

The Undeniable Axioms of Church Growth

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According to Scripture, in the last days, apostacy (falling away) will be rampant in the Church.¹ There will be false prophets, signs and wonders meant to decieve even the Elect. ²

It is our contention that God seeks to have systems built on HIS plan, not Man's. As regards AUTHORITY - His ways are not pyramid-shaped heirarchical systems following the will of a MAN at the top. If anything, it's a pyramic turned on it's head, with the leader being servant to all. As for authority, there is US and there is HIM. That's it. While there are dileneations and delegations of responsibility, and there might be a chain of command to accomplish something, everyone in the chain should be looking to God for authority and submit as servant leaders to those around them. If we're walking in His Spirit, we worship no man.

God wanted Israel to worship and follow Him only. But they insisted on a King, so God gave them one knowing it would go badly - but that's what they wanted.³ They had it coming.

The Church has fallen into the same trap. Instead of worshipping God only, we've absorbed all the man-made models and adopted them as our own for centuries - millenia even! Go look at your church or denomination's organizational chart and see if it resembles the structures of Man and follows behind one person at the top. As for "Authority," in many cases we've usurped God's position and inserted ourselves at the top of the chain of command and insisted on obedience from the lower levels.

During the Millenial Reign of Christ, we will return to the perfect model.⁴ Christ as direct leader of all with no other steps or layers of authority in between. Even though others may reign with Him, it's inside His authority, not their own.⁵

God hates man-made organizational structures because they are innately sinful. He directed us to be respectful of those already in place.⁶ But He clearly instructed us to listen to HIM only, never to call another Father or Rabbi, when we were to be listening only to God.⁷

A lot of thought and prayer has gone into this. We've tried to explain the apostasy in the church and the dangers of the coming systems in the simplest possible terms. Based on scripture and clearly harmonious with the basic instincts of every person with a clear understanding of human nature. To deny this is to fly in the face of a basic understanding of human nature.

The Undeniable Axiom of Sinful Inertia

IF: You believe the Bible is the Word of God and is Truth;⁸

THEN: You believe that Man is a fallen, sinful creature and beyond redemption and perfection on his own.⁹

IF: You believe that Man is sinful (to whatever degree);¹⁰

THEN: You have to believe that the more Men in one organization, the more potential for sin comes with them. Like compounding interest. ¹¹

IF: You want to have a positive impact on the World;¹²

THEN: You must acknowledge the sinful nature of Man and build structures to restrain or minimize it.¹³

IF: You base your structures on the ideas and management of Men;¹⁴

THEN: They are flawed and cannot restrain the mass of sin indefinitely.¹⁵

IF: The organization denies the sinful nature of Man;

THEN: It believes a lie, it builds no effective restraints and will immediately have a negative effect.

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IF: The organization believes Man is sinful, except their own leaders;
THEN: It believes a lie, builds no restraints on the leaders and very quickly has a negative effect.

IF: The organization believes that ALL Men are sinful and builds restraints on ALL;
THEN: It operates in truth and can have a positive impact - to the limits of the restraints.

IF: The accumulation of sinful Men exceeds the limitations of the restraints;
THEN: The organization ceases to have positive impact and becomes something negative.

IF: You are Satan and you want to spit in the eye of God; 16
THEN: You build a One World Church that lies about the nature of man and has no real restraints on behavior.

The Undeniable Axiom of Love of Money

IF: You believe the Bible is the Word of God and is Truth; 17
THEN: You believe the Bible when it says that the "Love of money is the root of all evil." 18

IF: You believe that the "Love of money is the root of all evil." 19
THEN: You have to recognize that it's not the money itself, but the LOVE of it. (Biblically speaking, anything that takes the place of God will do, but most often its money that's the issue.) 20

IF: You believe that money is a temptation when placed in the hands of sinful Man; 21
THEN: You have to believe that the bigger the pile of money, the greater the temptation.

IF: You have an organization that misunderstands the nature of Man and is already negative;
THEN: You have to see that if you give it LOTS of money, it will be VERY bad indeed.

IF: An organization believes ALL Men are sinful and builds restraints on ALL;
THEN: You can force it to and past the limits of it's restraints faster by just adding more money.

