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## The New Mandarins

Steven Alan Samson

*Liberty University*, [ssamson@liberty.edu](mailto:ssamson@liberty.edu)

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## THE NEW MANDARINS

Steven Alan Samson

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. (Rom. 1:18-19)

The Apostle Paul frequently juxtaposed the word aletheia, truth, and the word adikia, unrighteousness, in his letters. Both words are negative constructs. Aletheia means "not hidden." Adikia means "not right" or "not shown." Truth and unrighteousness must therefore be understood in relation to revelation.

The Apostle John makes a similar juxtaposition between skotia, darkness, and phos, light, in John 1:4-5. Describing Jesus Christ, John wrote: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." The word skotia suggests something shaded, obscure, or veiled. Phos means to shine or make manifest. In Matthew 6:23, Jesus relates darkness and light to personal character: "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Paul writes with equal irony about men "who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Elsewhere Paul asks "what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14b) These words immediately follow his injunction: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers...." (2 Cor. 6:14a)

Throughout the early chapters of Romans, particularly Romans 1:18-2:16, Paul repeatedly states that God reveals himself in creation. The unrighteous are without excuse: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imagination; and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing

themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." (Rom. 1: 21-23)

The point that Paul is making is simple: "The just shall live by faith." (Rom. 1:17b) When Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate, he said: "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (John 18:37) The unbeliever is without excuse. He thus stands condemned: "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19) The worldly wise who refuse to glorify God, who exchange truth for a lie, are given over to "uncleanness" and "vile affections." "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. 2:11-12)

In light of these passages, it is clear that Pilate's response to Jesus --"What is truth?" (John 18:38)--is not an innocent one. It represents the pique of an idolator who "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (Rom. 1:25) and whose notion of reality had been challenged. God confounds the wisdom of the wise who foolishly believe the serpent's temptation: "ye shall be as gods." (Gen. 3:5) They condemn themselves by preferring speculative thought--vain imagination--to God's revelation. This is the story of modern man.

The faith of modern secular man, like his predecessors, is vain. Having hope only in this life, the secular humanist must of all men be accounted most miserable. By denying creation, he has substituted an idea of evolution that gives life a fatality and death a finality which denies all liberty, all value, and all meaning. For the evolutionist,

personal extinction will be finally caught up in the extinction of all life in a dying universe. As Jean-Paul Sartre reflected in The Words (1964), 156: "Though I am now disillusioned, I cannot think about the cooling of the sun without fear." Sartre is alleged to have made a deathbed repudiation of his philosophy, but others, as Edward Rozek likes to say, hold fast to "the courage of their confusions." Ungodly men seek their immortality in the future. We may ever find them engaged in building empires, individually or collectively constructing "a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven." (Gen. 11:4) This is the perennial dream of reason.

In his recent book, The Dominion Covenant: Genesis (1982), Gary North characterizes the madness in the method of evolutionists: "The post-Darwin evolutionist is no less religious than the Christian creationist. Evolutionists simply reverse God's order of creation. The Christian affirms that a sovereign, autonomous, omnipotent personal God created the universe. The evolutionist insists that a sovereign, autonomous, omnipotent impersonal universe led to the creation (development) of a now-sovereign personal god, mankind." (247) North then shows that the idea of "cosmic purposelessness" is essential to establishing the sovereignty of a humanistic elite. The Creator is denied so that man may take up the task of controlling evolution by imposing his own design, that is, his own image on creation. "Once man achieves his freedom from undesigned nature by means of his knowledge of nature's laws, he can then assert his autonomous sovereignty over nature (including, of course, other men)." (265)

The same motive may be seen at work in scientific planning, as C. S. Lewis is noted in The Abolition of Man (1947), 69: "what we call Man's power

over Nature turns out to be a power exercised by some men over other men with Nature as its instrument." This being the case, constitutional safeguards are required to protect personal and corporate liberty. As always, this raises the ancient question: Who will guard the guardians? When legal absolutes are denied, discretion itself becomes absolute, and law degenerates to an exercise in politics or the imposition of a social program. The first is only to be expected. It is the second that merits more careful consideration.

