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Editorial

Almost weekly now it seems we hear of nations in social and political turmoil. This is as much true of the West where nations are passing through profound changes as they move into a post-modernist era, as it is of those in the former Communist bloc or of younger nations in Africa or indeed anywhere else in the world. It also appears to be the case that countries which have a rich history of successful Christian missions are as much subject to instability and uncertainty about the future as others.

In these circumstances, evangelical political and community leaders (as well as pastors and church members in general) are faced with the enormous challenge of developing a biblical vision and perspective that will serve this and future generations. Christians in public life often say they do not receive much help from their churches on matters of great importance and consequence which face them every day. Certainly pietistic and excessively church-centred theologies and praxis that are so common do not offer much to Christian nation builders. Furthermore, it is not easy to see how a biblicistic faith would be very successful at transferring the obviously political and national theology of the Old Testament into the contemporary world; even the New Testament has its own socio-political context that requires careful understanding before it can be applied to the 21st century.

So we present a set of articles from theoreticians and practitioners that will give some help in the complex yet urgent task before us. We turn first to Europe where Peter Kuzmic of Croatia speaks from his own intense experience in the Balkans with an urgent challenge for positive Christian witness in the public arena, and to the German Evangelical Alliance with a brief statement on the importance of participatory democracy. Then we move to Jun Vencer, who has a global view of national transformation informed not only from his perspective as International Director of the World Evangelical Fellowship but also from personal involvement in the process in his native scene, the Republic of the Philippines. We conclude with two reflective articles from Australia and Canada; in the first, Gordon Preece shows how it is possible for the people of God to have a public faith, while Jonathan Chaplin points to ways of developing a Christian political philosophy that will carry Christian witness authentically and effectively into the practical world of national life.

David Parker, Editor.

An Evangelical Looks at Nationalism and Nation Building

Peter Kuzmic

What is my nationality? I am a native Slovenian. I spent two years studying in Serbia and stayed two years in Bosnia. Then I moved to Croatia. All of this was in former Yugoslavia, where former citizens now fight for 'ethnic purity'. I met my Croatian wife, Vlasta, in Germany, where she went from Serbia—although her father is half German and

her mother is fully Czech. When people ask me, 'Who are you actually?' I frequently answer in the words of the poet Robert Frost, 'I am not confused; I am just well mixed!'

That, of course, is an answer for those who don't share our biblical faith. But my primary and overarching identity is with the Kingdom of God, and with its incarnational expression in the international community of the redeemed, represented at this General Assembly of the World Evangelical Fellowship. We are gathered here as ambassadors of God's kingdom, in which 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Gal. 3:28).

My family and I still relive the horror of one night at our Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek—a town next on the list to be destroyed during the ethnic war. Our students came from more than fifteen different nationalities, including those now fighting each other.

As shells started exploding, I was persuaded to evacuate my children. That horrible night we were almost killed while running across the street to the basement of our neighbour. Thunder and lightning mixed with flying objects; the shaking earth threw us to the grounds where only a wall saved our lives. My youngest daughter, whom I was carrying, was so traumatized that six years later she still wakes us up every night.

In my last sermon before we fled, I preached to my multi-ethnic congregation about the unity we have in Christ, our Peace and Reconciler (Ephesians 2). Jesus had 'made the two one' by destroying on the cross the barrier of enmity. He would make even the Serbs and the Croats one if they would respond to his love. In God's redemption there is no room for hating the enemy. The wisdom of the reconciling power of the cross is that God actually killed the enmity.

When government leaders and international agencies invite me to participate in reconciliation, I face a dilemma. As Christians, we cannot speak about reconciliation without speaking of the cross. How do we translate these central Christian concepts to those for whom 'the message of the cross is foolishness' (2 Cor. 1:18)?

On that Sunday morning when I spoke on Ephesians 2, air sirens suddenly warned of an impending attack. 'Run for the basements!' people screamed. But to reach the basement they would first have to run out on the street—the most dangerous place to be.

I persuaded the people to stay and pray, trusting Christ who is our Peace. In that solemn assembly we all felt a holy atmosphere as we prayed. I opened my eyes and became a wondering observer of the presence of the Kingdom of God. I saw several Croatian families embracing Serbian families—unimaginable in Croatia! I saw a Hungarian family embracing a Serbian family, although at that time many Hungarians were fleeing.

Others were asking forgiveness on behalf of their ethnic groups, although they had personally done no wrong. Tears of repentance and joy accompanied the reconciliation. The noise of artillery fire and falling bombs could not overcome my doxology: 'Oh Lord, outside they hate each other and kill each other', I cried. 'In this place they love and affirm each other. In the world there is revenge; in your body there is forgiveness and reconciliation. Thank you for the cross!'

THREE WAVES OF NATIONALISM GIVING BIRTH TO MODERN NATION-STATES

Nationalism, nations, and nation-states developed in three major waves of nationalism which irrevocably changed the political configuration of the modern world.

1. The first wave came with the upsurge of nationalism in Europe during the 19th century, when the principle of national self-determination became a kind of ideal public

law. It was an expression of developing democracy, which ran contrary to multi-national monarchies. It arose out of earlier struggles of the first nation-states (e.g. France, England, and Spain) against the universalism of medieval Christendom. Kings claimed to he emperors, appealing to the growing national consciousness of their population in their struggles for emancipation from both emperor and pope. The Protestant Reformation significantly contributed to the shaping of this national consciousness, with its liberating impulses. The compromise reached at the Religious Peace of Augsburg (1555), with its famous formula '*cuius regio*, *eius religio*', authorized the princes to decide what should he the religion of their fiefdom—but in fact allowed them to impose their own religion.

Today in some post-communist nations there are serious attempts to impose the same obsolete and anti-democratic territorial principle upon entire populations. Regrettably, people whose religious liberty they aim to restrict have only recently been liberated from totalitarian regimes which tried to impose atheism as a substitute secular religion.

2. The second wave of nationalism came after World War II with the break-up of the colonial empires, giving birth to numerous nation-states in 'the Un-aligned World'. Rupert Emerson summarized succinctly these epoch-making changes of the geopolitical map in his famous book From Empire to Nation, 'Empires have fallen on evil days and nations have risen to take their place.'[1] In the fifties and sixties, the resurgence of nationalism was synonymous with anti-colonialism and was in most cases a legitimate expression of a longing for freedom and national selfhood. This awakening of people to their dignity and liberty was in many ways a fruit of the missionary work of sowing and nurturing biblical ideals and values.

We must avoid interpreting nationalism from western experience and recognize the moral and spiritual justification of nation-building movements within the larger dynamics of history. Nationalist movements that led the revolt against (western) colonial domination, with all of their idiosyncrasies and subsequent failures, do nevertheless witness to the human search for freedom, dignity, and equality. As a result, in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East many nations have arisen from the ashes of the turbulence of post-colonial searching for nationhood. As we in WEF celebrate over 150 years of evangelical cooperation, let us also celebrate the great accomplishments of mission and the liberty of freedom-loving nations during this significant period of church growth.

3. At this Assembly we also celebrate the more recent dramatic arrival of freedom in the former communist nations of Europe. This third wave of nationalist resurgence is related to the collapse of communism and dismantling of the totalitarian socialist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. If nationalism of the fifties and sixties is interpreted within the context of anti-colonialism, the explosion of nationalism in the late eighties and early nineties must be at least partially credited with the liberating struggles of nations/nationalities against communism. It is less than a decade now since twenty-one new nation-states have arisen from the ashes of communism.

I joke with my students that the most important geographical designation of this era and area is 'former': Former Soviet Union, former Czechoslovakia, former East Germany, former Yugoslavia, etc. I discourage people from going into the map-printing business at the present time! Look at the example of Poland: in less than a couple of years it has lost all of its nominal neighbours. From Baltics to Balkans, studying geography is a rather confusing task.

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[1] Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1960), p. 3.

SOCIETIES IN A PAINFUL THREE-FOLD TRANSITION

The tearing down of the Berlin Wall and its symbolism brought about an understandable euphoria and international celebration of all freedom-loving people. Evangelical Christians were especially jubilant, for now we could freely evangelize, plant new churches, print Christian literature, use media for the proclamation of the gospel, and train for ministry. Our nations were ready for the harvest since communism created a religious vacuum and hunger, which led to a large-scale search for spiritual realities.

Unprecedented freedom made it possible for thousands of short and long-term missionaries, religious tourists, and variously motivated but ill-prepared spiritual adventurers from the West to rush into the vacuum. This was at times done in the best fashion of unrestrained competitive capitalism, bewildering their uninstructed hosts and ignoring the national churches. At the time, I felt compelled to warn of the resulting confusion. The freedom of the time was transitory, since it was due more to anarchy than design. Today we witness the restraining and restrictive consequence of the new design(s) as well as some of the backlash and bitter fruit of lack of unity, complementarity, and cooperation among the missionary enterprise in the immediate post-communist era.

East European nations are presently going through a very painful three-fold transition, marked by insecurity, societal pessimism and growing tensions causing conflict and violence and at times threatening the viability of a free and democratic future.

POLITICAL TRANSITION

Moving away from one party totalitarian regimes toward multi-party parliamentary democracies is a long and complex process. In many of these countries democratic traditions and instruments were nonexistent. The communist party elites were the only privileged class, trained in the use and abuse of political power. Many of these leaders, when they read the writing on the wall, changed 'from red to pink' to stay in power— while the people did not know the ABCs of democracy. The old mindset and its operative principles have hindered the free development of yearnings for 'liberty and justice for all'. Speaking at a university commencement in the initial stages of democratic change, I used the title, 'Perestroika is not enough—Metanoia is needed.'

ECONOMIC TRANSITION

The exchange of the centrally planned 'command economies' for a 'free' (or mixed) market economy is not a simple transaction nor can it be accomplished by decree. This transition has been painful due to a number of structural and subjective reasons. Communism killed or at least seriously stifled individual creativity and initiative, two basic human prerequisites for a flourishing free-market economy. At the same time, there was reluctance in radical restructuring and implementation of sound economic and fiscal policies. In some places huge, paralyzing bureaucracies were not dismantled in time, and state-owned companies and subsidized industries were not privatized in a timely and responsible way. A major social handicap was fear of social unrest, due to unemployment, providing dangerous opportunities for political manipulation or even military intervention.

Meanwhile, economic crime and anarchy were on the rise amidst the growing gap between the poorer masses and a privileged minority. During my several visits to post-communist Moscow, my Russian friends never failed to inform me that their city was

ruled by the Mafia. No wonder that some people, tired of anarchy and poverty, express nostalgia for the old better-ordered and more equitable socialist times.

RELIGIOUS TRANSITION

Under communism, socially and psychologically, atheism functioned as a secular substitute religion. It was state-promoted and state-supported 'national irreligion'. Wherever communists came to power they claimed monopoly, not only on power but also on truth. They have abused power and distorted truth in order to promote and preserve their cause, Their ultimate goal was not only a classless society, but also a religionless society. They considered all religion, especially Christianity, to be a dangerous remnant of the old social order and a pre-scientific, superstitious, irrational, obscurantist, and totally irrelevant—if not harmful—way of thinking and living.

With the collapse of communism, whatever communism had suppressed began exploding. The collapse of communism led to what appear to be contradictory phenomena—namely, dramatic new gains for liberal democracy and a resurgence of nationalism. Nationalism and religion are two prime examples of the 'explosion of the suppressed', of particular relevance to evangelical identity and ministry. Communists suppressed nationalism because it stood in the way of proletarian internationalism. They suppressed religion because it hindered building scientifically based and ideologically controlled atheistic societies. According to their deterministic understanding of history, religion was to wither away and the church was to disappear. They were more than willing to speed up that process by either barely tolerating or brutally persecuting believers and their communities.

Transition to free democratic societies with full religious liberties did not take place naturally because of the simultaneous explosion of nationalism and religion. The old national churches, Orthodox and Roman Catholic, and Islamic communities (in places like Albania, Bosnia, and Central Asia) were positioning themselves to reclaim monopoly on the religious life of their nations. The powerful synthesis of nationality, religion, and culture once again became the ruling paradigm of social existence and public image. Its public manifestations are very dangerous, as they threaten to derail the democratic processes and hinder the development of genuinely free pluralist societies.

The popular talk now is that if you are Russian (or Bulgarian or Serbian or ...) you are Orthodox. If you are Polish, Slovak, or Croatian you are Catholic. If you are anything else you are not a good patriot and cannot be fully trusted because of divided loyalties. Protestantism generally and Evangelicalism specifically are considered foreign intrusions, a threat to national and religious identity and unity of the people, thus impeding the process of nation-building.

In some of these new nation-states where bonafide citizenship and public identity are defined along ethno-religious lines, both democracy and freedom of religion remain vulnerable. Special legislation regulating religious affairs, and discriminating practice of both secular and religious authorities, are indicative of a fundamental lack of understanding of the principle of separation of church and state guaranteeing the life and ministry of a 'free church in a free society'.

Clergy and militant fanatics among the laity frequently work together in opposition to Protestant evangelicals, whom they view as a foreign intrusion and as disruptive sectarians involved in dangerous proselytizing and unpatriotic activities. Violent clashes, legal and illegal discrimination, and cultural marginalization are not excluded. Only a few weeks ago we read a report of Vasile Talos, president of the Baptist Union of Romania, about a violent attack on a group of Baptists on their way to church, instigated by two

orthodox priests. Six years ago, I wrote in the compendium, *Toward the 21st Century in Christian Mission*: 'It is not inconceivable that some leaders of religious minorities (evangelical and other eastern) could become the new "dissidents" of the post-communist era in Eastern Europe.'

THE GOSPEL IN THE WORLD OF ETHNIC VIOLENCE AND NEW NATIONS

One of the most disturbing threats to peace in our time is the shift 'from totalitarianism to tribalism', issuing in conflicts rooted in national, ethnic, and religious differences. This is also one of the most complex, urgent challenges to Christian mission. From European Bosnia to African Rwanda, from North American Quebec to South-East Asian Cambodia, with numerous other countries competing to enter the index of fragmentation, inter-ethnic warfare promotes brutalities committed against fellow human beings (with the Canadian exception of anxiety minus violence). Yet both perpetrators and innocent victims carry the image of the same God.

TASKS

1. First of all, we must continue to evangelize and disciple the nations by using all legitimate means available, in full dependence on the Holy Spirit, the chief executor of the mission of Jesus. We have no option but to obey his Commission by going and making disciples of all nations (Mt. 28), thereby fulfilling his eschatologically conditioned prophecy: 'This gospel of the Kingdom of God shall be preached as a testimony to all nations, and then shall the end come' (Mt. 24:14). Many of us here can bear witness to the fact that faithful evangelization, by the very nature of the gospel, changes whole communities, lifting them socially, enabling them to become constructive and responsible nation-builders

    2. Secondly, we must recover the whole gospel and repent of all 'half-gospels' that invalidate so much of our ministry. We will do well to listen to Peter Taylor Forsyth: 'Half-gospels have no dignity and no future. Like the famous mule, they have neither pride of ancestry nor hope of posterity.' The doyen of evangelical theologians, Carl Henry, agrees: 'Half-gospels deceive and defraud, demote and degrade, and dead-end in disillusion and dishonour.'