IF: An organization says it is positive but it's leader expresses a clear "Love of Money";
THEN: You can assume that organization has passed it's restraints and turned "Evil" and it is a lie. 22

IF: You are Satan and you want to spit in the eye of God; 23
THEN: You build a One World Government that controls ALL the money and has no restraints on the leaders. 24

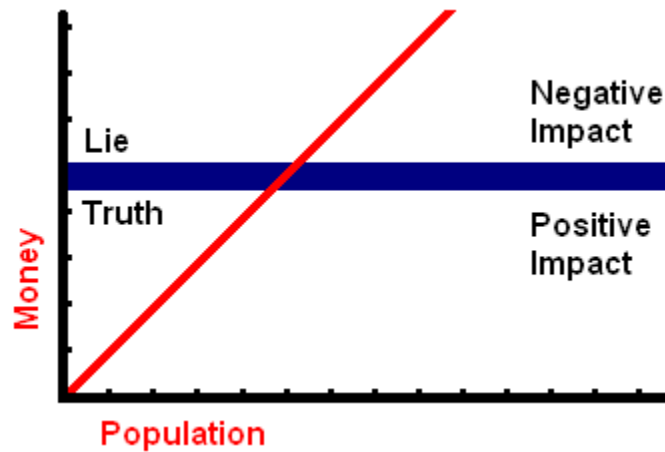
The Undeniable Axiom of Synergy

IF: You want to prove the Bible to be True and right about the nature of Man;
THEN: You combine sinful Man and lots of money and watch to see what happens.

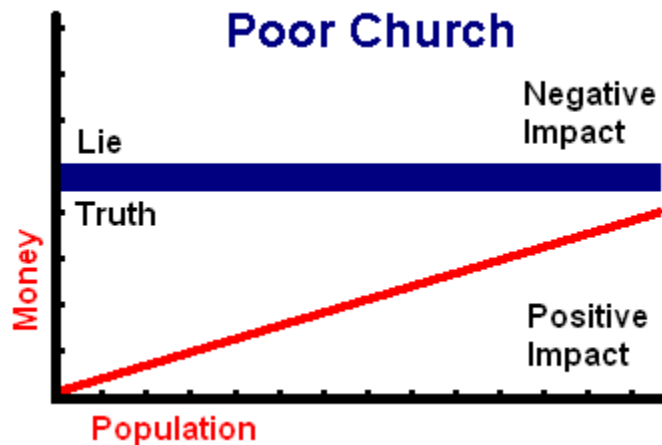
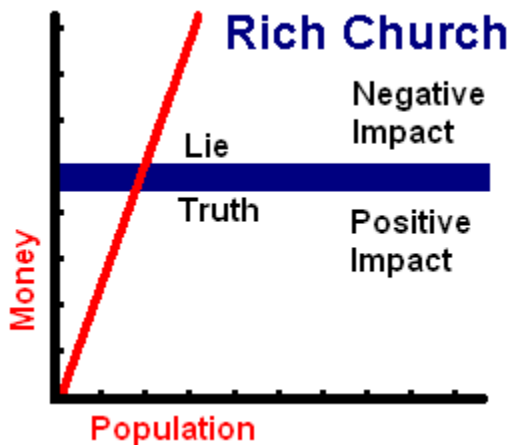
IF: You are Satan and you want to spit in the eye of God; 25
THEN: You build a One World Government and a One World Church, remove all restraints, thereby consolidating ALL of sinful Man into one mass and thus achieving "Maximum Possible Sinfulness." 26

IF: A Christian leader believes that the prophesied Millennial Reign of Christ is a time when Man will create a perfected, universal Christian church and Christian government on Earth to prepare the way for Christ to return;
THEN: That leader shows a flawed understanding of the nature of Man, has believed the Lie of Eve, and is (knowingly or unknowingly) playing right into the hands of the Enemy. Either way, you should RUN. And fast. 27

Basic Axiom Graph



As Population goes up and Money goes up, sooner or later the Inertia of Sinfulness exceeds the restraints of the organization and it becomes something else entirely. It may still think it's positive, but it's not anymore. Government, church, business, family, individual - it doesn't matter, it's all sinful Man. The reason it's hard for the "Rich" to enter the Kingdom 28 is because it all happens so much faster. The reason the poor churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia aren't chastised in Revelations Chapters 2 & 3 is because the "Rich" churches have already "jumped the shark" or crossed the line into being something other than their original nature. The poor churches are too worried about survival to have time to be in-fighting, debating new theology or getting lazy and soft.