Whether in politics, economics, education, or law, the modern state is viewed as a vehicle for social reform and social control. And to carry out such a program, some kind of ruling elite invariably offers its services. At different times, these elites may be composed of foreign conquerors, wealthy immigrants, merchants, intellectuals, feudal warriors, clergy, lawyers, or bureaucrats. But for a society that worships at the altar of evolutionary science, it is only natural that its elite should be composed of "the best and brightest," a notion given substance in David Lebedoff's recent book, The New Elite: The Death of Democracy (1981).

Lebedoff, a former treasurer of Minnesota's Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, views this New Elite strictly from the vantage of partisan politics. He is troubled by what he regards as a direct attack on democratic political competition by upwardly mobile professionals--high achievers--whose status is defined in the context of "a society that rewards ability." Merit or ability is increasingly measured in terms of scores on IQ tests, college scholarships, academic or professional degrees, and occupation. The key indicator, or threshold test, is self-perception: members of the New Elite are those who reject their roots and regard themselves "primarily as

intelligent rather than as something else." (19) True members of the New Elite gravitate toward others who are favored with similar graces. They seek occupations where their success or failure is ratified by their peers, not by members of the general public. They are thus likely to be found ensconced in civil service, professional, or tenured teaching positions where they are most immune from scrutiny or interference by the hoi polloi; those who constitute the "Left Behinds." The New Elite seeks immunity from criticism.

The humanist had to first reject God before asserting the sovereignty of man. The New Elite has similarly rejected politics in order to assert its demand for power. "Politics is not killing us; on the contrary, politics is dead.... Its death was not accidental. Someone caused it to happen. The destruction of our political process was executed by those who had the most to gain from its demise: the New Elite." (66) This has been accomplished by changing the rules of the game: party rules changes, reapportionment, quotas, primary elections, political action committees, attempts to polarize public issues, emphasis on life-style issues, efforts to modify traditions by law, emotional and moralistic appeals, nonpartisan elections, citizen panels, and single-issue politics. The New Elite strategy is to target "a majoritarian institution...that is a barrier to the new class dominance," attempt to control it through rules changes, and then heap blame on it for the resulting failures. The object is to discredit the democratic institutions, much as the Nazis, Fascists, and Bolsheviks did in Europe. The effectiveness of this strategy may be readily gauged from a review of Morris P. Fiorina's very brief volume, Congress (1977). Lebedoff's hypothesis suggests a simple explanation for shake-up in the traditional power structure of

Congress noted by Fiorina. Congressmen's home bases have been so weakened by the new rules that they must spend more time in casework--servicing their constituents' needs--and less time lawmaking if they expect to be reelected. The New Elitists consequently criticize a lack of leadership in Congress that is much their own making.

We hear pleas for new programs and bold solutions to pressing human problems. The now hamstrung two-party system is taking it on the chin for poor turnout at the polls and poor showings in the races. And what do these critics propose in its place? "The political goal of the New Elite is very simple: the transfer of political power to the New Elite. This has very little to do with issues or with the advancement of any philosophy or cause. It does have to do with who is fit to govern--as decided by the New Elite."

What Lebedoff is describing is an aristocracy of the experts or what has come to be known as a "meritocracy." But he is standing too close to this political animal to fully appreciate the nature of the beast. To say that the goal of the New Elite "has very little to do ...with the advancement of any philosophy or cause" is to miss its roots in evolutionary thinking. This elite supposedly represents the vanguard of human advancement toward greater perfection. Its ideal is a parody of the Christian doctrine of sanctification (1 Thess. 5:23-24). It resembles the perfectionist notion of "entire sanctification." Thus B. B. Warfield's Perfectionism (1958) offers insights through a survey of perfectionist movements among American Christians. The New Elite's secular perfectionism is of the same variety as the racial theories of the eugenics movement, Margaret Sanger's American Birth Control League (later Planned Parenthood), and Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of uebermensch (superman). These theories survive in much of the New

