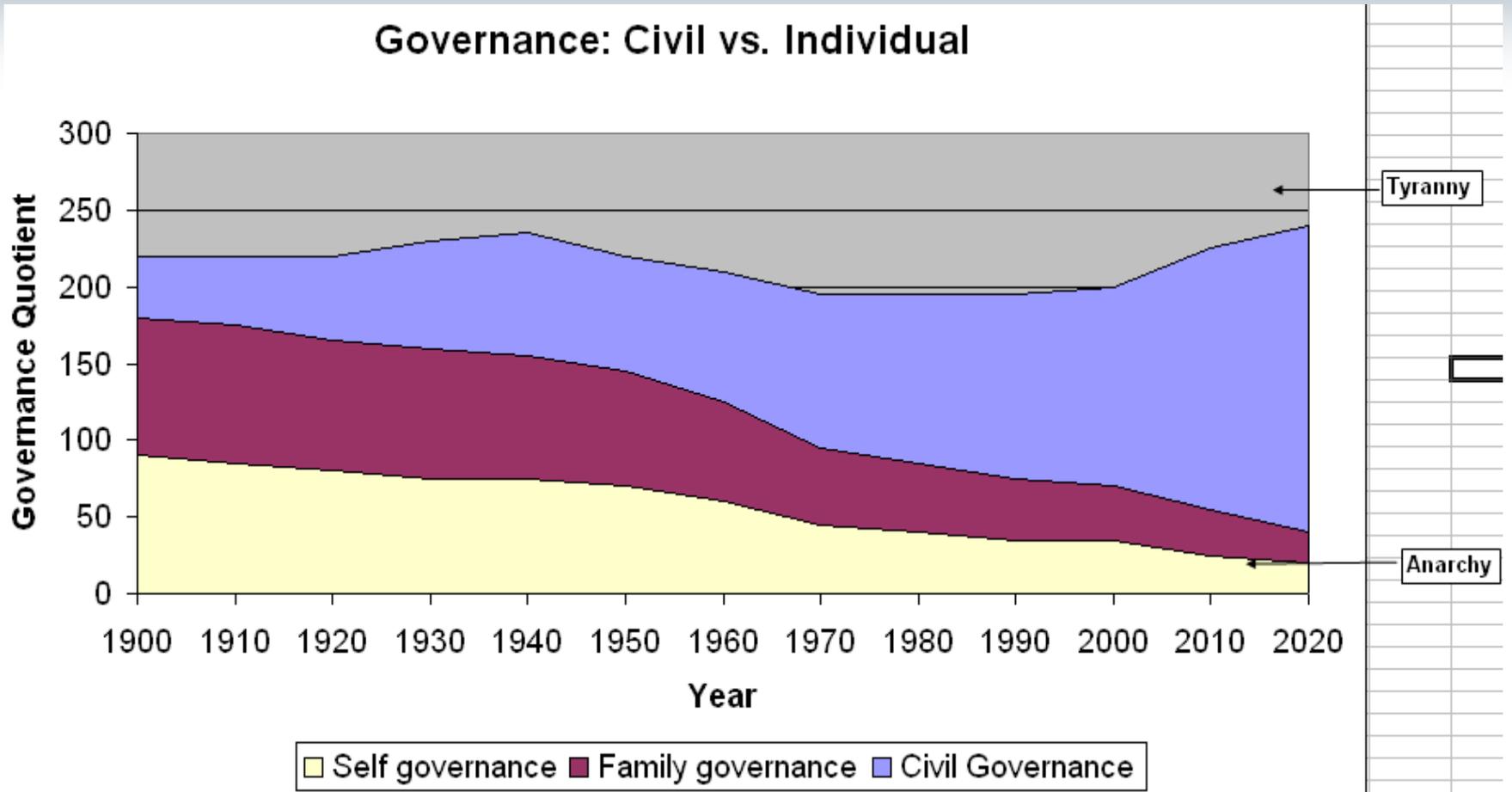
What do you see as the reasons why the scientific method works?

Do you think that life has a purpose? Why?

Do you think there are absolute truths that hold for all time for all people? Why?

Do you believe that some things are either right or wrong? Why?