What is this Truth and Lie stuff?

Let's say a church starts off as a small group of committed friends in an affluent community wanting to worship together and care for each other. They say, "We are a family. We care about each individual." Their numbers grow and with growth comes lots of cash. They build a building, they hire staff, they start new programs for outreach and care. They say, "We are a family. We care about each individual." At some point, if they're not VERY careful, they cross a line and their ACTIONS through their committees, their strategies, their staff decisions, their spending habits say, "We need more people here to pay the bills. We need to grow to justify the new gym. We need to be careful not to challenge or offend anyone, or we'll stop growing." But, they continue to SAY to themselves and to others, "We're a family. We care about each individual." But more and more people begin to feel that it's a lie. They sense the dissonance. Then leadership begins to "urge" people out of the church who disagree and wave a flag of warning. Then the pastor writes a best selling book about how he grew his church so big - so that other pastors can learn how to do it to their own churches. Then the pastor has lots of money AND lots of

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people to contend with - exactly the way Satan likes it. Even if they manage to resist the inertia of sinfulness until they are very large, there is constant need for watchfulness because a new leader (or a new heart in an old leader) can remove or diminish restraints very quickly.

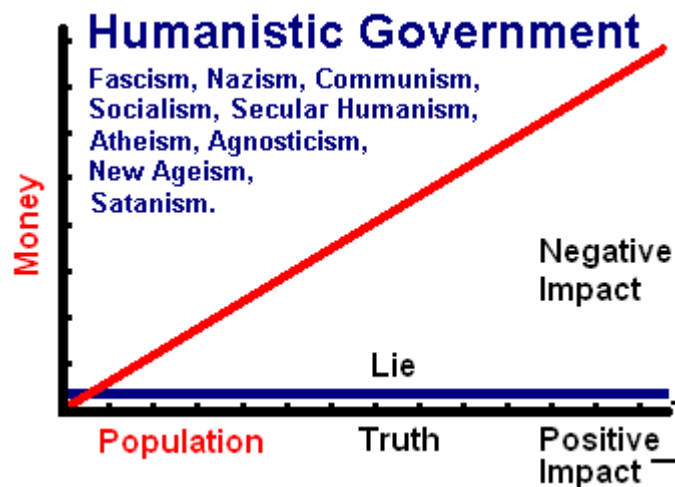
Meanwhile, the poor church accumulated many times the number of members without ever changing their basic nature because they don't have enough assets to be covetous and contentious. They have just enough to care for each other and to worship God. No Christian coffeehouse, no amusement parks, no aerobics classes, no budget ministries, no best selling books, no giant egos. They say, "We are a family. We care about the individual." And while someday they might cross over the line, they can sustain it much longer because they are much more reliant on lay leaders and not paid staff and fancy programs and facilities. They have to be mobile and entrepreneurial. They don't have any resources to waste. Even so, there is need for watchfulness because a new leader (or a new heart in an old leader) can remove or diminish restraints very quickly.

This Axiom asserts that Mega churches with Mega assets are not Biblically what we should be striving for - and should always be treated with suspicion and much care. The burden of proof that they HAVE NOT crossed the line should constantly be on the pastor and lay leadership to verify to the people that in all things their actions and decisions match with their words. Steps should be taken to raise the restraints so that the threshold is higher - OR - steps should be taken to dramatically reduce the size of the organization and it's assets. One option would be to split into smaller units and divide up resources. Or to funnel money away from themselves as quickly as possible and get it directly to the most effective, Scripturally justifiable ministries.

What About Governments?

We should be wary of governments because everything is bigger and stronger and the mountains of money involved make it immediately highly dangerous. In addition, because government leadership can change quickly, the line between Truth and Lie is fluid and can flex up and down, taking you from a point of safety into a danger zone very quickly.