    To be faithful to the whole gospel means, among other things, that we evangelicals as people of the Great Commission also become the people of the Great Compassion. 'Feeding the hungry, caring for the stranger and the refugee, clothing the naked, visiting the prisoner...' (Mt. 25) are as much the words of Jesus as is the command to evangelize by proclamation and teaching (Mt. 28). There is only one gospel of Jesus Christ, which is both personal and social because it has two focal points: the individual person and the kingdom of God. Jesus clearly taught and consistently practised this. We have learned in Bosnia, where over 200,000 have been killed and millions have become refugees, that at times proclamation can be counter-productive because it smacks of religious propaganda and senseless proselytism. We must practise Christian love.

CONCLUSION

We must give to Caesar that which belongs to Caesar, and give to God that which belongs to God. But let us remember that God defines what belongs to Caesar—not vice versa. 'Fear God; honour the emperor' (1 Peter 2) is the priority of the command. Above all we must fear God, for only then can we properly honour the state. Faithfulness to God must

always be given priority over loyalty to our nation. When that priority cannot be kept, when our nation demands uncritical allegiance, we will respond like the early disciples with the uncompromising stand: 'We must obey God rather than man.'

Let us go back to our nations as carriers of hope and biblically founded faith. To quote St. Augustine, 'Hope has two daughters: anger and courage—anger with the way things are, and courage to change them.'

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'Give Democracy What It is Entitled to'
Statement of the German Evangelical Alliance concerning the issue of political responsibility of Evangelicals (Stuttgart, June 6, 1994)

Keywords: Democracy, Evangelical Alliance, voting, hope;

In its past few meetings The Board of Directors of the German Evangelical Alliance dealt with the question, if and to what extent the German Evangelical Alliance should take public responsibility. These meetings resulted in the following statement of conviction:

We live in a democratic society in which every citizen is called to participate in the shaping of political life. The far-reaching possibilities of constructive-critical accompaniment and involvement which exist in a democratic state bound to a legal constitution are a gift and, at the same time, a challenge for us. The biblical testimony concerning the church of Jesus Christ as 'salt of the earth' and 'light of the world' places us unavoidably, societally speaking, within the realm of co-responsibility. The possibilities of our community for democratic involvement are no matter of purely private choice. For Christians there are, rather, challenges to practical obedience in our lives as disciples of Jesus. We thereby invite others to reflect anew with us about what actualizing the command of Jesus means under today's conditions; namely, to give democracy what it is entitled to and God what is his (cf. Mt. 22:21).

It is especially necessary in an age of increasing resignation and reluctance toward political involvement that Christians should be bearers of hope. By their tie to God's Word they have the freedom, moreover, to go against the general trend and to take responsibility. We, therefore, encourage Christians to take over public tasks at the local

level, for example, in community help, in schools, at the university, and at the workplace. We also encourage fellow Christians who are gifted in these areas, and support them in direct political involvement in parties and parliaments.

A look back on the first 50 years of the history of the Evangelical Alliance in Europe (in the second half of the 19th century) shows that taking public responsibility was one of the major emphases of tasks undertaken. Some of the issues dealt with then were, for example, campaigns against genocide, actions to outlaw and abolish slavery, protest against impoverishment brought about by economic exploitation, involvement in the struggle for complete freedom of religion and conscience, and for the recognition by society and the established churches of independent 'free' churches.

The experiences of the Evangelical Alliance in political involvement historically encourage us not just to put our hope in short-term successes, but to mention it anew as something which must always be recognized. Political involvement is necessary even today, then, if God's laws are clearly and directly affected. This concerns, especially, the following areas:

1. Human dignity
2. Freedom of religion and conscience
3. Protection of the unborn
4. Support of marriage and family
5. Responsibility for the life of future generations
6. Questions of medical ethics, such as euthanasia, gene technology, etc.
7. Peace and social justice
8. Environmental protection

We ask Christians in our country to give prime importance to their voting decisions based upon how the candidates themselves voted in these elementary questions of human existence. Last, but not least, we especially remember the command given to all Christians to pray for those in positions of responsibility in politics and society.

QUESTIONS ON BIBLICAL TEXTS

'Political Involvement and Responsibility of the Christian'

1. What is the significance of the fact that God himself is King of Israel for government and world responsibility in the Old Testament (cf. 1 Sam. 8:1–8)?

2. On the other hand, how does Jesus view the Roman government (cf. Mt. 22:15–22)?

3. Why does Jesus abstain from taking worldly power? What kind of a kingdom does he rule over (cf. Jn. 18:33–37)?

4. What is the difference, respective to salvation history, between the kingdom of God in the Old Testament and the distinction between worldly kingdoms and the kingdom of God in the New Testament (cf. the texts and answers to questions 1–3)?

5. According to Paul, what important task does government have (cf. Rom. 13:1–7)?

6. Where are the boundaries of loyalty toward the state and its laws (cf. Acts 5:25–29)?

7. Where do demonic dangers of governmental power lie (cf. Rev. 13:1–10)?

8. Why does Jesus help to combat hunger, yet refuse to become a king who can supply people with bread (cf. Jn. 6:1–5)?

9. How can love for one's neighbour and God's love be shown, and how do they relate to one another (cf. Luke 10:25–42)?

10. How effective was the social involvement of Christians in the ancient society of slave owners (cf. Philemon 8–20)?

11. What are the chances for the realization of a kingdom of peace on earth? Who will bring about this kingdom of peace and who will not (cf. Isa. 11:1–12 and Rev. 20:1–6 and in contrast to this, Rev. 13:1–10)?

Churches Transforming the Nations: The DNA[1] Vision

Jun Vencer

Keywords: Discipling, social, privatised, justice, transformation, evangelize, community, economic development, relief, peace, globalization, kingdom of God;

> *'Say to the nations, The Lord reigns ....' (Ps. 96:10)*
> *' ... make disciples of all the nations ....' (Mt. 28:19)*
> *'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Lord, and of his Christ ....' (Rev. 11:15)*

I. INTRODUCTION

Jesus Christ commands his church to '*make disciples of all the nations*' (Mt. 28:19). In carrying out this commission, one may ask: What will a discipled nation look like? A clue to the answer can be found in his very commission statement: '... teaching them to observe all that I commanded you'. His teachings, contained in the Old and New Testaments, sum up the 'whole purpose of God' (Acts 20:27). Of course this purpose is centred on the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, his life and mission. The question, then, may be rephrased: If Jesus is Lord of a community or nation, what will that nation look like?

This question, I submit, is of critical importance. It moves the gospel beyond the private claims of a highly individualistic evangelical culture and liberates it to touch people and nations. It also provides a legitimizing and integrating vision for the ministries of God's people. It ensures that social ethics in the present time is responsive to the vision of God's future. It makes faith in Christ a living and even subversive leaven for the transformation of a dying world into life.

In the commission of our Lord, the preliminary issues are: what does discipleship mean, and what does the nation include? A disciple is a student of a teacher or a follower

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[1] DNA is an acronym for 'Discipling the Nations'. It can be misunderstood for DNA or *deoxyribonucleic acid* which is an essential component of all living matter and a basic material in the chromosomes of the cell nucleus. It contains the genetic code and transmits the hereditary pattern. I thought that the definition can be said of the vision as well. Christ is the essence of life and the vision is one that needs transmission from one generation to another until the eschaton.

The question is raised about the feasibility of discipling the nations. Discipling people, yes. After all, a disciple is a follower of Jesus and it requires a prior repentance and faith. The use of the term follows the biblical phrase in Matthew 28:19. In this paper, it simply means a nation whose culture and people enjoy basically the values of the Kingdom of God. Moreover, it is a goal when the reign of God becomes a realm in the eschaton.

of a master. Disciples endeavour to become like their teacher and master. Paul describes discipleship in his letter to the Christians in Corinth: 'Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ' (1 Cor. 11:1; 4:16; cf. Philp. 3:17). Of course, in Christian context, such following and becoming requires a prior personal relationship with Christ Jesus through repentant faith in him as Saviour and Lord.

As to the other issue, the word nation (Gk. *ethne*) refers to tribes or to people groups (cf. Rev. 7:9). It is the regular word in Scriptures used for Gentiles. Gentiles were non-Jews. 'In both Greek and Hebrews', says John H. Skelton, 'the plural "nations" was used of the nations of the unbelieving world, of pagans and of Gentiles ....'[2] But is the word consistently used for Gentiles and therefore exclusive of Israel? The Bible does not warrant such a conclusion. New Testament scholar R.T. France points out that the phrase 'all nations' has been used previously to Matthew 28:19 in 24:9, and 14:25, 32 in the context which probably includes Israel in 'the nations'. Daniel 7:14 does not exclude Israel from the dominion of the Son of Man.[3]

I am not convinced that 'nation' is to be limited to tribes and tongues or to people groups. If Israel is not excluded from the term nation, then it is hard to believe that the reference is just to the Jewish people without including in the understanding its culture, values and socio-political structures. This thought must be brought to the meaning of every nation.

'Nation' as defined by a U.S. Supreme Court ruling (Montoya v. U.S.) is 'a people ... existing in the form of organized jural society, usually inhabiting a distinct portion of the earth, speaking the same language, using the same customs, possessing historic continuity, and distinguished from all other like groups by their racial origin and characteristics, and generally, but not necessarily, living under the same government and sovereignty'[4] In Political Law, the idea of nation includes: territory, sovereignty, people, government. As a *jural* body it is treated as a person that can act and be held responsible for such act.

Therefore a nation acting in autonomy can reject God or deny any accountability to him. In the Old Testament, when the nations or the nation of Israel acted in rebellion against God, they were scattered or destroyed in judgement. For when God judged nations, he did not only judge the people. The records of the judgement of Sodom and Gomorrah says, 'Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord of heaven, and he overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground' (Gen. 19:23).

This was the same picture when Joshua conquered Jericho: 'And they utterly destroyed everything in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep and donkey' (Jos. 6:21). In fact God said, 'Cursed before the Lord is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his first-born he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates' (Jos. 6:26). When God judged mankind because 'every intent of the thoughts of his heart is evil continually' (Gen. 6:5), he said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things to the birds of the sky' (Gen. 6:7).

I submit then that 'to disciple the nations' has a more expanded content than just people. This is suggested in the Mission Statement of the World Evangelical Fellowship:

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[2] John K. Skelton, Nation, Baker's *Dictionary of Theology*, Everett F. Harrison, editor-in-chief (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975), p. 371.

[3] R. T. France, Matthew: *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1988) p. 414.

[4] *Black's Law Dictionary*, sixth edition (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Co., 1990) p. 1024.

to serve churches and Christian organizations to disciple their communities and countries for Christ. In this article, country, nation or state are understood synonymously. The gospel is to be preached to every person, to the whole inhabited earth. But the preaching is to people who live in their communities with their structures, relationships, values and culture. The gospel is to transform not just sinful people but also unjust structures. For if Jesus is Lord, then such a fact challenges every form of idolatry and earthly power. The very declaration demands transformation of all areas of life and community or country because the church does not live in a sociopolitical vacuum.

This neglect of geopolitics in the life of the church is tragic. Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann explains this anomaly convincingly:

> Over the long haul of the Enlightenment, Western Christianity has been progressively privatized in terms of individuals, families, and domestic communities. By and large, out of bewilderment and embarrassment, the ecclesial communities have forgotten how to speak about national and international matters, except in times of war to mobilize God's support for the 'war effort.' The inevitable outcome of this privatization is to relinquish geopolitics to practical, technical analysis, as Joseph Stalin's question, 'How many divisions has the Pope?' That is, *if the theological dimension drops out of international purview, and with it any credible, critical moral dimension, then the world becomes one in which might makes right.* To some extent, that is what happened among us, because Yahwistic rhetoric in this arena of life strikes any modern person as mindless supernaturalism.[5]

Let me also point out that God, in freedom, has a special concern for the nations of the world. From the Genesis genealogy, we find that the entire world is in covenant with God (Gen. 9:8–17), that the covenant of God with Noah and his progenitors includes the nations and therefore all nations are bound together to live under the life-giving covenant and all are recipients of God's blessings for life. But the nations insisted on their autonomy, rejected God and refused his terms of blessings. For this reason they were scattered and 'the coherence and unity of mankind was irreversibly violated'[6] (Gen. 9:8). Nevertheless, the nations are subjects of God's attention.

Will they have a future? It is for this that Israel's unsolicited testimony offers the nations an opportunity to see God in the life of Israel, that they may know him, experience his saving power, and join Israel in thanksgiving and praise (Ps. 117:3). The church, acting in continuity with Israel's mission, has the same duty to the nations, as noted in the statement in the Sermon on the Mount: '… that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven' (Mt. 5:16). The Psalmist says that 'All the nations you have made shall come and bow down before you' (86:9, 10). His desire is that 'a whole earth and all its peoples shall now gladly affirm Yahweh's sovereignty and gratefully receive from Yahweh all the blessings of a rightly governed creation'.[7]

In the Old Testament, Yahweh's concern was not limited to Israel, nor did Israel have a monopoly of Yahweh. 'Yahweh' according to Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann 'has Yahweh's own life to live, and it will not be monopolized by Israel.'[8] Yahweh is the Lord of the nations as well (Ps. 96:10). This is very important because God has a special relationship with and passion for Israel. Paul does not deny this sovereign

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[5] Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997) p. 525.

[6] Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 494.

[7] Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 501.

[8] Ibid.

choice of grace for Israel ([Rom. 11](#)). But what needs reflection and challenge is that in passages such as [Amos 9:7](#) 'Israel's monopoly on Yahweh is broken.'[9] The liberation of Israel from Egypt through the exodus was paralleled by God's liberation of Israel's most serious enemies such as the Philistines from Capthor and the Arameans from Kir. Moreover, racist bias is rejected as well as ethnocentrism. Again, this is important in the modern world's understanding of nations which is increasingly becoming multi-racial.

Many years ago, the Philippines was known as the only Christian nation in Asia. Yet the nation was inclusive of Filipinos who are Christians, Muslims, Tribal animists, Hindus and Buddhists. While it meant that the majority of the citizens profess Christianity, it also meant that its culture, values, and laws are primarily based on Judeo-Christian values. This is the same understanding of the so-called Christian west. A similar understanding is found in the concept of Christian civilization. The point has relevance to the concept of discipling a nation.