# COUNTER-STRATEGY #2



# DISPENSATIONAL IMPLICATIONS: They Shape Use of the Strategies

Dispensational Ecclesiology

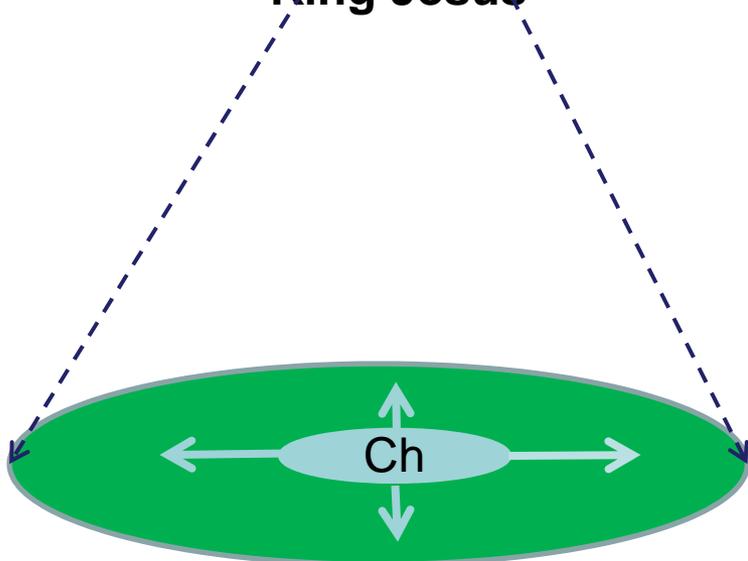
Dispensational Eschatology

# IMPLICATIONS of DISPENSATIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY

## COVENANT VIEW



Transcendent King Jesus



RULING ALL NATIONS

## DISPENSATIONAL VIEW



Forensic challenge

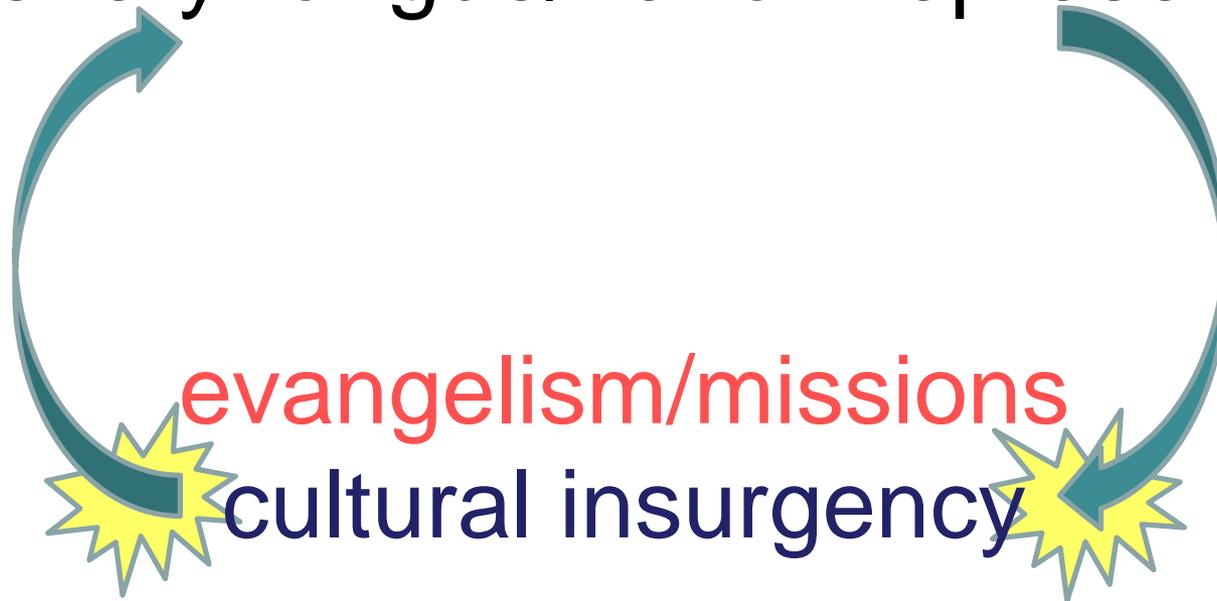
Immanent Indwelling Jesus



GATHERING REPRESENTATIVES

# IMPLICATIONS of DISPENSATIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY

Growing the BODY of CHRIST with  
every tongue/nation represented

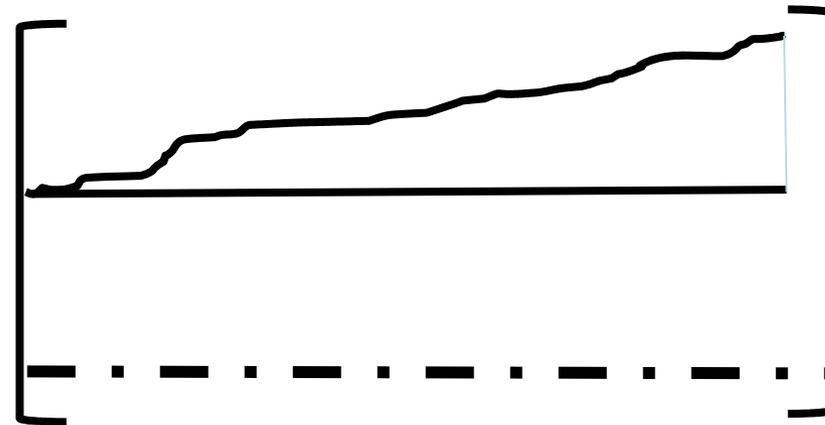
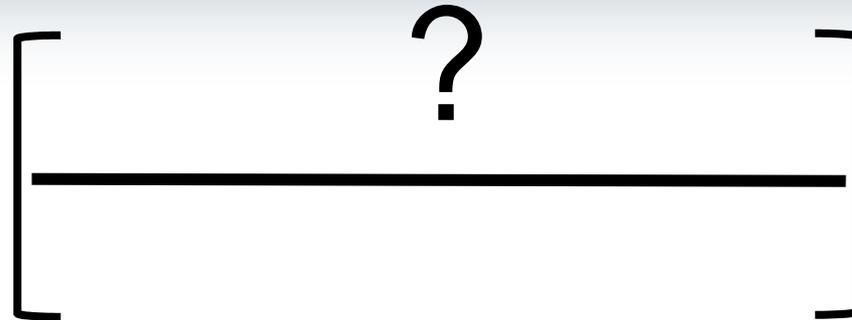


# IMPLICATIONS of DISPENSATIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY (cont'd)

A purposeless time?