Age or New Consciousness literature. But American social reformers and artists have shown a long standing affinity for such thinking, as may be seen in the proliferation of utopian communitarian movements, radical religious cults, secret societies, and mystical-occultist circles. Ralph Waldo Emerson's "The Oversoul" and Edgar Allan Poe's "Eureka" are representative of the visionary quality of much American literature. Such works served as a wedge in opening the door to liberal theology, evolutionism, Eastern religion, and the occult. Both the Romanticism and the Nationalism of the 19th century gave impetus to the secular perfectionism that characterizes 20th century culture. This is the philosophy Lebedoff overlooks. It is this "religion of humanity" that R. J. Rushdoony analyzes in The Nature of the American System (1965) and which shapes what Rushdoony calls "the messianic character of American education" in his book of that title.

Public education is, in fact, a key "change agent" for the creation of a new social and economic order. "Teachers are to serve as the new predestinators." (North, 307) Not so long ago the "ivory tower" of academia seemed to be the last refuge of cranks and visionaries. But it might be more accurately termed the laboratory for a new society. Such a statement can be easily debunked as paranoid. Yet the evidence is as abundant as it is persuasive. Neither is it confined to one field. Whether the subject is education, planning, scientific research, politics, or law, the pattern is much the same. The goal of the New Elite is political to the core and paternalistic in its assumption that a new class of social engineers is needed to set the public agenda. It forsakes the appearance of politics in favor of the object of politics: power. The new center of power is the bureaucracy.

Lebedoff correctly notes the growing emphasis on style over substance.

The political scientist, Murray Stedman, has made a similar observation and adds a historical dimension lacking in The New Elite. Stedman examines the "brokerage style" of urban politics in America and identifies two types: the machine type and the reform type. The classic study of machine politics is Dayton McKean's The Boss (1940). The New Elite may be seen as a lament on the demise of the rough and tumble partisanship that the machine so vividly exemplified. City Politics (1963) by Edward C. Banfield and James Q. Wilson has a chapter devoted to the emergence of reformist politics out of the 19th century social reform movement. Supporting evidence concerning the goals of the social reformers may be gleaned from such works as Transcendentalism in New England (1876) by Octavius Brooks Frothingham, Freedom's Ferment (1944) by Alice Felt Tyler, The Triumph of Conservatism (1963) by Gabriel Kolko, and Tragedy and Hope (1966) by Carroll Quigley. The thread that links these and similar studies is their portrayal of various efforts to deliberately construct a new and more perfect society, first through voluntary societies, then through political agencies established or captured by reformist forces.

The early German sociologist, Max Weber, has left us with a sympathetic description of the struggle to preserve the old style of partisan politics. It is quoted in From Max Weber (1958), ed. by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, p. 71, and was written in 1906:

(E)verywhere the house is ready-made for a new servitude. It only waits for the tempo of technical economic 'progress' to slow down and for rent to triumph over profit.... (T)he increasing complexity of the economy, the partial governmentalization of economic activities, the territorial expansion of the population--these processes create ever-new work for the clerks, an ever-new specialization of functions, and expert vocational training and administration. All this means caste. Those American workers who were against the 'Civil Service Reform' knew what they were about. They wished to be governed by parvenus of doubtful morals rather than a certified caste of mandarins. But their protest was in vain.

While Lebedoff works within an evolutionary framework of analysis, his description of changing social patterns underscores a growing problem: through increased mobility, universal education, and rewards for intellectual achievement, a new social class is emerging that is no longer based on the random distribution of intelligence. Lebedoff believes that this change may prove fatal for such democratic values as equality of opportunity which were based on the observation that talent may be found in all walks of life and that social status had little to do with personal value. But what happens when, deliberately or unintentionally, people are bred for specific characteristics such as abstract intelligence, physical strength, or beauty? The ambitions of the eugenicists early in our century are being realized in ways we have seldom troubled ourselves to examine.