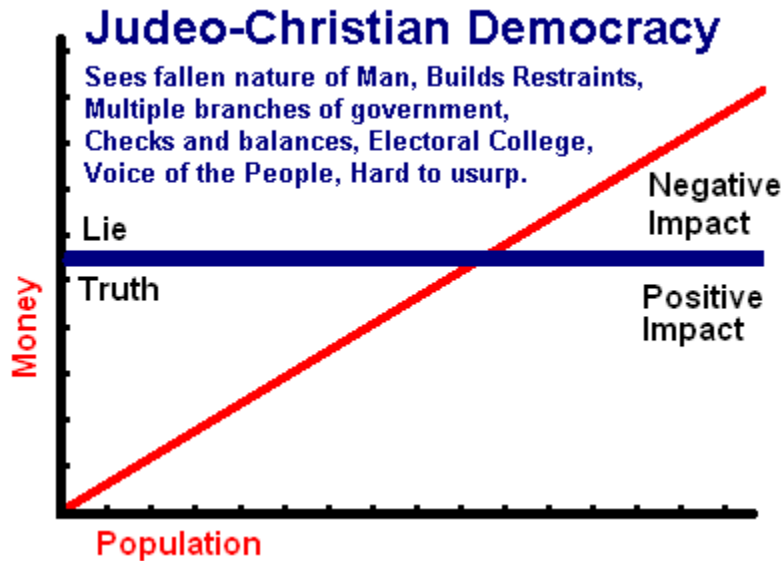
Again, if any government or movement believes that they can create a Utopia on Earth if they'll just invent the correct structure, process, program, education, or worse, have the right single person in charge - they are GROSSLY misunderstanding the nature of Man and the lessons of history and are therefore highly dangerous.



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If you give a government like that absolute authority and access to loads of cash, it will nearly immediately turn into a killing machine and eradicate any resistance to it's plan for "Peace". Because it has removed restraints on behavior since it believes Man to be inherently good - or even to have God within himself - whoever has the most power or charisma will call the shots and create whatever they want for themselves and crush any opposition.

Conversely, if a government is founded from the very beginning on the idea that they are going to have to plan ahead to create complex ways to keep some powerful sinful Man (or Men) from exerting his will and taking over the whole government, it's possible that they could create a system that would hold off disaster for awhile.