Recently, the *Financial Times* published an article, 'Can Putin clean up?'. It described Russia saying that a 'sense of moral degradation, of what Russians call *besperedel*, or lawlessness, pervades almost every aspect of life in modern Russia ....' Russia has degenerated into a country 'where bribes are paid more routinely than taxes ....'. Responding to such a situation, Valery Rudnyev, chair of the Moscow Club of Lawyers, said: 'Russia can only develop a truly law-based state if it roots its legislation in the moral values of its Christian, Muslim and Jewish population and conforms to broader conceptions of human rights.'[10] Malaysia is a parallel example in which the basic foundation of government is based on Islam although it presents itself as a united Malaysia that is multi-racial and with a liberal and tolerant policy on religion.[11]

The church should live its life and offer a testimony that 'God so loved the world ...' ([Jn. 3:16](#))—the world of nations. In doing so, they may joyfully hope for *the exciting possibility that every nation can, by acknowledging him as sovereign and by ordering their lives according to his Law (cf. [Is. 2:3](#)), be partners of God* in preserving creation and fulfilling 'the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature ....' ([Gen. 9:16](#)). Beyond all these, may all humanity be persuaded 'to become a Christian' ([Acts 26:28](#)).

II. STANDARD FOR TRANSFORMATION

I go back again to the question: What would a discipled nation look like? If the command is given primarily to the church of Jesus Christ, then, inescapably, the church provides the key to the answer. For the church is God's 'eschatological covenant community'.[12] As a community it has covenanted to live by the Law of God under the rule of Christ, the Head of the church ([Eph. 1:22](#)). The church is under God's rule or reign. In the context of divine reign, one needs to examine closely the biblical teaching about the kingdom of God. For the church is both *ekklesia* (an assembly) and *baileia* (kingdom or God's rule). The church as the community of the kingdom is both the referent and the agency for discipling the nation. This being the case, the question may be restated: What are the indicators of the presence of the kingdom in church and in the nation?

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[9] Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 520.

[10] *FT Weekend* (March 18/19, 2000) I.

[11] Mahathir Mohamad, Vision 2020.

[12] Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology For The Community Of God* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman and Holman, 1994) p. 604.

While the Bible offers no complete description of the kingdom, it remains its essential vision and hope. The church has paid lip service to it. Peter Wagner, perhaps the best-known leader in the worldwide 'church growth' movement, also refers to the unanimous opinion of modern scholarship that the kingdom of God was the message of Jesus. Then he adds,

> I cannot help wondering out loud why I haven't heard more about it in thirty years I have been a Christian. I certainly read about it enough in the Bible ….But I honestly can't remember any pastor whose ministry I have been under actually preaching a sermon on the Kingdom of God. As I rummage through my own sermon barrel, I now realize that I myself have never preached a sermon on it. Where has the Kingdom been?[13]

Dr. I. Howard Marshall of the University of Aberdeen has commented,

> During the past sixteen years I can recollect only two occasions on which I have heard sermons specifically devoted to the theme of the Kingdom of God ….I find this silence rather surprising because it is universally agreed by New Testament scholars that the central theme of the teaching of Jesus was the Kingdom of God.[14]

'Any systematic conception of Christianity', Walter Rauschenbusch says, 'must be not only defective but incorrect if the idea of the Kingdom of God does not govern.'[15] The church needs to recover this vision of the kingdom and offer this hope to the nations.

The prophet Isaiah offers significant insights about the kingdom, the consummation of which is being awaited as the noonday of humanity. Isaiah chapter 9 begins with a message of gloom, despair and impending darkness. Judgement is about to come for the Northern Kingdom. The tenses in verses 1–7 are in the past indicating that 'the future is written as something which has already happened'. In fact, 'the eye of faith looks at all this but affirms that, real though it is, it is not the "real" reality… .that hope is a present reality, part of the constitution of the "now" '. The royal Messiah referred to 'is born king (cf. Mt. 2:2), actually divine. In him everything that was envisaged is embodied; he is the eschaton.'[16]

From the verses cited, a vision of a discipled nation through the kingdom can be constructed. I would like to venture this vision. In a community or country where the Lamb is the centre of life or where kingdom values are inculturated in people and institutions, that community or country would have economic sufficiency, social peace, public justice, national righteousness, and increasingly acknowledge Jesus as Sovereign.

1. Christian Influence.

For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.
Then it will come about in that day that the nations will resort to the root of Jesse
Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And his resting place will be glorious
(Is. 11:9, 10 cf. Hab. 2:14).

A truly discipled nation is one where Christ is Lord of all spheres. As John expressed it in regard to the world: 'The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord, and

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[13] Buzzard, *Coming Kingdom*, pp. 14–15, as quoted from C. Peter Wagner's *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981) p.2.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Gordon Harland, *Christian Faith and Society* (Alberta: The University of Calgary Press, 1988), p. 10.

[16] J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), pp. 98, 99.

of his Christ; and he will reign for ever and ever' ([Rev. 11:15](#)). Dutch prime minister, Abraham Kuyper once said of the Lordship of Christ: 'There is not one square inch of the entire creation about which Jesus Christ does no cry out, "This is mine! This belongs to me!" ' In God's own time, this glorious expectation will come to pass. The church is called upon as God's redemptive partner in realizing this vision. To disciple the nation, the local church as God's partner, should consider its duties to the nations.

To preach the gospel to every person. This means Spirit-led, systematic, and sustaining evangelistic communication at home and overseas. The *evangel* must be proclaimed in season and out of season. Christ must be offered to every person, a church planted in every community. The church must never fall into the trap of recognizing God's cosmic plan and neglecting the necessity for individual conversion without which one can not enter the kingdom (cf. [Jn. 3.3](#)). In our zeal to transform society we must not forget the *sin-analysis* of Jesus about man and society. The cross of Jesus can either be a stumbling block or a redemptive means to honour God. There is no other way to enter the kingdom nor is there any other name under heaven by which a person can be saved (cf. [Jn. 14:6](#), [Acts 4:12](#)).

To plant a viable and vital local church in every village or people group. Where Christ is, there the glory of God is also. In particular, Christ is present when two or three are gathered in his name (cf. [Mt. 18:20](#)). This is the nuclear presence of the church in a specific locality. In fact, this is the aim of evangelism—a church in every people group. We evangelize with the prayerful intent to organize churches. Our Lord himself declares his mission: 'I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it ....' ([Mt. 16:18](#)). The existence of the church as the primary agency of the Kingdom of God is essential to the task of discipling the nations.

In his definitive work on the Kingdom, Ladd advances this thesis: 'The Kingdom creates the church, works through the church, and is proclaimed in the world by the church.' Although the two are not identical they are inseparable. A tension is to be acknowledged that 'there can be no Kingdom without a church—those who have acknowledged God's rule—and there can be no church without God's kingdom.'[17] Christ is both the King of the kingdom and the Head of the church. For this reason discipling and kingdom-building should not be independent or unrelated activities.

One of the most effective strategies is promoted by the movement known as DAWN (Discipling A Whole Nation.). Its visionary founder, Dr. Jim Montgomery wrote: 'DAWN aims at mobilizing the whole body of Christ in whole countries in a determined effort to complete the Great Commission in that country by working toward the goal of providing an evangelical congregation for every village and neighborhood of every class, kind and condition of people in the whole country.'[18] 'To complete' the Commission means 'that the last practical and measurable goal has been reached toward making a disciple of that country and all the "nations" within it'.[19]

To disciple every believer to live by all the teachings of the Lord. There must be solidity or maturity among God's people. Without such strengthening of the mind and spirit, the people can be discouraged and marginalized. The Word and the Spirit of God becomes indispensable in this process. Christian obedience, however, is essential to knowing God and growing in the Sprit.

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[17] George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 119.

[18] Jim Montgomery, *Dawn 2000: 7 Million Churches To Go* (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1989), p. 12.

[19] Ibid, p. 13.

Disciples are needed to transform communities. There is danger in a Christianity that is on the right wing committed only to the salvation of souls and on the left wing only to the salvation of society—on the one hand, to save people from their spiritual death; on the other, to deliver people from poverty and injustice. The two are necessary dimensions of a truly evangelical message. Yet the two are, in many ways, disconnected from each other. Knowledge disconnects from character. Discipleship must be holistic. It must encompass the whole counsel of God ([Acts 20:27](#)). The absence of a holistic world view among believers is a tragic deficiency that has retarded the advance of the kingdom. I would urge that this world view should contain the following essential elements: God, Creation, Fall, Redemption, Church, and Vocation.

To model the Kingdom of God in their new community. If we want to have an ideal society, there must be a vital Christian witness in our society. It is not enough that we have churches planted in our cities and towns. These churches must be revived, alive, and living out their testimonies to their community. They must be the integrating centre of holistic life, a church where the blessings of the kingdom are enjoyed and shared with the community they are called to serve. 'The Christian gospel' Niebuhr says 'which transcends all particular and contemporary social situations can be preached with power only by a Church which bears its share of the burdens of immediate situations in which men are involved, burdens of establishing peace, of achieving justice, and of perfecting justice in the spirit of love. Thus is the Kingdom of God which is not of this world made relevant to every problem of the world.'[20]

The church however is not just a community. It is an eschatological community— already, though partially, experiencing in the present the reality of the kingdom that is still future. Missiologist Lesslie Newbigin referred to the church as 'the sign that points people to a reality beyond what we can see'.[21] The church is not the kingdom but it cannot be dissociated from Christ's kingdom. It is its most concrete expression and God's primary partner in redemption. It is a community where the Lord reigns.

To mediate the values of the kingdom in society through their transformational vocations. Witness to society becomes a natural consequence in the life of a believer like heat to the fire. This witness often is counter-cultural. The affirmation that 'Jesus is Lord' is an exclusive and a universal claim. This, as Newbigin explains of the early church, 'was bound eventually to clash with the *cultus publicus* of the empire. The confession ... implies a commitment to make good that confession in relation to the whole life of the world—its philosophy, its culture, and its politics no less than the personal lives of its people.'[22]

It must be recognized that the church is not always the instrument for political or social action. There are some issues that would call for a collective response. But in general, it is through its members who are actively fulfilling their vocation as lifestyle that the church must act. It is also important to recognize that the task is not just for a particular church but for the whole church and its instrumentalities (sometimes referred to as para-churches).

The transformation of people and society is the mission of Christ's people here and everywhere. The technological innovations and the globalization of the world make the task of total mobilization of churches the more feasible. Spiritual grandstanding and self-aggrandizing individualism even with Bible-laced jargon only undermines the witness of Christ before a watching world.

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[20] Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christianity and Power Politics* (Archon Books, 1969), p. 216.

[21] Lesslie Newbigin, *A Word in Season* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 63.

[22] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), p. 17.

To influence culture is not an innovation. The story of western civilization cannot be understood without the inclusion of its Christian heritage, such as the rule of law, the equality of men and women, the justice system and democracy. We need to remind ourselves that ours is not a lost cause in the midst of such overwhelming odds. The church is an eschatological reality. It was, it is, and it will be the people of God in pilgrimage to his new earth. As in the Eucharist, it speaks of its past 'in remembrance of me', it speaks of its present 'do this (now)' … proclaim the Lord's death until I come, the future.

Christianity has influenced human history. The apostle Paul can be a case study to illustrate this point. He was a man of many cultures: Hebrew by birth, raised and educated in a Greek city, and a citizen of Rome. Each of those cultures had its own ideals. Each had its own metaphor for ultimate reality. Paul was going to show people of all three cultures that they were looking at the back walls with the beam and they needed to turn and see what the beam pointed to.

The Hebrew gave the world our moral categories; the Greeks have given us our philosophical categories; the Romans have passed on to us our legal categories. For the Hebrew the great pursuit of life was symbolized by light: 'The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?' (Ps. 27:1). 'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light' (Is. 9:2). 'That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world' (Jn. 1:9). For the Hebrews light said it all.

For the Greeks, the ultimate goal was knowledge. 'You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free' (Jn. 8:32). 'I know whom I have believed ….' said the apostle Paul (2 Tim. 1:12).

For the Romans, the epitome of life was symbolized by glory. Rome was a city to which all roads led. It was not built in a day. It was the eternal city. The glory of the Roman Empire and the Caesars is proverbial.

Light, knowledge, glory. These were the ideals of the three great cultures. These were the beams of light they stared at. Writing to believers in the city of Corinth that embodied all three influences, the apostle Paul said, 'For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, [has] shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6).[23] Christ made the difference in transforming civilizations. In union with him, we are tasked to do the same.

A few years ago in Davao City in the Philippines in a coastal slum area where many Muslim dwellers live, a Christian lady worked with PHILRADS (the relief and development arm of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches) in a church-based community Project. She was Evelyn Fernandez and was locally known as the Mother Theresa of Davao—for good reasons. She cared for the Muslim poor so effectively that whenever a Muslim was in need, they would rather go to her than elsewhere. This is a silent witness, yet so important for national transformation when multiplied countless times in the nation.

For even in a nation that is prosperous and has approximated justice in practice, it does not necessarily mean that a good society has been achieved. As Glen Tinder says, 'Life can be culturally vulgar, morally degraded, and spiritually vacuous even under conditions of substantive justice.' The fact is that even in societies where substantive justice is found or abounds, as in North America, it has also created a spiritual void and a moral morass that tend to negate the avowed goal of a good life and society. Therefore, we must take a look at another option, to go beyond simply public advocacy and to move into the heart of the issue itself.

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[23] Ravi Zacharias, *The Cries Of The Heart* (Waco: Word, 1998), pp. 20, 21.

We need the kind of Christian influence that stems from the believers' life of worship in their local churches. The exodus reminds us that the liberation of the Israelites was to enable them to worship God (Ex. 5:1) before they could enjoy the blessings of Canaan. In worship, the people covenant themselves to obey their God (Jos. 24:18). In obeying their God, they become a 'delightful land' to those around them.

To share the blessings of the Kingdom of God with all nations of the world. The intent of God is not just to bless a nation. God has a plan not just for his creatures but for his creation. God wants his church to grow and to expand, to be blessed and to share the blessings. The prophet Isaiah wrote: 'For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left. And your descendants will possess nations, And they will resettle the desolate cities' (Is. 54:3). This was the message of God to Abraham: 'And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed' (Gen. 12:3; 17:5). This was reaffirmed by Christ in the great commission when he called his church 'to make disciples of all the nations' (Mt. 28:19).

2. Economic Sufficiency.

'*… as with the gladness of harvest' (Is. 9:3).*

God will eradicate poverty in the future. The language of Isaiah is 'gladness of harvest' (v 3). During harvest time, the whole community is rejoicing. Nobody is hungry. There is food for everyone. The other metaphor was 'as men rejoice when they divide the spoil' (v 3). Here is the image of a victor enjoying the spoil of war. This points to the biblical ideal that God promised his chosen people, where no poor person will be found in his community (see Deut. 15:4). This will be actualised, but not yet!