or

The Holy Spirit Growing the Body of Christ to completion for beginning the endtimes



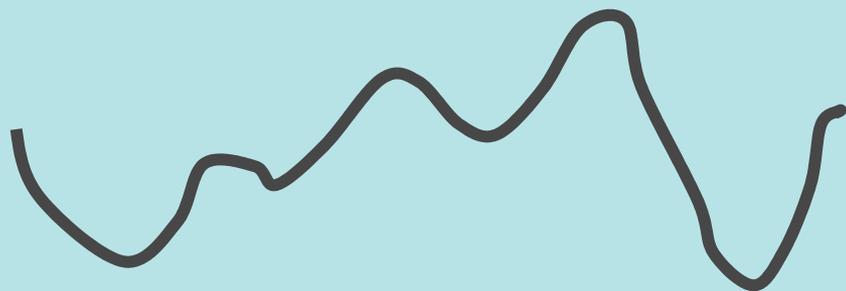
Heavenly reality

Earthly appearance

# Church Age Contrast with Tribulation & Millennium Conditions

## ENVIRONMENT

*NOT Millennial conditions*



*NOT Tribulational conditions*

*“Dominion-friendliness”  
of natural environment*

## POLITICS

*NOT Millennial conditions*



*NOT Tribulational conditions*

*Cultural righteousness*

# CONCLUSION !

**ACTION ITEM:** Are pastors going to continue acting as agents of the State after the State has rendered illegal the biblical definition of marriage as unalterable creation ordinance of God based upon His design of man, woman, and their role in history?