All of the attitudes associated with noblesse oblige are evident among the social reformers: arrogance, moralism, liberality, idealism. For arrogance, it is hard to exceed that of the Rev. Frederick T. Gates, who was the manager of John D. Rockefeller's philanthropies and the chief instigator of the General Education Board. In "The Country School of Tomorrow" (1913), the Board's first Occasional Paper, Rev. Gates shared his vision for making rural life "beautiful, intelligent, fruitful, recreative, healthful, and joyous:"

The present educational conventions fade from our minds; and, unhampered by tradition, we work our own good will upon a grateful and responsive rural folk. We shall not try to make these people or any of their children into philosophers or men of learning or of science. We are not to raise up from among them authors, orators, poets, or men of letters. We shall not search for embryo great artists, painters, musicians. Nor will we cherish even the humbler ambition to raise up from among them lawyers, doctors, preachers, politicians, statesmen, of whom we now have ample supply.... We are to follow the admonitions of the good apostle, who said, "Mind not the high things, but condescend to men of low degree." And generally, with respect to these high things, all that we shall try to do is just to create presently

about these country homes an atmosphere and conditions such, that, if by chance a child of genius should spring up from the soil, that genius will surely bud and not be blighted.

Elements of the goals of both the social reformers and the New Elite are evident in this passage. One is the identification of a group of "subjects" for the social experiment: in this case, residents of the rural South. Another is the desire to inoculate these subjects from their "traditions." Such a program implies the substitution of another tradition, as John Dewey urged in A Common Faith. Dewey intimated that "there is such a thing as faith in intelligence becoming religious in quality...." (26) In fact, social reform has always been religious in quality. And it is this quality which lends itself so readily to the rise of new class of social benefactors.

It is, in part, to this generous impulse that we owe the rise of the university system and the development of the social sciences. Before all of society can be converted into a true social laboratory, the experimental theories and instruments must be tested on a smaller scale. This has been a function of the social sciences from their very inception. The modern university was born following the Civil War through a convergence of private wealth, public subsidies, professional ambition, and reform-minded social crusaders.

Such "helping professions" as social work and counseling received a boost from the new gospel of philanthropy. In law, medicine, theology, and education, the distinct emphasis was on developing a professional identity on the basis of scientific principles. Many national professional associations were founded during the decade following the Civil War, and there emerged what Burton J. Bledstein has called "the culture of professionalism" in his book of that title. Evolutionary science was the new intellectual orthodoxy. The spokesmen for sci-

entific professionalism were among its chief prophets. Is all of this a part of some dark conspiracy? Not in the commonly understood sense, anyway. Yet what is politics if not the endeavor by like-minded individuals to shape the public agenda and thus influence the character of society? Is it secretive? To some extent it is necessarily so. This does not make it evil. What must be challenged is the attempt, described by Lebedoff, to make politics a matter of expertise or to wrap it in the mantle of professionalism. We have grown so accustomed to accepting the bona fides--good faith--of professional associations at face value that we tend to ignore the mixed motives from which their appeals spring. We are apt to forget what The Westminster Confession, XVI, 7, so clearly states: "Works done by unregenerate men, although, for the matter of them, they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet, because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to the word; nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God."

A spate of angry critiques of academia and the professions has come out in recent years. It is not necessary to agree with all the conclusions to appreciate the reasons for their authors' disaffection. Perhaps none is more sharp-tongued than the person whose god has failed. And perhaps none bears more poignant witness to dashed hopes and betrayed expectations.

The Graves of Academe (1981) by Richard Mitchell is a recent entry into the lists of works destined to be ignored by their intended audiences. It is a hilarious, subversive book that should be required reading in all teachers' colleges. One may scarcely hope, however,

to find copies of it in college libraries. The author is a Professor of English at Glassboro State College and the editor of The Underground Grammarian. In the eyes of many "educationists," as he calls them, Mitchell is likely to be regarded as a blasphemer in the temple. His caustic directness is as refreshing as a vigorous scrub-brushing, perhaps with a Brillo pad. His "saltiness" has lost none of its savour. Mitchell taunts doctoral dissertation writers for their aesopian babble, their pseudo-scientific measurements of the unmeasurable, and their preoccupation with the pathology of students. "The incipient teachers are to be, in fact, therapists, keen to discover, if unable to treat, vast arrays of 'learning disabilities' and 'problem youngsters.' Teacher-training, therefore, is a colossal and terribly serious enterprise. It calls for more and more courses and workshops and 'hands-on' laboratory 'experiences' and in- and pre-service training, all of which require larger and larger faculties and counselors and facilitators and support services and more and more money." (67)