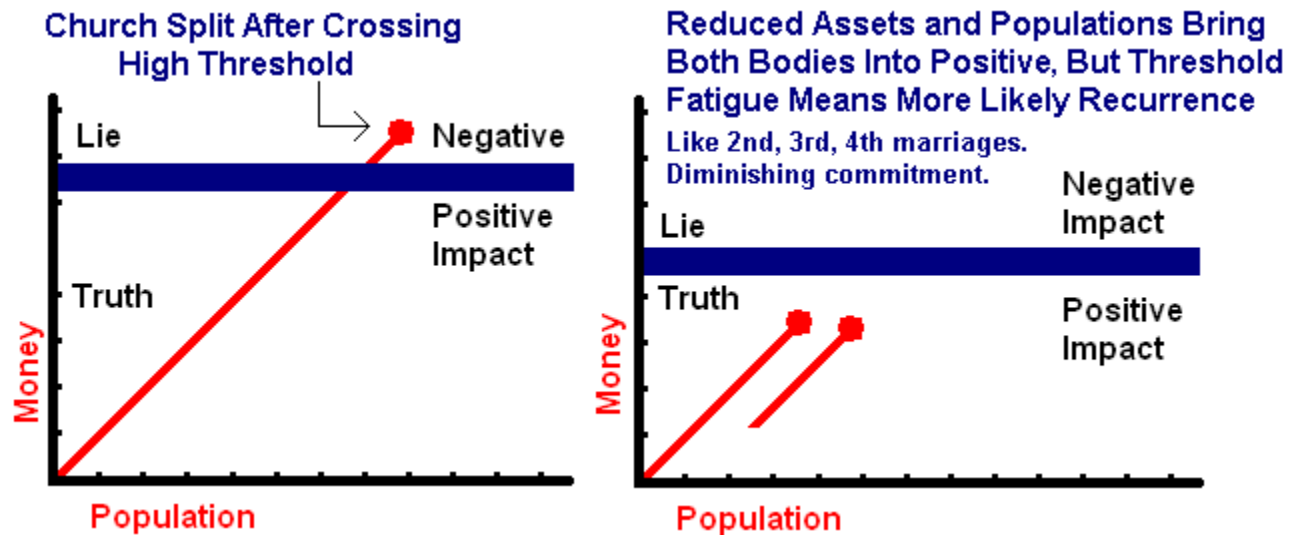


Please don't take this to mean that this is what God wants! Far from it, these are all Man-made constructs that are inherently dangerous and innately un-Holy. Even the Judeo-Christian Democracy (or Representative Republic) has proven to work only by degrees and with lots of peaks and valleys along the way. It's nowhere near as linear as the over-simplified graph might suggest. It advocated slavery, welfare, racism, imperialism, manifest destiny and many others. (Many believe that American government has, for some time now, accumulated too much money and caused more harm than good. But that's not really our fight here.)

Again, the burden of proof should be squarely on Government to prove that it is still consistent with "We The People" and a concern for the rights of the citizenry. But, then, it's a flawed Man-made system and shouldn't be trusted anyway.

Conclusions

Between these Axioms you can chart the rise and fall of every government, every ministry, every man of God that fell, every future danger predicted in the Biblical prophecies. If an organization can identify that line before it gets to it, or feel it at the very early stages and act on it, there's a chance it can keep it's identity by addressing the issues quickly enough. Once an organization passes up and over that line, it will most likely result in painful division and much suffering. Or a long nasty lingering as it turns into something completely dangerous.

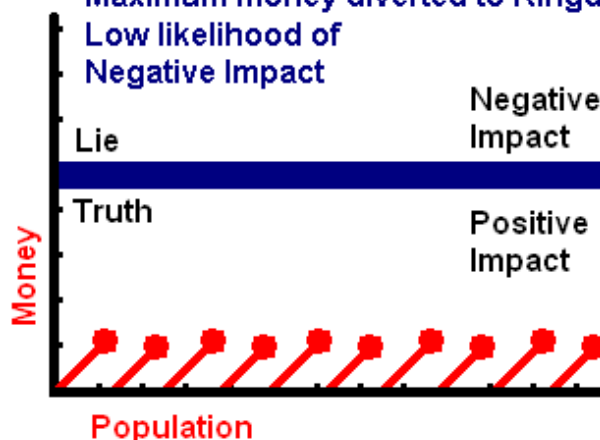


Here we see a church cross the threshold and it responds to the dissonance by splitting. Note that not all members are recovered. Some disappear, never to be seen again until the Day of Judgement, when we'll have to stand before God and accept responsibility for the kind of role models we were and take our punishment for the sheep that were lost while in our care. Both bodies from this split are now in even greater danger as they have begun a habit of dissension and division that will likely stunt the growth of their current efforts. Satan chuckles smugly.

One possible solution is the independent Self-Replicating House Church. These work because they simulate poverty. Or rather, they could be seen as the beginning stages of the Mega Church, but by their constant multiplication rather than consolidation, were never allowed to progress near the danger zone. Sort of like filling an ice cube tray where as each pocket fills it overflows and fills another. Bite sized ice chunks with their own compact lives and purpose - rather than one giant glacier with massive inertia. These are the model of the Chinese House Church movement. One other advantage is that they are very difficult to stomp out if persecution should begin. They can meet anywhere, be formed and reformed on demand and don't need formal leadership because many have been trained and can assume leadership. (This is also a model used effectively throughout history by many groups - with a wide varieties of motives. And has proven to be by far the most difficult to eliminate.)