Poverty is an inescapable reality in the present. Within the 10/40 window are located 80% of the world's poor and 18 of the 40 least developed countries. In the Philippines, for example, about 43% are living below the poverty line (this figure can move up or down depending on what is added to or subtracted from the bread basket of basic subsistence). Newbigin said that 'During the three decades following the inauguration of the "Development" Decade, the gap in income between the richest and the poorest billions of the world's population was estimated to have widened by a factor of 500 percent.'[24] Christian Futurologist Tom Sine reported that 'The United Nations Development Program states that 30 years ago the poorest 20 percent of the world's population earned 2.3 percent of the world's income. Now they earn only 1.4 percent and that amount is still declining.'[25]

The stark reality is that the ugly faces of poverty stare at us everywhere. These countries are social volcanoes that can erupt in tragic proportions unless something is done to alleviate poverty. Dr. Yen, the late founder of the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, once said that, 'even if the manufacture of nuclear weapons were discontinued and the superpowers were able to settle their differences, there would be no guarantee of security and lasting peace throughout the world, so long as two-thirds of the human race are left to suffer in mass poverty, mass inequality and mass discontent'. This is the church's continuing challenge; it is not just an ultimate concern but also a social concern.

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[24] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), p. 94.

[25] Tom Sine, *Cyprus 2000: Which Scenarios Are Most Likely* (citing 'A Global Poverty Trap', *The Economist*, July 2, 1996, p. 34.)

But what does economic sufficiency mean? Many development planners would have varying answers. Prime Minister Mahathir answered this question in his Vision 2020 for Malaysia. In fact, it has become a successful national programme for the country.

> This nation must be able to provide enough food on the table so that not a solitary Malaysian is subjected to the travesty of gross under-nourishment. We must provide enough by way of essential shelter, access to health facilities, and all the basic essentials. A developed Malaysia must have a wide and vigorous middle class and must provide full opportunities for those in the bottom third to climb their way out of the pit of relative poverty.[26]

Economic sufficiency does not mean that all will be rich. There are many variables to consider, including differences in personalities, skills, resources, and culture; these factors will result in unequal productivity or scales of economy. God told his people Israel that 'There shall be no poor among you' (Deut. 15:4) yet he also said 'the poor will never cease to be in the land' (Deut. 15:11, cf. Mk 14:7). Massive poverty is the stark reality in our world. And since redemption is also restoration, then the deviation between the ideal and reality becomes a church agendum for action. An effective response to poverty begins with analysis of the many causes of poverty: sin, laziness, and injustice. Others would add to the causes calamities, wrong values, religious vows. Christians should deal with these root-causes of poverty.[27]

Across two millennia the churches and Christian humanitarian agencies have worked hard to alleviate poverty wherever they are found. At the immediate level, there is *emergency relief assistance* to arrest the deterioration of the quality of life and to end the dying. There is the *empowerment programme* for the poor which comes in the form of skills training, micro-finance, and other job or income-generating programmes that lead to economic freedom. One cannot ignore *value transformation* for the poor. Economic and national development especially in the modern world requires the enculturation and alignment of values that are consistent with science, technology and information. These values must include a work ethic of excellence. In an eloquent way, Dewi Hughes writes that 'the issue is not whether we should engage in economic activity or not. This is our destiny.'[28]

But economic wealth must not be hoarded and indulged in by those who have it. God is the one who gives the raw materials for production and also the one who gives the power to make wealth. Work and production are part of his means to provide for his creatures. Thus, compassion for others must not be neglected. Christians should not close their hands to their neighbours in need (cf. Eph. 4:28).

The dignity of human labour, the pursuit of productivity, and the compassion to help the poor have been contributory factors in the development of the middle class which, in turn, is a common denominator for viable democracies in the world. Micah sums it up well: 'And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?' (Mic. 6:8).

Then there is the need for *public advocacy.* Christian work has social justice implication. The Bible is so specific about some of its teachings on social justice. Policies

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[26] YAB Dato'Seri, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia: 'The Way Forward (Vision 2020)'—a speech delivered February 28 1991, p. 5.

[27] Note that poverty in a fallen world can be self-caused (laziness, greed, foolishness, shortsightedness), imposed (oppression and injustice), or due to religious error (fate, karma) and natural calamities. Clearly, the solution is not just relief but transformation of personal values and structural evils.

[28] Dewi Hughes, *God Of The Poor* (U.K.: OM Publishing, 1998), p. 157.

must be in place that allow for the opportunities to gain wealth, increase production and to widen the middle class of society. This would include avoidance of usurious interest and the dismantling of oppressive structures (see [Neh. 5](#)). This economic goal is both a religious and political concern.

Before leaving this concern, Hughes point out that 'the two poles of biblical teaching focus on the great danger of acquiring wealth for our own enjoyment, on the one hand, and on addressing the needs of the poor on the other hand'.[29] It demands therefore, that those who have wealth should share with the poor in a 'hands up' way and not in a 'handout' so that the poor works himself out of poverty with dignity. Davis S. Landis, Professor Emeritus of History and Economics at Harvard University, observes: 'History tells us that the most successful cures for poverty come from within. Foreign aid can help but like windfall wealth, can also hurt. It can discourage effort and plant a crippling sense of incapacity. As the African saying has it, "The hand that receives is always under the one that gives". No, what counts is work, thrift, honesty, patience and tenacity. To people haunted by misery and hunger, that may add up to selfish indifference. But at bottom, no empowerment is so effective as self-empowerment.'[30] Israel, as God's development project in the Old Testament, was instructed by God to do so. Paul expresses this same principle saying '… let him labour, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need' ([Eph. 4.28](#)).

Granted the givenness of our responsibility to the needy and poor, the next question is this: What indicators or standards are we setting against which we evaluate ourselves periodically? What do we really want to see happen to them? In the study of successful democracies, we can set the following goals. (1) that not more than 10% of the people should be on survival mode economically, (2) that there will be a broadening of the middle class, (3) that not more than 50% people are illiterate, and (4) they are in good health or the life span increases alongside the developed nations of the world. Idealistic? But then small dreams never excited people into action.

3. Social Peace.

He is the 'Prince of peace. There will be no end to the increase of his government or of peace' ([Is. 9:6](#), [7](#)).

Social peace is perhaps one of the most illusive pursuits of civil societies. In the last two decades, we have seen on many sides the problems of social peace. The transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy created labour unrest. Tribalization in Eastern Europe and ethnic cleansing in some countries of Africa have also been a problem. As globalization impacts many countries, geographical boundaries slowly diminish in importance. Urbanization and electronic commerce have been the cause, among other factors, of the development of multi-racial and pluralistic societies. The challenge of governments today is to maintain national peace and unity in their quest for national economic sufficiency and political stability.

Peace is not just absence of conflict or 'no more war'. Peace is primarily well-being and freedom from anxiety. It includes goodwill and harmony in human relationships. It is to live a fulfilled life, 'to have achieved all God planned' (e.g. [Gen. 15:15](#); [2 Ki. 22:20](#)). Two related thoughts are subsumed in the title. *First,* because the Prince is Christ, and Christ is the man, the whole man, it points to a human ideal of a truly 'integrated, rounded

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[29] Hughes, *God Of The Poor*, p. 178.

[30] David S. Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998) p. 523.

personality' (e.g. Lk. 2:52).[31] *Second,* the means to peace will be non-violent. Here, the New Testament refers to the proclamation of the gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15). All these are combined in the Hebrew word for peace, *shalom:* peace with God, with one's neighbour, and with one's environment.

Social peace is a key factor in eradicating poverty. The economic growth of the Pacific rim has resulted in the development of the so-called tiger countries. But the countries that registered growth since World War II, the Korean War or the Vietnam War have been countries where there is social peace, e.g. Japan, Singapore Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong. A key factor in the development of many countries is their ability to lure investments and external venture capital to develop the economy. Venture capital from other nations will not flow into countries with social unrest. The West and other developed countries with their capital and high labour costs cannot compete in the global market. They have to invest outside of their countries into the so-called third world. But these investments will flow only where there is social peace. Social peace is a pre-requisite to economic growth. To be sure, venture capital and offshore manufacturing can bring their own kinds of evil. Oppression and exploitation often become issues that undermine the progress that they bring, and there can be widespread labour unrest. This is in fact one of the major challenges of democracy and development: how can a nation become prosperous without becoming idolatrous? How can democracy define the limits of individual freedom so as to protect society?

Social unrest is a key factor in poverty. Countries that have not grown as much or whose growth has been stunted by civil war or conflicts include Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Bangladesh, Myanmar. The biblical narratives showed similar patterns where progress comes when the nation is at peace and not at war. Jeremiah told the exiles in Babylon 'to pray for the peace (welfare) of the city where I sent you for in its welfare you will have welfare' (Jer. 29:7). Clearly, political and economic advocacy is a vital ministry for evangelicals to ensure that just and favourable structures and systems are in place in the country to participate in the internationalization of business.

In addressing social peace, we have to deal with the issue of culture wars or tribal conflicts that have degenerated into genocides. There are obviously many reasons for this situation, ranging from ethnicity, to land claims, ideological struggles, and religious differences. The ethnic cleansing in Rwanda and in Kosovo are clear examples. Pockets of unrest are found among the tribal peoples in Nagaland, in Southern Philippines, and in Indonesia to name some. The issues are grave and no easy solution is suggested. But it is no excuse for evangelical indifference. Socio-political solutions gave South Africa social peace in recent years. This is an area for involvement by evangelicals as well as by others. Evangelicals can be a part of the peace initiatives of their government or of their churches as well.

Can evangelical faith contribute to the building of a new order that approximates to God's Kingdom? The answer is yes. In fact, the church is called upon as God's primary partner to realize that order that is certain to come.

Lasting social peace begins with peace with God. The Messiah, our Lord Jesus, is the Prince of peace, his kingly rule will be established non-violently. It will be through the gospel of peace. This is foundational. We are to call all men who have been alienated from God (cf. Rom. 3:23) to be reconciled to God through Christ Jesus.

Peace with God leads to peace with our neighbour. More than any other group within a nation, the evangelical church would have a decisive advantage in the ministry of reconciliation. Christians are called to be peacemakers (Mt. 5:9). The apostle Paul

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[31] J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, p. 103.

provides a firm theological ground for such a ministry. Robert J. Schreiter follows and cites Jose Comblin's three levels of reconciliation: the 'Christological level, in which Christ is the mediator through whom God reconciles the world to God's self; an ecclesiological level, in which Christ reconciles Jew and Gentile; and a cosmic level, in which Christ reconciles all the powers in heaven and on earth'.[32] These are Pauline concepts. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself' (2 Cor. 5:9). The church is one body where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, where Jesus 'broke down the dividing wall, and abolished in his flesh the enmity' (Eph. 2:14); 'in him all things hold together … and through him to reconcile all things to himself' (Col. 1:18, 20). Schreiter, drawing from his experiences in Chile, observes that 'reconciliation is more spirituality than strategy'. (p. 26).

Because the church is a community of reconciliation, it is given the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18–19). The idea of a Christian peace corps to mediate peace has biblical validity. The Church and Society Department of the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) has focused on the ministry of reconciliation with considerable success in Rwanda and Cambodia. Recently, the evangelicals in Kingston, Jamaica have worked with the police to reconcile warring gangs with encouraging results.

Truth and justice must be factored into the process of reconciliation. If the oppressor recognizes wrong then he can repent. But often he doesn't. Since the oppressor cannot forgive himself, then the proper subject of reconciliation is the victim. This is where evangelical Christians are special instruments of grace in the hands of God. In the process, Schreiter continues, 'because the victim has been brought by God's reconciling grace to forgive the tormentor, the tormentor is prompted to repent of evil doing and to engage in rebuilding his or her own humanity.' Thus, forgiveness can lead to repentance. God, however, is not a Being of indifferent mercy in this act of reconciling. Paul tells us that our God is the God of wrath but that Christ died for our sins while we were yet sinners (Rom. 5:8, 9). For this reason, we do not seek a hasty peace, where everyone just wants to forget the past and start all over again; neither do we want the experts to secure compromises from the opposing parties in hope of arriving at 'peace'. In certain conflicts, clearly there is right and wrong. We are not called to reconcile God with the devil. However, it is necessary to deal with the root of violence or evil and to respect the humanity and dignity of the parties. The victim's forgiveness does not absolve the perpetrator of sin and wrong. He will be judged by the holy God.

The long road to lasting social peace begins in the churches. The ministry of reconciliation must work there or else we are disqualified as arbiters of peace in our societies. The church as the community of people reconciled to God by grace must become ambassadors of peace where there is unrest. Truly, they must follow the footsteps of the Prince of Peace.

In the last decade or so, about 123 countries within the United Nations have undergone radical changes. With improved technology, people have direct access to information. Consequently, people want to participate in the governance of their lives and future. As someone described it: the twilight of bureaucracy and the dawn of democracy. No wonder then that totalitarian governments were toppled. The problem is that Christians have been bitterly divided along political lines in their countries. Some collaborated with the establishments for the price of being left alone, and others have suffered persecution and reprisals for their radicalism. South Africa is an example. The 1985 Kairos Document admitted that 'the Church is divided. More and more people are now saying that there are in fact two Churches in South Africa—a White Church and a

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[32] Robert J. Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995), p. 42.

Black Church. Even within the same denomination there are in fact two churches.' With the collapse of apartheid under Nelson Mandela, the evangelicals had to decide whether they would remain divided or take the bold step of faith to dismantle their own multiple structures and be united. They did this in 1995 and formed one body—The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa.

Whatever approach one uses as may be required by the uniqueness of the context, the fact is that the ministry of reconciliation is inescapable for Christians. The new community of new creatures in Christ must demonstrate that model of peace. Clarke E. Cochran (*Religion in Public and Private Life)* observes that, 'an effective public role for religion is often not in direct political involvement, but in public witness to what equality, solidarity, and mutual respect look like in specific institutional forms'.

Peace with the environment. God made a covenant of blessing for Noah with his descendants and with every living creature (Gen. 9:10). God desires that his bounty be experienced by all his creatures. This means adequate provisions, good health, and freedom. He wants his people to celebrate life and rejoice in him. But this would require that the air is not polluted, that the lakes and the sea are not dumping grounds for industrial waste, that the water is potable, that there is enough forest cover to prevent soil erosion and river siltation, that greed does not destroy our aqua-culture and make our animals extinct, that the streets do not stink with uncollected garbage, and that the land is kept fertile as we pass use from one generation to another. We are to be not only our brothers' keepers, but we are to be good gardeners and good vice-regents of the whole of creation.

4. Public Justice.

'He will rule … in justice' (Is. 9.7).