Mitchell's reference to "therapists" is a prevalent theme in the critical literature. Mitchell echoes other critiques of the high priestly aspirations of professionals: The Triumph of the Therapeutic (1966) by Philip Rieff, The Theology of Medicine (1977), and The Messianic Character of American Education (1963) by R. J. Rushdoony. His diagnosis of the medical model of education is both engaging and incisive. Mitchell wields a mean scalpel. He seems to specialize in deflating swelled heads with a little of their own medicine. But it is always a pleasure, after reading so many academic hatchet jobs, to read someone who knows how to bury the hatchet.

Much has been made over the years about such "change agents" as progressive education, sex education, urban renewal, land use planning,

progressive taxation, and sociological jurisprudence. But it is difficult to convey a sense of the continuity, consistency, and deliberateness of the changes that are taking place throughout the land. We do not need to conclude that these changes are being orchestrated by a particular group, or that they all fit neatly into a single pattern, in order to conclude that there is some rhyme or reason behind them. In fact, some influential academic and professional theorists give away the game in now largely forgotten works. These include Auguste Comte, the acknowledged father of sociology; Horace Mann and John Dewey, key figures in education; Christopher Langdell and Roscoe Pound in law; Wilhelm Wundt and G. Stanley Hall in psychology; and innumerable others. Each of these men was a "global thinker" and each left a forceful imprint in his field. They exemplified Karl Marx's dictum in "Theses on Feuerbach:" "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it."

Gary North devotes considerable attention to one such program for change: Dynamic Sociology (1883) by Lester F. Ward, the first major work of American sociology. This two-volume tome is an unabashed appeal for a planned state which is comprehensive in its scope. Ward suggested training legislators in the laws of sociological science. Nowadays, congressional committees are staffed with academicians and lawyers. Ward believed that a beneficent elite could use the growing fund of knowledge to elevate humanity to new heights. What speaks so hopefully here, as elsewhere, is the perennial dream of reason, now disguised as science. But, as always, it suffers from the perennial problem of perfectionism: an inadequate notion of sin and, ironically it would seem, a denigration of the flesh. What is imperfect is fit only to be

discarded or recast. Ward advocated eliminating crime through education (so did Horace Mann), rule by scientific planners, laissez faire morality, abolition of suffering, redistribution of wealth, population control, and other programs that strongly resemble current practices.

The dream of reason remains, as always, a religious one: "Ye shall be as gods." Its vision is clearly expressed at the conclusion of The Treason of the Intellectuals (1928) by Julien Benda:

Above classes and nations there does exist a desire of the species to become the master of things, and, when a human being flies from one end of the world to the other in a few hours, the whole human race quivers with pride and adores itself as distinct from all the rest of creation. At bottom, this imperialism of the species is preached by all the great directors of the modern conscience. It is Man, and not the nation or the class, whom Nietzsche, Sorel, Bergson extol in his genius for making himself master of the world. It is humanity, and not any one section of it, whom August Comte exhorts to plunge into consciousness of itself and to make itself the object of its adoration. Sometimes one may feel that such an impulse will grow ever stronger, and that in this way inter-human wars will come to an end. In this way humanity would attain 'universal fraternity.' But, far from being the abolition of the national spirit with its appetites and its arrogance, this would simply be its supreme form, the nation being called Man and the enemy God. (201-202)

The illustrations could be further multiplied. But these should be sufficient to convince people who have eyes to see and ears to hear. Jesus counsels his disciples to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves." (Matt. 10:16) Christians must learn to "try the spirits whether they are of God...." (1 John 4:1)

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.... (Rom. 1:18)