

Spring 2014

Starting from Scripture

Thomas S. Mach

Cedarville University, macht@cedarville.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/history_and_government_publications

 Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), [History Commons](#), [Political Science Commons](#), and the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Mach, Thomas S., "Starting from Scripture" (2014). *History and Government Faculty Publications*. 150.
http://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/history_and_government_publications/150

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Cedarville, a service of the Centennial Library. It has been accepted for inclusion in History and Government Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Cedarville. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@cedarville.edu.

HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

A proper understanding of Scripture dramatically impacts the study of history and government. The Bible clearly teaches that God spoke man into existence. If man were the product of evolutionary chance, it would be difficult to consider his presence as anything other than a quirk of fate. Instead, the fact that God purposefully created man endowed him with meaning. As such, the study of man and his actions through time (i.e., history) has purpose. God used history as a didactic tool in much of Scripture, providing a model for us and suggesting that we have much to gain by studying the past.

When it comes to the study of government, Scripture again provides the essential foundation. The Bible teaches that God ordained government to be His minister for good, to execute justice, and to provide protection for its people. With that foundation, we Christians have a rather distinctive standard from which to assess what is good and proper government.

In studying the tumultuous years following America's Civil War, I have my students read Herman Melville, who argued that the Northern government should be lenient on the seceded South, because Scripture calls for loving our enemies and forgiving those who have wronged us. Melville is certainly correct that Scripture teaches these important principles. A proper approach to Scripture, however, notes that these imperatives are commanded of Christians in the context of how to respond to those who treat them poorly, especially for their faith, and in the context of how to respond to fellow believers who offend them (Matt. 5:44, Luke 17:3-4). But can these commands be applied to government?

Given the teaching of Scripture, it would appear they cannot. Government bears the "sword" for a reason — to execute justice (Rom. 13:4). Governments cannot give love or forgiveness. If we take Scripture seriously and properly, we recognize that Melville's assertion was based on a shallow understanding

of Scripture. God communicated to us extensively and has preserved His Word through the centuries for our benefit. In the Department of History and Government, we believe it is imperative to bring a proper understanding of Scripture to the process of integration in each of the fields we teach.

Thomas Mach, Ph.D.
Chair, Professor of History

cedarville.edu/historygovernment



ENGINEERING

People often think of engineering as an objective, fact-based discipline with unchanging principals. They believe solutions found in engineering textbooks primarily concern truth and facts, and the profession is distanced from tricky moral dilemmas, as long as engineers have a sound ethical foundation.

Engineering work is rarely one-dimensional, however, and subjective issues often preclude finding an answer "in the back of the textbook." Not only

does the engineer's device or system have to function, but real-world solutions have to account for deadlines, development and production costs, manpower and resource limitations, company politics, and market dynamics. In addition to book knowledge, Christian engineers also need a surprising measure of faith on the job.

There's also the matter of skill. "Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings; they will not serve before officials of low rank" (Prov. 22:29). Just as Christian character and faith are fundamental in the daily business of engineering, so are solid engineering skills; without them the men and women in our program simply cannot work at the most advanced levels. God may override ignorance on occasion with a flash of insight, but generally inspiration comes in the context of diligence, foundational skills, and practical experience. To do work that makes a difference in the world, some doors are only open to engineers who excel at their craft.

Throughout our program, and particularly during senior design projects, Cedarville's engineering faculty helps students gain experience and stretch their

faith to accomplish new things. This year, for example, mechanical engineering students on the Solar Boat Team are developing and assembling a fantastic electric motor for a high-speed sprint race. God has provided exceptional design assistance and motor components from a world-class manufacturer of RC model motors. Developing the specifications, praying through the long-distance correspondence and design process, and branching out far beyond their course of study, the students will end up building a motor that exists nowhere else on earth. Teaching students to tackle engineering challenges with a practical approach of knowledge, skill, and faith is a unique combination at which Cedarville excels.

Gerald Brown, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering

cedarville.edu/engineering