Peace is simply defined as 'freedom from war or strife'. Technically, peace in this sense, can be imposed by the sword or by the barrel of a gun. Marxist and totalitarian governments have managed to have 'peace' for years. Yet, the collapse of Marxism in 1989 showed that coercion will not bring peace or sustainable development. A structure for growth must be in place that will allow for a reasonable degree of freedom and justice. With the end of the Cold War, US President Carter's insistence on human rights as basis for American foreign policy is being revisited. The American management guru, Peter Drucker, made the observation that 'governments will have to learn that it is futile, folly and predictably a wasted of money, to invest—whether through a World Bank Loan or through a Stabilization Credit—unless the recipient country establishes a truly independent and truly *legal* system. Otherwise the money will only make the wrong people rich: political bosses; generals; con-artists. Instead of enriching the recipient country it will impoverish it.'[33]

The biblical foundation for social peace is justice. This divine concern is so serious that in the Old Testament, the word and its related terms are used about 500 times and 200 more in the New Testament.[34] However, it is not easy to precisely define justice. Its essence can be inferred from the Old Testament concept of *lex talionis* or the famous 'eye for eye, tooth for tooth' dictum (Ex. 21:24), although there is no record that this principle was applied physically or literally. The application of this text (v 26) is more of an illustration of its meaning. I believe that Marshall rightly interpreted this as 'the judicial

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[33] Peter F. Drucker, *Managing in a Time of Great Change* (New York: Truman Talley Books/Plume, 1995), p. 336.

[34] Paul Marshall, *Thine Is The Kingdom* (Vancouver: Regent College Bookstore, 1984), p. 52.

principle of *equity*—treat equal cases alike and let the measure of reward and punishment be appropriate to the gravity of the deed'.[35]

The term justice 'suggests primarily man's conduct toward others, especially in matters of legal or personal rights' ([Lev. 19:35](#); [Deut. 25:13–16](#); [Amos 8:5](#); [Pro. 11:1](#)).[36] It is external. It deals with laws governing relationship and the use of things that order life in society. Emil Brunner declares 'justice to be the supreme principle of earthly institutions and systems in fallen society….'[37] God insists that governors are to rule with justice ([Ps. 89:14](#)). Such a command is not a contradiction of his nature as merciful. Henry argues the correlation of these concepts succinctly.

> The great distinctive of the Bible is that in respect to the people of faith, God is both the God of justice and of justification. Not the New Testament only but the Old Testament also relates God's justice and his mercy. The God of covenant is the God of justice and salvation…. The Psalmist can say of Yahweh: 'The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love' ([Ps. 33.5](#) NIV; cf [Pss. 87.11 f.](#), [102.11](#); [Jer. 50.7](#); [Is. 41.2](#)). God's justice vindicates his people from their oppressors ([Deut. 32.4](#), [35 f.](#); [Hos. 2.19](#); [Mic. 7.9](#)).[38]

Justice has three essential dimensions. *Firstly,* it deals with equitable and fair legislation for everyone. This is a challenge for an evangelical Solon, the wise legislator, because he cannot impose his religion on others in a pluralistic society. But as Norman Geisler and Frank Turek point out, the task of legislation is to enact morality.

> … all laws declare directly, or by implication, that one behavior is right and its opposite is wrong. In other words, all good laws are just laws, and to legislate justice is to legislate morality. Since securing justice is, in fact, the primary function of our government, *legislating morality is not only constitutional but unavoidable and necessary. The only question is 'Whose morality should be legislated?'*[39]

The question 'whose morality should be legislated' may be answered in a number of ways. It will be determined firstly by the powerful or the majority, secondly, by culture, or thirdly, by an impasse on legislation resulting in anarchy. The Christian legislator should seek for universal values that would be espoused by other religions or cultures. Theologically, this is a plausible process because of God's image in every person. God is spirit (*ruah*—[Gen. 1:2](#); *pneuma*—[Jn. 4:24](#)) and he created human beings with the same quality of personality. According to Darrell Smith, 'The spirit reflects the more elegant or God-like characteristics in human personality (e.g., see [Rom. 8:16](#)) and is concerned with love, justice, truth, beauty, meaning, relationships, values, righteousness, benevolence, and eternality.'[40] This is supported by Paul the apostle saying:

> For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written

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[35] Marshall, *Thine Is The Kingdom*, p. 52.

[36] Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority: Vol. VI, God Who Stands and Stays: Part Two* (Waco, Texas: Word, 1983), p. 404.

[37] Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority: Vol. VI*, p. 407.

[38] Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority: Vol. VI*, p. 410.

[39] Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, *Legislating Morality* (Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers,1998), p. 25.

[40] Darrell Smith, *Integrative Therapy* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990) p. 53.

in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or defending them …. (Rom. 2:14).

In concrete terms, we find the golden rule affirmed by different religions.

'All things you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them.' Christianity, Mt. 7:12.

'What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man.' Judaism, Talmud.

'No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.' Islam, Sunan.

'Do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you' Hinduism, Mahabharata 5:1517

'Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.' Buddhism, Udanavarga 5:18.

'Do not unto others what you would not have them do to you.' Confucianism, Analects 15:13

The same sentiment is expressed by Oxford philosopher C.S. Lewis. Borrowing from Confucianism, he wrote of the principles of the Tao in *The Abolition of Man* saying that it draws support from all religious and moral traditions in inculcating certain rules such as: 'general beneficence towards others, special beneficence towards one's own community, duties to parents and ancestors, duties to children and posterity, the laws of justice, honesty, mercy, and magnanimity. Whether drawn from the Torah, the Sermon on the Mount, Chinese *Analects*, Cicero, or the *Bhagavad Gita,* these are the truths that constitute the civilizational circle.'[41] Even so, these constitute a minimal foundation that in amplification and definition must yield to Judeo-Christian tradition.

The Christian legislator must constantly seek the denominators of common grace for all mankind and ground their actions on them. All truth is God's truth because God, who is the source and end of all truth, is one. At the same time, the legislator must be courageous to stand by his theologically-informed and irreducible limits of tolerance in working with others.

Secondly, it is concerned with remedy. Due process is crucial in administering justice. If the remedial process is violated, then there can be no ample protection for the rights of a person. The penal code of a nation may consider rape as a crime but if a poor victim has no means to hire or avail of the services of a good lawyer[42] or if the accused has the means to bribe a judge, then there will be miscarriage of justice. The crucial question then would be: Is the remedy available and affordable to the poorest of the poor? God exhorts that justice be given to the afflicted (Job 36:6) and to the slaves (Col. 4:1).

Thirdly, it includes penalty. For justice to exist, the penalty of law must be equally applied to the guilty whether he/she is rich or poor and not dependent on whom one knows or does not know. Moreover, it must be commensurate to the offence. The blessings of Israel under David [and other kings] was due to his administration of justice to all the people (1 Chr. 18:4).

The issue of justice is far more difficult than we can imagine. While there are clear principles of justice in the Bible, it does not provide for all areas. Examples would be laws

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[41] Cited by Richard John Neuhaus, *The Idea of Moral Progress, First Things* (August/September 1999, Number 95), p. 26.

[42] The legal provision for public defenders for indigent litigants is a requirement of due process in many countries. The root of social justice 'that those who have the least in life should have more of the law' may be traced to God's concern for the poor.

against smoking in public and in such other areas as driving, abortions, euthanasia, drug addiction, genetic modification, cloning. In the West, a critical agenda of legislation has been focused on individual *choice.* The issues of abortion, de facto marriage and alternative lifestyles (homosexuality) are examples of legislative agenda that are being promoted on the basis of choice or freedom. Such legislation must deal with the fact that choices have consequences to society. Thus, one must go into prudential balancing in border situations to serve the common good. This is particularly true in cases where the separation of the church and state is constitutionally guaranteed.

This means that the church cannot impose its value system or coerce others to believe in the same way. Niebuhr reminds us that 'the ultimate principles of the Kingdom of God are never irrelevant to any problem of justice, and they hover over every social situation as an ideal possibility; but that does not mean that they can be made into simple alternatives for the present schemes of relative justice'.[43]

It must be noted furthermore, that because God requires everything to be just then 'justice is a standard which can be applied not only to people. Even weights and measures must be just, i.e., they must be fair ....' (Lev. 19.36). God enjoins all people to act justly in relation to others. This means that the task to do justice is for all people to do justly in all their doings (Ps. 15:1f). It can be negative in that one must 'refrain from such things as idolatry, adultery, robbery and violence ....' It can also be positive in that 'a just person must care for those who are hungry and naked, defend the poor, and judge fairly between others (cf. Ezek. 18.5–9).'[44]

What would be some specific goals that evangelicals can strive for? The most basic need is the recovery of the Christian vocation or calling. This call is by grace from God to God for God. It is a call to recognize the sovereignty of God and to respond in unqualified obedience. It is to live a life of wisdom, discerning the works of God in creation. It is to work with God as his transactional partner in redemption; yet, though partners, to admit to the decisive incommensurate difference between them *in pursuing justice, sharing love, and living in holiness* in the world. Such is the unchanging and continuing human vocation that qualifies our occupations in society. Each can serve as God's agent of justice in every area of life.

Then they can help establish a government under the rule of law. For this cause, evangelicals can critically collaborate with other citizens or interest groups so that justice will roll like a river (Amos 5:4). The important point is that 'God maintains a just order in the creation. We are to conform our actions to this order and we are to judge all things and all actions in terms of this order. When we say that something is just or unjust we are measuring it in terms of God's requirement for justice.'[45] (cf. Jn. 5:3; 7:24; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2.11; Eph. 6.9; 1 Pet. 1.17; 2.23; Rev. 16.7; 19.2).

The case of Albania, for example, is a fresh reminder of the input needed from God's people in the development of a just system.

Another goal for evangelicals is the affirmation of religious freedom as the foundation of all other freedoms. To achieve this, an active public advocacy ministry for evangelicals is needed to monitor, evaluate and engage in shaping public opinions on the legislative or policy agenda from community to national levels of government. The work of the National Association of Evangelicals in the USA with their lobby in Washington D.C. is a model to be noticed, as is a similar activity of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Other national

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[43] Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christianity And Power Politics* (Archon Books, 1969), p. 25.

[44] Marshall, *Thine Is The Kingdom*, p. 53.

[45] Marshall, *Thine Is The Kingdom*, p. 53.

Evangelical Alliances use networks such as a Christian Legal Society to achieve the same end. In the Philippines, the Philippines Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC) is part of the National Ecumenical Consultative Committee which meets with the President to present their views on national issues. This ministry should be linked with other like-minded interest groups. Not least, there can be participation in the global networks of WEF for additional pressure from the international community.

5. National Righteousness.

'He will rule … in righteousness' ([Is. 9.7](#)).

Justice and righteousness, a frequent pair in Isaiah, are two sides of the same coin since both are rooted in divine holiness. Together, they form the moral foundation of the kingdom. For divine holiness will be 'perfectly manifested in true procedures (justice) which reflect righteous principles'.[46] J.A. Motyer further states that 'righteousness embodies holiness in sound principles, and justice is the expression of righteousness in sound precepts'.[47] Righteousness is an internal concept. Carl Henry says that 'the word righteousness tends to fix attention on inner divine-human relationships ….'.[48] It is the inner prompting in a person to give to the other person his/her due or right. If the citizens act rightly, then the collective result will be national righteousness.

There are five fundamental issues involved in the movement towards national righteousness.

First, is the issue of morality. For when one speaks of right it also posits a concept of wrong. But in a world where truth is culturally relativized, who defines truth? Is there an absolute that determines right from wrong? Is culture the authority in what is referred to as survival ethics? To those within a culture, a particular act may be right or wrong, but it may not be so within another context. Which culture can prescribe objective morality for all? And by what standard or authority will it be able to do that? Is it the voice of the majority or the coercion of superior power?

In a debate in Canada some years ago, the proposition was: Can a man be good without believing in God? The answer is not easy because a prior question arises: what is 'good'? If there is no transcendence, then there can be no objective good as referent for an answer. As a philosopher once said, ethics is transcendental. Stated another way, the question is: Can there be any moral goodness if there is no God? In a culturally pluralistic world one has to concede to relativism as a logical consequence. For if all cultures or religions are equally valid yet contradicting each other in essential points, then all can be wrong but not all can be right. This is the Law of Non-contradiction. Of course, there is another way out, that one position is right and all are wrong.

The Christian position is that there is God, the transcendent Being, who is the source of truth as written in Scriptures. God revealed his moral laws in nature in general (the law in your heart), and in the Ten Commandments in particular. Darrow L. Miller points out that 'the Ten Commandments brought order to society …' and 'create the foundation for civil society'.[49] In the case of Israel, the exodus (political freedom) was followed by the giving of the Ten Commandments at Sinai (the Law or political charter).

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[46] J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, p. 103.

[47] Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, p. 49.

[48] Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority: Vol. VI*, p. 404.

[49] Darrow L. Miller, *Discipling Nations: The Power of Truth To Transform Nations* (Seattle, Washington: YWAM Publishing) p. 124.

By this Decalogue, God defines morality in terms of what *ought to be* rather than the secular view of what *is*. Civil society must be based on *ethics* (normative principles) and not on *pathos* (emotions or feelings). Jesus must have referred to this same truth saying: 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven' ([Mt. 6:10](#)). The Kingdom of God 'is governed by a moral philosophy'.[50] This means that all activities—political, social, economic, technological—in a civil society should reflect this divine morality for the people truly to enjoy the abundant life and the bounties of creation from God. It also means that cultures should be transformed into what Mangalwadi calls the 'culture of the cross'—seeking first the righteousness of the kingdom and not compromising with wrong or evil.

The role of Judeo-Christian morality is indispensable to the very idea of the inevitability of human progress. Without grounding human progress in what Richard John Neuhaus calls 'the civilizational circle of moral conversation' or simply 'traditional values', the options, as Alasdair MacIntyre points out, are between Aristotle or Nietzsche, between a tradition of virtue, on the one hand, and moral nihilism, on the other hand'.[51]

The link between values and progress is crucial to the future of humanity. It is true that the future holds endless possibilities for progress. But it includes possibilities both for good and for evil. Therefore, outside of Judeo-Christian morality, humanity has to face up to Reinhold Niebuhr's conclusion: 'History, therefore, has no solution of its own problem.' Neuhaus strongly insists that 'there can be no progress *beyond* but only *within* the civilizational circle of moral truths into which we were born, by which we are tested, and to which we are duty bound, in the hope of sustaining the circle for those who come after us. The alternative is the willed ignorance of nihilism.'[52]

Evangelicals do affirm that ethics is inseparably grounded on biblical truth. Russell Kirk expresses this eloquently:

> The terror of existence without object or rule was dissipated by the revelation that man is not alone in the universe; that an Other exists; and that Other is the One God, who makes it possible for human beings to be something better than the beasts that perish. Through the revelation of order in the universe, men and women are given the possibility of becoming fully human—of finding pattern and purpose in existence, unlike dogs that live from day to day only. So the Ten Commandments, the Decalogue, are not a set of harsh prohibitions imposed by an arbitrary tribal deity. Instead, they are liberating rules that enable people to diminish the tyranny of sin; that teach a people how to live with one another and in relation to God, how to restrain violence and fraud, how to know justice and to raise themselves above the level of predatory animals.[53]

Second, granting the normativity of Christian morality or kingdom ethics, the problem still arises because it cannot be imposed on others. Even if the language and spirit of the law conform to Judeo-Christian ethics, the fact remains that legislation cannot bring transformation. For 'Legislation has to do with conduct that can be controlled'[54] but not with motive. For example, taking the teaching of Jesus on murder and adultery, the law can punish murder but not anger. The law can condemn adultery but lust is beyond its

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[50] Miller, *Discipling Nations*, p.133.