Self-Replicating House Church

Small populations, but no overhead.
 Maximum money diverted to Kingdom
 Low likelihood of
 Negative Impact

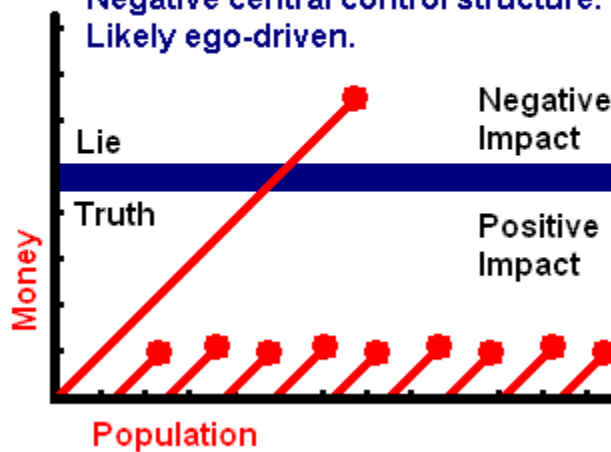


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One spin off that looks similar but isn't is the Centrally Controlled Cell Church. An example of this would be David Yonggi Cho's church where it looks like lots of independent cells, but they are really offshoots of a massive central church and are all VERY efficiently and tightly controlled and taxed. This is a difficult one because it's a great temptation for a big church to start cell groups as a way to multiply its reach without adding infrastructure. This should be seen as dangerous because they are not truly independent - not separate ice cubes capable of a life of their own. They are splinters off of the glacier and still owe their allegiance to it. They are tightly controlled specifically so that they WILL NOT spin off and become independent. That would diminish the power, money, and influence of the central control structure.

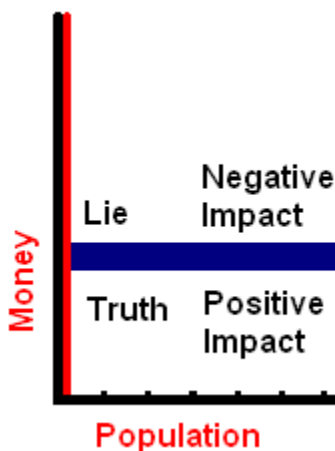
Centrally Controlled Cell Church

Deceptive nature. Positive Cells.
Negative central control structure.
Likely ego-driven.



Are you getting it? This isn't necessarily about just the macro view. It applies down to families, teams, classrooms.

You see, big populations aren't required, the Axiom works even with the individual. Say a person writes a best selling book, wins the lottery, inherits big money, finds a copy of the Declaration of Independence in their attic, records a hit record, whatever.



If they don't accurately assess the dangers of their own nature, put systems in place to constrain and restrain the temptations and channel the blessing to do God's work, the dangers to themselves and others from having a massive windfall are enormous. The lie begins with, "I've waited a long time for this. Spending it on me won't hurt anybody. I earned it by picking the right Lotto numbers." And as groupies and salesmen start to accumulate, it quickly becomes, "They love me! I must be a great guy! I deserve this! God must want me to have that new Ferrari." Before you know it, it's "I'm indestructible! I'm practically a god." Then, late one night at a strip bar it becomes, "I AM God! I can do anything!" Then they die tragically.

Of course, it doesn't always happen like that. Sometimes they live long happy lives full of reward and enjoyment, completely full and content in themselves, wanting for nothing. God says to enjoy it because that's all the reward there is. Then they die and get to report to Jesus what they did with all the blessings they were given.

Either way, you can see why Jesus suggested that it was EXTREMELY difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. There is a massive amount of inertia and temptation to overcome when big piles of cash are laying around.

Think you can deny the undeniable? Let's hear it.

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"Undeniable Axioms" References

1. 2 Thes. 2:3
2. Matt. 24:24
3. 1 Sam. 9:20
4. Rev. 20:1-6
5. Rev. 20:4,6
6. Heb. 13:17
7. Matt. 23:9
8. Psalm 119:160
9. Rom.3:23
10. Rom.8:3
11. Rom.7:13
12. Matt. 5:13, Isaiah 58
13. Rom.8:12-14
14. Gal. 1:10-12
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16. Isaiah 50:6
17. John 17:17
18. 1 Tim. 6:10
19. Col. 3:1-2
20. Matt.26:14-16
21. Acts 5:1-11
22. Rev. 3:17-18
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27. Matt. 24:16
28. Matt. 19:24

"Axiom" :

- 1 : a maxim widely accepted on its intrinsic merit
 - 2 : a statement accepted as true as the basis for argument or inference
 - 3 : an established rule or principle or a self-evident truth
- (Websters New World Dictionary)

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