[51] Richard John Neuhaus, *The Idea of Moral Progress*, p. 26.

[52] Neuhaus , *The Idea of Moral Progress*, p. 27.

[53] Cited by D. L. Miller, *Discipling Nations*, p. 123.

[54] George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, p. 129.

sphere. The ethics of the kingdom applies to both realms. And even believers have to recognize that 'ethics, like the Kingdom itself, stand in the tension between present realization and future eschatology'.[55]

Third, what shall the people of God do? Since they cannot impose Christian morality, then they should live their lives so that by word or deed, they participate in the process of the inculturating of Judeo-Christian values in society. The church must promote this moral vision at all levels from village councils to the national parliament, in schools or in the market place, at home and in the church. This vision must be shared by the whole nation from the top leaders to the grass root citizens. Governance, legislation, education and socialization are target channels to achieve the positive goal of national righteousness. Adam Seligman, a holder of a Ph.D. in Sociology and Social Anthropology from Hebrew University, grounds the success of the American Civil Society in the idea of a Holy Commonwealth which was 'interiorized into individual conscience'.[56]

Fourth, how should the people live? How, then, can a person be empowered to do what is right and not to do what is wrong? Reality clearly evidences what Scripture teaches that all are sinners or as Paul of Tarsus puts it: 'the things I want to do I cannot do, the things I don't want to do, I do. It is not me but sin in me' (Rom. 7:19). Any analysis of the acute state of man's criminalization of his culture or man's inhumanity to man cannot be resolved by economics or politics unless at the heart of the reform is the sin-analysis of Jesus Christ. For a new society, a new spirit (Ez. 11:19). For the birth of a new nation, a new birth (Jn. 3). This is made possible only in Christ Jesus who alone can transform man and make him a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17). The Spirit of Christ is the needed dynamic for such empowerment.

Fifth, righteousness expresses itself in terms of showing mercy to the poor (cf. Mt. 6:1–2; 2 Cor. 9:9–10). This inference is drawn from the fact that in a fallen world of abounding unrighteousness, God himself 'must become the protector and vindicator of the oppressed'.[57] This can include political deliverance as in the exodus (Ex. 9:27) and spiritual deliverance as in redemption from sin and from bondage to the devil. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation … the revealed righteousness of God (Rom. 1:16–17). God declares as righteous those who have faith in Jesus (Rom. 3:24).

The people of God should realize whose they are, God's own possession (1 Pet. 2:9). They are the people of the Word and of the Spirit. They are promised not just the Spirit who will lead them into all truth (cf. Jn. 14:17f.), but also power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them (Acts 1.8). Their Word-dependent and Spirit-filled lives will help them to become increasingly Christlike in their lives. This enables them to transcend and transform the righteousness of the law into the righteousness of the heart. The ethics of love becomes woven fabrics to them which is a sign of the gift of God's reign. It is manifested at home, in the church and then through vocational ministry in the world. Only when people see righteousness *incarnated* in the lives of Christians, will they accept the beneficence of Judeo-Christian morality for all humanity.

I was delighted to find out that a business text book published by Macmillan Press in the USA on business ethics featured Correct Craft. This company is owned by the Meloon family in Orlando who are godly people with a passion to reach souls for Christ. The independent analysis came out with a glowing report in comparison to the business ethics of the Ford and Rockefeller companies. Of course, as the Reformers would say, it would

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[55] Ibid.

[56] Adam Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), p. 77.

[57] *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, p. 462.

be good to have our preaching converted into public policy. Clearly, the implication is kingdom witness in all areas of life. People may do right because of fear of sanction by law or culture. But the righteousness of the heart will ensure lasting righteousness among the people. The sum of all these is this: righteousness exalts a nation (Pr. 14:34).

III. POSTSCRIPT

The different elements are interdependent. Righteousness produces justice resulting in peace and economic sufficiency. On the other hand, history reminds us, economic prosperity can lead to consumerism and greed. The story of the West is like that of the Prodigal Son. After receiving the blessings, he took his share, indulged himself, and forgot his Father. There is a sense in which the Father is awaiting the return of the prodigal. This is a major concern today for developing nations. In their pursuit to become developed nations, how can they avoid becoming permissive and disintegrating their values? I asked the same question of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad of Malaysia during a visit. I remember his answer: through the protection of our own values in a democracy that is Asian in form.

The activities are multi-directional. The Christian message and ministries on poverty eradication, promotion of peace, public advocacy and apologetics are by themselves valid activities. Christian social concern and actions are legitimate activities by themselves and should not be construed as a means to an end; they justify themselves. These activities can lead to the centre of all life—Christ. In the same way those who are in Christ should manifest his life in and through them in terms of promoting economic sufficiency, peace, justice and righteousness.

These themes are very prominent in the teachings of the prophet Isaiah. The messianic text that is the framework of the vision naturally links with the messianic vision of the New Jerusalem that awaits its consummation in John's vision of the New Heaven and New Earth (cf. Rev. 21). Isaiah said that when the Messiah finally rules and creation is re-ordered, the universal people of God who are gathered in the second exodus will experience total provision (Is. 66:13), total peace (66:24–25), total security (66:22–23) and total happiness (66:29).

IV. CONCLUSION

The path to disciple a nation is not a paved interstate highway. It is not clearly lighted, and it presents many pitfalls. As one scholar wrote ' … the very struggle to secure justice itself involves the use of the instruments of power, and the instruments of power are always ambiguous. Nor can innocence be maintained, or purely achieved, by withdrawing from the struggle. The fact to be recognized is this: there is no moral hiding place.'[58] But his chosen people are assured of God's promised wisdom and guidance. In fact, the very promises of God presuppose that he is not on the side of the status quo but demands change. This change must take place within his new community for this is where his judgement will begin.

The biblical ideal of the kingdom that is coming is the basis of Christian social ethics. The discrepancy between the ideal and reality is the arena for evangelical engagement. We need a theology that is not grounded on the capacity of humankind for progress as the panacea of human ills. Rather, we need one that is founded on our living Lord. He will realize his purpose: through an awakening, or through special political agencies, and/or

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[58] Harland, *Christian Faith and Society*, p. 86.

through his church. For this reason, all activities should be grounded upon and should lead us to the centre of our faith—Jesus Christ. Everything flows from the centre to the peripheries of the circumference. The DNA Vision should be recovered, but this would require a death-experience of the old paradigms as they give way to the new. Lesslie Newbigin, missionary for many years in South India, has summoned Christians to challenge the belief-framework within which contemporary culture operates: 'It must call unequivocally for radical conversion, a conversion of the mind so that things are seen differently, and a conversion of the will so that things are done differently. It must decline altogether the futile attempt to commend the biblical vision of how things are by seeking to adjust it to the assumptions of our culture.'[59]

Let me conclude by suggesting some practical programmatic implications for the church.

1. The philosophical vision provides both the legitimating and integrating ideal for a holistic evangelical agenda. Not all of us can do all these things simultaneously. Therefore, it recognizes our interdependence in working out God's total agenda in the world. We will appreciate the works of interest groups, specialists or para-church agencies within our midst and draw them into a creative partnership with the churches. The vision of a discipled nation is our point of reference.

2. Our vision evidences the truth that such a total ministry cannot be carried out by any one denomination, church or organization. Present divisions within the Christian community must not add to the magnitude of the problem that is already there. The church must be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

3. This vision demands the focusing of the strength of local churches to allocate their limited resources in kingdom building.

4. It will define the prophetic nature of the church as agents of transformation.

5. It calls for the alignment of resources so that we can move in the same direction, seeking functional alliances and networking that will enable all of us to work together for the goal.

6. It calls us to repentance and to prayer. Praying in the midst of the apparent human helplessness leads to revival and awakening that can bring the grace and mercy of God in divine visitation.

7. It revitalizes the churches enabling them to validate Christian organizations and ministries, offer a structure for coordination, and a context for integration of total ministries in the community thereby bringing hope to the land for the glory of God.

There are limits to what the church can achieve in the sphere of politics. Scripture encourages us to look forward to that day when society shall be drawn towards that kingdom where 'the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid' (Is. 11:6); when 'nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more' (Is. 2:4); when Christ shall deliver 'the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power' (1 Cor. 15:24); when 'there shall be no end to the increase in his government or of peace … to uphold it with justice and righteousness' (Is. 9:7); when 'the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Lord, and of his Christ' (Rev. 11:15); and when there shall be 'a new heaven and a new earth' (Rev. 21:1). In other words, we cannot be numbed into inaction by accepting as fate our fallen societies and evil in our world. Evil is not a finality in our world. On the contrary, we take a prophetic stance and live lives in the hope of our destiny in the coming kingdom.

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[59] Lesslie Newbigin, *The Other Side of Nineteen Eighty Four* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1983), p. 53.

The Public People of God: A Paradigm for Social Ethics

Gordon Preece

Keywords: People of God, public, private, naked public square, polity, policy, universal, particular.;

INTRODUCTION

The almost never-ending Clinton-Lewinsky affair displayed the blurred lines of public and private in contemporary western life. The varied reactions to the sorry saga from both sides of politics represented a range of pragmatic, political, philosophical and religious views regarding the relationship of private and public dimensions of contemporary society. Many liberals separate private and public sharply, saying President Clinton's sexual peccadillos are private and yet would rightly say with feminists that 'the personal is political'. Many conservatives are equally inconsistent, being upset most because Clinton's behaviour violates the 'private' family values they uphold, while allowing a similar individualistic and libertarian philosophy full reign over economics and politics.

Western culture's confusion and inconsistency over the public-private relationship is echoed in the church as many of the views voiced above were those of Christians. In this light it is important to put the question of the nature of the public and the church's public role into an historical and global context. Contrary to the parochial conceit of many modern westerners, the private-public split is a product of a liberal Enlightenment or modern perspective, about which death-notices are regularly, though perhaps prematurely, posted.

However, a change does seem to be upon us. Australian media theorist Catherine Lumby notes that unprecedented levels of media coverage and surveillance of private life driven by technological change, frenzied competition and globalization are pushing a changed perception of not only the relationship of public and private but the very notion of a public sphere(s) and space(s) itself. '[T]he contemporary media sphere constitutes a highly diverse and inclusive forum in which a host of important social issues once deemed apolitical, trivial or personal are now being aired.' These include 'the rise of feminism, environmentalism, gay and lesbian rights, indigenous rights, and a host of allied

movements'. Citing John Hartley's *Popular Reality* she suggests that the image-intoxicated 'postmodern public sphere' is 'intensively personal (inside people's homes and heads)' and 'extensively abstract (pervading the planet)'.[1]

The modern private-public split is also parochial in terms of place and culture, being primarily western; in many cultures, whether tribal, Islamic, Confucian or other, such splits are not as sharp. Yet the privatization of values and religion is not irrelevant to non-western Christians. Secularization and privatization of religion *may* move out from the west along the frontiers of globalization (if globalization from above is seen primarily as westernization), leading to Dan Beeby asking: 'Where will the growing churches of South Korea and China [and Africa and South America] be in fifty or a hundred years time? Do they face a bleak European future where churches will opt to be small private yachts in a sea of religiosity?'[2] On the other hand, globalization from below, where non-western cultures speak back to the west, may lead to increasing recognition of the public significance of religion.[3]

Given this context of cultural and ecclesiastical confusion and change concerning the relation of public and private and the fact that neither in church history nor today can consensus be reached 'over the participation of the people of God in the public place'[4], this paper will seek to provide theological resources for resisting the privatization of God's people and for affirming the people of God as an alternative public and polity, yet of universal relevance. It will argue:

1. Through a rapid re-reading of modernity and postmodernity that not only 'the personal is political' but 'the pastoral is political' also.[5] Pastoral or shepherding imagery in Scripture has its background in kingship or divine political terms and has implications for the public and political dimension of pastoral practice.

2. 'The naked public square' that results from modernity rigidly separating private and public is no neutral arena or vacuum of values. Because nature and culture abhor a vacuum it is subtly and secretly filled with values. The liberal public square accepts individual freedom as the ultimate, absolute value and its economic embodiment in late capitalism and the market as master narrative. Christians are effectively not allowed to tell their stories in public, they are only for bedtime reading. It is time we came out of our banishment to the private.

3. Due to the postmodern fragmentation of society there is no undifferentiated public, but rather a global public with multitudes of local sub-publics or local publics with global sub-publics, as illustrated by many forms of media. This raises the question of 'whose public, which rationality'[6] are we addressing? Christians should dialogue with all these

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[1] Catherine Lumby, *Gotcha: Life in a Tabloid World* (St. Leonards NSW: Allen & Unwin. 1999), pp. xi–1. Cf. Trevor Hogan, 'What's Public?: Pluralism, Democracy and the Common Good', unpublished paper delivered to the *Hard Choices Conference*, 29/9/99 John XXIII College, Canberra, pp. 1–2.

[2] 'The Gospel and "Asian Western Culture" ', *The Gospel and our Culture* 5:4, 1993, p. 4.

[3] See P. L. Berger ed., *The De-Secularisation of the World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) and Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of World Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1997).

[4] Bruce W. Winter, 'The Public Place for the People of God', *Vox Evangelica* XXV, Nov. 1995, p. 7.

[5] Ian G. Packer, 'Seeking a Community of Promise: The Ethico-Political Priority of the Ekklesia in Postmodern Public Theology', BA Hons thesis, Murdoch University, 1999, p. 125.

[6] Adapting A. MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IND.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

publics without letting our distinctive Christian polity and unity be destroyed by captivity to particular publics or rationalities.

4. This distinctive polity is that of the republic of God. We are citizens of heaven. As the household of God and *ekklesia* of the city of God, the church makes a public claim in the name of Jesus as Lord; we do not retreat into a private realm. As representatives of the republic of God we are to be independent of the party spirit and patronage systems of the world, engaging in public benevolence on behalf of those made invisible or private.

5. Several visions of Christian engagement in the public domain will be examined. These include Universal, Liberationist, Middle Axioms, Ecclesial and People of God paradigms. The latter is preferred as the primary and most inclusive biblical image of who we are. It includes both gathered and scattered aspects of our identity and polity. The polity of God's people provides a middle axiom between theo/anthropo-logical principles and wider social application and policy. As a scattered community it supports and holds accountable the distinctive public vocations of frontline Christians who exercise expertise in social ethics and policy.

1. 'THE PASTORAL IS POLITICAL'

If biblically and sociologically 'the personal is political',[7] so too, biblically, 'the pastoral is political'. The pastoral is an abstraction of the concrete biblical imagery of shepherding. The predominance of shepherding/pastoral motifs derives from king David's original occupation (1 Sam. 16:11). In king David, both idealized and less so, realized, the pastor is politician, and the politician is pastor. Later kings and leaders fell short of this Davidic ideal and allowed God's sheep to be scattered in exile, so busy were they fleecing their sheep. Yet drawing on David's vivid awareness of God as supreme king, pastor and shepherd (Ps. 23), Ezekiel 34 depicts God promising to again directly shepherd his sheep rather than delegate the task to incompetent and corrupt leaders.[8] John 10 portrays Jesus fulfilling this prophecy of a Messianic Good Shepherd who, unlike the Pharisees and other Israelite rulers, lays down his life for the sheep. This is the sacrificial model for elders as undershepherds of the chief shepherd (1 Pet. 5:1–5), not one of secular, self-seeking, party politics, ruling as the Gentiles rule and divide, but of self-giving, serving, kingdom of God politics (Mark 10:41–45).

If this re-reading of the Bible's pastoral imagery sounds strange to our ears it is because we have so privatized and spiritualized its pastoral imagery. How did the privatizing[9] or de-politicizing of the personal and religious occur? The standard reading of secularization or the Christian retreat from public life is that it is due to the churches' inability after the Reformation and particularly during the 'Wars of Religion' to create a public space for rational dialogue rather than passionate diatribe. Therefore secular rationality and the liberal, tolerant State was developed during the Enlightenment as part of the search for public peace.[10]

William T. Cavanagh, however, argues that the Wars of Religion were often more state than church sponsored, that nobles and governments of the same religion often fought

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[7] G.R. Preece, 'The Republic of God is a Great Outdoor Restaurant', *Zadok Paper* S91, Summer 1998.

[8] Cf. Paul Barnett, 'Shepherding the Flock: Part 1: The Shepherd in the Old Testament' Essentials (Dec. 1999), pp. 8–11.

[9] Os Guinness, *The Gravedigger File* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1983).

[10] Cf. Jeffrey Stout, *The Flight from Authority: Religion, Morality, and the Quest for Autonomy* (Notre Dame, IND: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), p. 13.

each other, and that the established view is a convenient creation or salvation myth of the absolutist state. ' "Wars of Religion" is an anachronism, for what was at issue in these wars was the very creation of religion as a set of privately held beliefs without direct political relevance … by the new State's need to secure absolute sovereignty over its subjects'.[11] Originally, the Latin *religio* meant to bind together, to make a whole, not a minor part that is bound or imprisoned in the private realm. Tragically, many churches were easily compromised by the state's 'divide and conquer' policy, forfeiting the distinctive contribution their own polity could make toward peace. Their reciprocal bellicosity cannot be excused even if it is ironic that some see it as progress for people to kill for the nation or a pair of Reeboks instead of religion.[12]

Enlightenment based constitutions and political arrangements in France, the United States and Australia have effectively banished Christianity from public space while maintaining nominal freedom of 'private' worship. In supporting the US Supreme Court's prohibiting of the use of the drug peyote by the 'Native American Church', conservative columnist George Will commended their Jeffersonian libertarianism and dualism:

> A central purpose of America's political arrangements is the subordination of religion to the political order …. The founders … wished to tame and domesticate religious passions of the sort that convulsed Europe …. not by establishing religion, but by establishing a commercial republic—capitalism. They aimed to submerge people's turbulent energies in self-interested pursuit of material comforts. Hence religion is to be perfectly free as long as it is perfectly private—mere belief—but it must bend to the political will (law) as regards conduct …. Mere belief, said Jefferson, in one god or 20, neither picks one's pockets nor breaks one's legs.[13]

Christianity is thus made inconsequential, a matter of 'mere belief' from the top of the head, which even the demons have (James 2:19). Not only will people not kill for it, they will not die for it, nor embody it. In this dualistic division of labour Christians' bodies are subordinated to the state and the state to economics while their souls are left to the church. The church is subject to soul-itary confinement and Christians are consigned to the closet as effectively as gays once were. This allows advertisers to publicly name and norm our bodies according to their own stories of status and arbitrary individual freedom instead of the biblical story of the body in terms of cross, resurrection and Pentecost as 'members of Christ', 'bought with a price', 'temples of the Holy Spirit' etc (1 Cor. 6:13–20, cf. chaps. 10–12).

Like Jefferson, Voltaire in his *Lettres philosophiques* vividly illustrates the civil religious privatization of Christian assemblies and worship and their replacement by alternative commercial assemblies and worship as a way of producing private contentment and public peace respectively:

> Enter the London Stock Exchange, that place more respectable than many a court. You will see the deputies of all nations gathered there for the service of mankind. There the Jew, the Mohammedan, and the Christian deal with each other as if they were of the same religion, and give the name infidel only to those who go bankrupt; there, the Presbyterian trusts the Anabaptist, and the Anglican honors the Quaker's promise. On leaving these

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[11] ' "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House": The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State', *Modern Theology* 11:4 (October 1995), p. 398.

[12] William H. Willimon, 'Christian Ethics: When the Personal is Public is Cosmic', *Theology Today* 52.3, Oct 1995, pp. 367–68

[13] Quoted in Stanley M. Hauerwas, *After Christendom* (Homebush, NSW: Lancer; Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), pp. 30–31.

peaceful and free assemblies, some go to the synagogue, others to drink; this one goes to be baptized …; that one has his foreskin cut off and the Hebrew words mumbled over the child which he does not understand; others go to their church to await the inspiration of God, their hats on their heads, and all are content.[14]

Hand in hand with the forced retreat of religion from public space due to state absolutism and economic or utilitarian individualism came the privatized self of Enlightenment, Romantic or 'expressive' and later 'therapeutic individualism'.[15] This inspired the 1960s sexual and therapeutic revolutions and aspects of postmodernism. While the rational, scientific, political and economic self could enter the public domain of university, parliament and market, the Romantic, expressive, subjective, valuing self was confined to drawing rooms, bedrooms, psychiatrists' couches and churches.[16]

Stanley Hauerwas speaks of 'The Democratic Policing of Christianity' by many Christians who are complicit in keeping their Christian convictions private.[17] Yet, as Will Willimon shows, 'there is no such animal as the "private" self, the self prior to or somehow detached from a public. Our language, symbols and reality are socially, that is, publicly constructed'. There is therefore no 'private' ethics, for all action contributes to or detracts from the public good. 'Personal' problems, the focus of much evangelical therapeutic ministry, are not just personal failures of psychological adjustment, but related to the way power is used and abused in society (and church)'.[18] Our pastorally therapeutic fixation on problems such as workaholism ignores the way this individualistic approach functions as an ideology and idolatry allowing public corporations and governments to project the blame for their policies onto individuals. Many churches and clergy have been willing dupes in this therapeutic individualist perversion of true, preventative, pastoring.[19]

2. RE-CLOTHING THE NAKED PUBLIC SQUARE

The modern privatizing of the allegedly irresolvable and violent disagreements about religion and values results in what Richard J. Neuhaus calls *The Naked Public Square*.[20] This is an allegedly neutral, secular, fact-based arena, minimizing substantial disagreement about God, human nature and destiny, and social directions in the name of democracy. However, the greater danger to democracy is when ' "the separation of church and state" is taken to mean the separation of religion from public life. The public square, like nature, abhors a vacuum. If it is not filled with the lively expression of the most deeply

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[14] Quoted in Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation: The Science of Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), pp. 90–91.

[15] R. Bellah et al, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), pp. 27, 32–35, 46.

[16] See C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge, MASS.: Harvard University Press, 1989) and G.R. Preece, 'You are Who You are Called: Trinity, Self and Vocation' in S. Hale and S. Bazzana eds. *Towards a Theology of Youth Ministry* (Sydney: Aquila Press, 1999), pp. 133–51.

[17] In his *Dispatches from the Front: Theological Engagements with the Secular* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1994), ch. 4.

[18] Willimon, 'Christian Ethics', pp. 369–70.

[19] See R. Wuthnow, *The Crisis in the Churches: Spiritual Malaise, Fiscal Woe*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), chs 4 and 5, esp. pp. 98–99 on the therapeutic 'happiness' language of clergy.

[20] 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.

held convictions of the people, including their convictions grounded in religion, it will be filled by the quasi-religious beliefs of secularism' as Nazism and communism showed.[21]

Candidates to fill or re-clothe the naked public square include the 'procedural republic', economic or market values, a revived republicanism, family values or a vision of the City of God. The first, what Michael Sandel calls critically a 'procedural Republic', cannot morally or spiritually sustain the liberty it offers.[22] Here the legal procurement and protection of rights to choose or consume is used to deny debate about large matters of meaning or principle. Visions of virtue—of the good society—are kept submerged, except on some specific 'moral' issues like abortion or euthanasia where a conscience vote may be allowed and the churches come out of exile into the public domain in the name of those disallowed public identity.[23]

However, secondly, the good is generally a private question for the borders of life, not the centre which concerns economic goods or values. 'We have rights, rules, procedures, economic statistics, experts and technologically efficient means but to what end? We are trapped between a public economic absolutism/fundamentalism and a private radical relativism.'

Political democracy is difficult to sustain long-term without some economic democracy or active participation. Today there is a global 'gap between the scale of economic life and the terms of political identity'—'between polity—in the sense of self-rule—and economy'.[24]

This turns upside down the biblical view described by Robert Jenson that:

> The economy is for polity .... [W]hat God is up to in the economy is *compelling the polity*. In the economy God rules us in the same way as he rules galaxies and amoeba: without our choice. We must eat, take shelter, and the like; and we are an economy insofar as we cannot manage these singly. God so arranges his creation that we cannot but deal with one another. Just so, communal moral choices become inevitable, and with them politics—and with politics prophecy.... [A]n economy that produces such inequalities of wealth as to dispense some from and incapacitate others for communal moral deliberation is just so evil, counter to the economy's godly function. 'Safety nets' are nothing to the point; it is not poor citizens' mere survival that is the polity's responsibility, but their freedom for the polity.[25]

In the light of this biblical challenge we must ask Sandel's question: '[W]hat economic arrangements are hospitable to the qualities of character that self-government requires?' The global economy increasingly functions on a virtual basis, not necessarily conducive to (normally face to face) virtuous relationships. While many argue for 'cosmopolitan' or even cyberspace citizenship, Sandel argues that 'if civic virtue can only be cultivated closer to home in families[26] and schools and workplaces, rather than on a global scale,

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[21] Richard J. Neuhaus, 'Proposing Democracy Anew—Part Three', *First Things* (Dec. 1999), pp. 70–71.

[22] Michael Sandel, 'The Politics of Public Identity' in Echoes 1:3, (Winter 1997), pp. 6–9. Cf. his *Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy* (Cambridge, MASS: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[23] Neuhaus, 'Proposing Democracy', p. 70.

[24] Michael Sandel, 'Politics', p. 9 and Richard Sennett, 'The New Political Economy' in *Echoes* 1:3 (Winter 1997), p. 10 respectively.

[25] 'Toward a Christian Theory of the Public' in his *Essays in Theology of Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), pp. 144–45.

[26] See B. and P.L. Berger, *The War over the Family: Capturing the Middle Ground* (Garden City NY, 1983), ch. 8 'The Family and Democracy'.

then how can we address the gap between the local and the global?' Democratic societies are challenged to construct local, mediating, and global institutions to nurture the characteristics self-government requires.[27]

This global gap appears to expand the empty public square. But in fact it has been filled by the myth of the market. Australian activist Tim Costello points out that medieval towns had three main institutions in the public square—the church, town hall and market—but today's towns are mainly market towns.[28] Markets are best for exchanging goods and services, but they are not an overarching metaphor or master narrative for life; the state is best for preserving order and justice (Romans 13). Yet both depend on other mediating institutions; they also need biblical and republican narratives and traditions to sustain the virtues necessary for economic and political life to flourish.

Francis Fukuyama, who at the fall of communism lauded capitalism as the end of history, now laments the loss of trust and sense of civil society and mediating institutions outside the family required for even a workable market and minimal society to be maintained without constant and costly recourse to law.[29] This leads to a 'post-public society'.[30] Fukuyama blames the 1960s cultural 'rights revolution', 'the rise of moral individualism and the consequent miniaturisation of community for rising crime, distrust and family breakdown. We use rights as rifles to keep strangers at bay and preserve our privacy but lament a lack of community. Just as the Great Disruption of the early 19th century Industrial Revolution and unfettered capitalism was followed by a Victorian era spiritual and moral reconstruction so our current information and individual rights revolutions and unfettered global capitalism may well need a similar spiritual and moral reconstruction.'[31]

Richard Neuhaus sees such reconstruction coming not from the state but from a renewal of 'mediating institutions' such as family, church and all sorts of voluntary associations. 'The discernment and teaching of the moral law, for instance, is primarily the task of institutions such as the family and the church. In articulating that law, the state is responsive rather than generative.' These mediating institutions 'stand between the autonomous individual and the "megastructures" of society'—state, multinational corporations etc. This is closely related to Roman Catholic social teaching on 'subsidiarity' or persons in various communities making the decisions that most closely affect them.[32] Many fundamentalists, while rightly reacting against infringement of their right and responsibility to teach their children (Deut. 6), for instance, idolatrously absolutize the family, something Jesus often challenged (e.g. Mark 3:20–35 balanced by 7:9–13). They seek a return to Pleasantville 1950s or Victorian values as the simple solution to society's

[27] Sandel, 'Politics', 6–9. For an attempt at this see G.R. Preece, *Changing Work Values: A Christian Response* (Melbourne: Acorn, 1995), ch. 3 on my former Sydney parish's Work Ventures project.

[28] Tim Costello, 'Rise Before Dawn', Ridley College Centre of Applied Christian Ethics Lecture, May 1997.

[29] F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992); *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1995). On the social costs of unfettered liberalism see my 'America the Land of the Free and Unfree', *Zadok Perspectives* 34 (June 1991), pp. 16–17. On the need for new relational networks see Eva Cox *A Truly Civil Society* (Sydney: ABC, 1995) and especially M. Schluter and D. Lee, *The R Factor* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1993).

[30] Christian T. Iosso, 'Changes in Ecumenical Public Witness, 1967–1990', in *The Church's Public Role*, ed. Dieter Hessel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992).

[31] *The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order* (London: Profile Books, 1999).

[32] Neuhaus, 'Proposing Democracy', p. 70. Cf. Reformed notions of 'sphere sovereignty' and n. 72 below.

ills, assuming that the family is not only a necessary mediating structure, but sufficient. In defensively pulling up the drawbridge to protect their private family values part of society they fail to challenge the heart of 'secular' society. For all their good intentions, family values advocates often do not realize that the very notion of 'values' as some sort of private consumerized choice separate from the public, economic and scientific world of fact forfeits the game.[33] It leaves a public vacuum for various pagan spirits and vices to fill. Nor do they stop at the front gate.

The post-industrial domestication of home and church life away from the public realm exacerbated the church's part-retreat, part-excommunication into the private arena. Religion, like women who mainly practise it, belongs in private. Christians, by and large, can practise 'bedroom ethics' or family values but not 'boardroom ethics' or corporate values in western societies.[34] We clothe the naked public square only when its nakedness invades our TVs, computers or art galleries and rely heavily on the state or law to do it, rather like the famous photo of an English policeman with his helmet over a naked streaker's private parts.

Our famous evangelical forbears, William Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect, were strong family advocates, seeking to protect it from the city vices of business and politics by being among the founders of modern suburbia at Clapham, south of London. However, the personal and communal spiritual disciplines of the sect, and their spirited extended family discussions provided a platform for challenging the public world of London and the global, colonial world of trade and slavery.[35]

Sadly, some fundamentalists who campaign for family values fail to maintain the balance which their forbears were able to maintain. They are more pejoratively sectarian and are bound by what Gibson Winter called *The Suburban Captivity of the Churches.*[36] Some float on the rising tide of privatization of public enterprises and services, education, transport, recreation, tax avoidance—in sum the privatization of time and space. This secession of the successful from the public domain and public service leads to 'private affluence and public squalor' (J. K. Galbraith). Some churches reflect worldly 'lifestyle enclaves' as espoused in the comment of one person that his community would be just great if we could put a moat around it and pull the drawbridge up.[37] It can be an abandonment of citizenship and discipleship to 'seek the welfare [shalom] of the city where I have sent you into exile' as Jeremiah 29:4–9 says and New Testament Christians put into practice in their exile in 'Babylon' or the Roman empire.[38]

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[33] Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Demoralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values* (New York: Knopf, 1995). Cf. Alasdair MacIntyre's seminal *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theology*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, IND: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).

[34] Willimon, 'Christian Ethics', p.36,

[35] Robert Fishburn, *Bourgeoise Utopias. The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (NewYork: Basic Books, 1987), esp. pp. 51–62.

[36] New York: Macmillan, 1962. Suburban sites of family values are prey to the city vices—sex, drugs, violence—that suburbanites fled from. Larry L. Rasmussen, *Moral Fragments and Moral Community: A Proposal for Church & Society* (Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 1993), pp. 47–48.

[37] Bellah, Habits of the Heart, pp. 71–75, 335. Cf. J. Milbank, 'Enclaves or Where is the Church?' *New Blackfriars* 73: 861, June 1992.

[38] B. W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City': Christians as Benefactors and Citizens: First-Century Christians in the Graeco-Roman World* (Grand Rapids and Carlisle: Eerdmans and Paternoster, 1994); idem, 'Public Place', pp. 7–16.

This is an asocial family form of individualism, as the French sociologist Alexis de Tocqueville saw it in 19th century America:

> Each person, withdrawn into himself, behaves as though he is a stranger to the destiny of all the others. His children and his good friends constitute for him the whole of the human species. As for his transactions with his fellow citizens, he may mix among them, but he sees them not; he touches them, but does not feel them; he exists only in himself and for himself alone. And if on these terms there exists in his mind a sense of family, there no longer remains a sense of society.[39]

This vision of estrangement from a wider sense of society reached its peak when former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, an advocate like Fukuyama of a return to Victorian values, said 'there is no such thing as society', only individuals and families. Yet she forgot that, as Ford K. Brown wrote, the Fathers of the Victorians and their virtues were the Clapham Evangelicals with their wide social concerns.[40] A.H. Halsey also notes that Thatcher's individualism finally undermines the family:

> [B]y an irony of history, while Mrs Thatcher forebore to extend the ethic of individualism into domestic life, and tacitly accepted that the family was the one institution that properly continued to embrace the sacred as distinct from the contractual conception of kinship, those who denounced her doctrines of market-controlled egoism with the greatest vehemence were also those who most rigorously insisted on modernizing marriage and parenthood along her individualistic and contractual lines.[41]

Helpful in part as are most of these attempts to re-clothe the naked public square, they would still elicit the fairy tale boy's cry, 'the emperor has no clothes'—or at least not enough clothes. The naked public square needs re-clothing not in the pseudo-narratives of 'late-modern liberalism' but in the biblical narrative of the city of God that inspired Augustinian Christendom (minus its coercive features), early modern (16th century) liberalism,[42] and some of our most urbane cities or public places. We need to reclothe public space and challenge economically exclusive discourses by 'restor(y)ing' or 'reframing' our lives biblically and theologically[43] as narrative ethicists stress.

This vision inspires Christian sociologist Richard Sennett's attempts to 'help people transcend their sense of institutional nakedness and uselessness'. For him the cracking of capitalism's moral and spiritual base is exacerbated in our increasingly placeless and virtual global economy. The rapid turnover of jobs and consequent mobility causes '*The*

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[39] Frontispiece to R. Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

[40] Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961.

[41] No source. Cf. John O'Neill, *The Missing Child in Liberal Theory: Towards a Covenant Theory of Family, Community, Welfare, and the Civic State* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994).

[42] See Oliver O'Donovan's seminal *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 275–76. cf. 226–30.

[43] On 'restor(y)ing see Audrey N. Grant, 'Towards Restor(y)ing a vision of education for Third Millenium', *Ridley College Centre of Applied Christian Ethics Newsletter* III.1 (1998). Ian Barns advocates doctrinally 'reframing' the 'fiduciary framework' (Lesslie Newbigin, *The Other Side of 1984* [Geneva: WCC, 1984], p. 30) of modern secular society and 'the conditions of existence'. See 'Going Public: Reflections on Zadok's Role in Australian Society', *Zadok Paper* S86 (Autumn 1997), pp. 8–11 and 'Towards a Post-Constantinian Public Theology', *Faith and Freedom* (June 1996), pp. 29–38.

Corrosion of Character', [44] an erosion of vocational, locational and family loyalty, even for the previously stable middle class. 'The global economy does not "grow" personal skills, durable purposes, social trust, loyalty, or commitment'.[45]

Sennett's means for clothing our 'institutional nakedness' are firstly for localities and cities to offer tax cuts in exchange for corporations' long-term commitments and job provision. Secondly, he believes the dense, impersonal human contacts of the city's pubs, playgrounds and markets promoted by the 'New Agora' movement (based on the ancient agora or market as a meeting place)[46] will promote the 'impersonal citizenship' needed in 'a disjointed and disenfranchising postmodern world'. Sennett rightly argues that 'neither classical … cities nor defensive, inward-turning localities'[47] provide answers.

Thirdly, Sennett recognizes that mere urbanity is not enough either to guarantee community or counter human depravity and suffering. He describes how our bodies act as microcosms of the macrocosm of the city and how we have sought a utopian and absolute autonomy since the French Revolution. By contrast, a Christian view of the body's insufficiency, pain and exile, in need of God and others, is required to nurture an alternative vision of the city's public space. By bringing those in pain or exile into public visibility through places of sanctuary, hospitality and charity as the church did in medieval Paris, for instance, we are all made more whole.[48]

The eschatological goal of the biblical narrative is the city of God which transforms the earthly city. This story of the city of God out-narrates all utopian stories of the secular city[49] which justify violence against their voiceless victims. As John Milbank says, the Christian story is 'a master narrative in which there are no masters'. Milbank unmasks secular sociological and political reason as a Christian heresy. Drawing on Augustine's *City of God* written at a time of disruption (to the Roman Empire) not dissimilar to our own, it traces the origin of the Roman republic, and any human society or 'City of Man' to an ontology of violence and mythology of original conflict. One god of the pantheon and one power group saves the republican city from such conflict. In Rome it was Jove, and Romulus who killed his brother Remus. In the Enlightenment it was the state that saved us from inter-religious rivalry. Today it is Mammon and the market which saves us from

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[44] *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998). Cf. William Wolman and Anne Colamosca, *The Judas Economy: The Triumph of Capital and the Betrayal of Work* (Reading, MASS: Addison-Wesley, 1997). Both are reviewed by me in *Zadok Perspectives* 63 (Autumn 1999), pp. 36–37.

[45] Richard Sennett, 'The New Political Economy' in Echoes 1:3 (Winter 1997), p. 15. Cf. on such covenantal characteristics Max Stackhouse ('Mutual Obligation as Covenantal Justice in a Global Society' *Zadok Paper*, Spring/Summer, 1999/2000) but contrast more positively on globalization's possibilities for nurturing those virtues, his unpublished paper 'Public Theology in Global Perspective: A Reformed View', Ridley College Centre of Applied Christian Ethics, 27 Sept 1999.

[46] Cf. J. Hartley, *The Politics of Pictures: the Creation of the Public in the Age of Popular Media*: (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 35.

[47] 'The New Political Economy', pp. 11, 15.

[48] R. Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: the Body and the City in Western Civilization* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994), pp. 370–76 on 'Civic Bodies' and chap. 5 on Paris.

[49] See Ian Barns, 'Nomad Pilgrims: on the way to the heavenly city', *St. Mark's Review* 173 (Autumn 1998), pp. 24–30, and William T. Cavanagh, 'The City: Beyond Secular Parodies', ch. 9 in J. Milbank, C. Pickstock and G. Ward eds. Radical Orthodoxy (London: Routledge, 1999). Robert Jenson ('Public', p. 142) notes that 'a polity is, indeed, the institutionalization of an eschatology' needing prophecy.

the interfering 'nanny' state. Victims like the unemployed or refugees are made invisible—private and shameful, while rivals are subordinated and enemies resisted.

The Christian story, by contrast, is based on an ontology of peace created by one God who effortlessly establishes a world of shalom. Despite the destructive detour of human pride and domination, God's heavenly city brings 'liberation from political, economic, and psychic *dominium*'. It inaugurates a different kind of political community for pilgrims seeking refuge from sin and violence, remembering the victims, showing equal concern for all its citizens and reconciling enemies.[50] We can move forward into the next millennium only if we publicly name the violence and the redemption of our history.[51]

3. WHOSE PUBLIC, WHICH REALITY?

But which public is to be object of our proclamation about an alternative polis? Much modern talk of the role of the public church falsely assumes an easily identifiable monochrome public and media which Christians assimilate and address with secular bromides. It lets the world set the agenda, to use the 1960s and 1970s World Council of Churches (WCC) language, casting Christians literally as re-actionaries. It reduces Christians to speaking in a moral Esperanto.[52] There is no reason for anyone to listen to echoes of their own words, like some non-directive counsellor who adds their soothing 'mm' to the end of the secular world's every sentence.

For too long the mainline church danced to the 'progressive' tune of modern secularism, but today its temptation is to dance to the beat of postmodern pluralism. Yet as Hauerwas notes: 'Pluralism turns out to be a code word by mainstream Christians meaning that everyone gets to participate in the democratic exchange on their own terms *except Christians themselves.*'[53] Many Christians feel they can participate in the pluralist public square only if they do a secular 'streak'—strip themselves of their Christian clothes and argue on 'secular' grounds which is contrary to Paul's commands to 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ' (Rom. 13:14). This perverted pluralism (unlike a creation based plurality of institutions) is really a monism of money or economic fundamentalism.[54]

In the pluralist democratic dance the church is often left partnerless, arms desperately held out ready to embrace anyone who would oblige her for the next dance. To paraphrase Dean Inge: 'He who marries the political structures of this age had better beware lest they end up a widower by the next political shift'.

This short-sighted strategy also ignores the increased fragmentation of the public into sub-cultures or micro-publics through narrow-casting aimed at specific demographics or

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[50] *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1991), pp. 391–92.

[51] Today, Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu in South Africa and John Paul II in his regular apologies for the church's horrors inflicted on native peoples, Jews and Muslims demonstrate the power of reconciliation and repentance (see Bruce Duncan, 'The Jubilee and the Pope's Apologies for Catholic Failures', *Zadok Perspectives* 65 (Spring/Summer, 1999/2000), pp. 26–29).

[52] Jeffrey Stout, *Ethics after Babel* (Boston, MASS: Beacon Press, 1988), p. 163 on secular bromides and p. 5–6 on 'Esperanto'.

[53] *Democratic Policing*, p. 93.

[54] Cf. Francis Canavan, 'New Pluralism or Old Monism', Ch. 1 in his *The Pluralist Game: Pluralism, Liberalism, and the Moral Conscience* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1995), pp. 5–6. '[M]onism dictates that there should be only one set of secular, officially neutral public institutions in all fields…. If we wish to achieve a genuine pluralism, we must come to see that secular monism is increasingly out of date'.

market niches.[55] Enclaved cosmopolitan elites of first or third world nations and some church social responsibilities groups often take their bearings from global media and contacts, not national or local ones. They have little comprehension of other publics outside the urban elite that political populists like Australia's Pauline Hanson or America's Pat Buchanan and Rush Limbaugh appeal to, however inappropriately.

These lower middle class and working class publics' conservative productive and family values are criticized as parochial, politically incorrect or fundamentalist by the new cosmopolitan middle class made up of the information, media, social welfare sectors with their expressive individualist values of unlimited self-and sexual expression.[56] The clash of publics was visible in the demonstrations at the abortive World Trade Organisation talks in Seattle in December 1999, where there was a strange alliance of green groups, economic nationalists, unions and mainline church groups. This expressed the sense of anger and anxiety at economic globalism's abandonment of public risk policies; this is true whether it takes the form of trade or ecological barriers preserving the social and natural ecology of particular nations and localities. It is part of the 'revenge of the particular' against universalism or globalism.[57]

These groups rightly ask whether we are part of a global village or global pillage? Are we global citizens or only consumers in a global economy? The nation state finds itself increasingly powerless before the network society[58] of financial markets and multinationals, as during the Asian economic crisis. Many problems are too big or global for nations, while others are too small and local. New global forms of governance or political participation (polity) are necessary to regulate global financial speculation and plundering.[59] Otherwise, xenophobia, scapegoating and inhospitable attitudes to migrants and refugees will continue to grow.

In this context the global or catholic people of God linking first and third worlds as in the Jubilee 2000 movement is the main alternative to an ideology of exploitative economic globalism. We need to develop a discerning response to the positives and negatives of globalization as a form of economic and technological networking.[60] The church's traditional critique of gambling, often dismissed by others as a mere private vice or personal choice, has had its public relevance and the state's parasitic dependence upon it successfully demonstrated in my own state of Victoria, Australia by Tim Costello and others. We could extend this critique of gambling to its big brother of global financial speculation or gambling where the analogy holds. This is one way in which the personal and pastoral is political and global and where our practice of preventative pastoral care carries political authority.

A further implication of the catholicity of God's people is for churches to beware of inserting themselves into the existing party political process of national and global class

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[55] Scott Turow, *Breaking Up America: Advertisers and the New Media World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

[56] In criticizing family values fundamentalists for absolutizing the family I am not standing with the cosmopolitan middle class but wanting a balanced biblical concern for family virtues in their place.

[57] Cf. Hugh Mackay, 'An Explosion of Post-Materialist Anger Before the Healing Century', *The Age* (11 Dec. 1999), News Extra, p.9. Though groups like Greenpeace have their own global connections.

[58] M. Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, (Malden, MASS: Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

[59] George Soros, *The Crisis of Global Capitalism: Open Society Endangered* (London: Little, Brown & Co., 1998).

[60] Cf. M. Stackhouse, 'Global Perspective'.

and cultural divisions. In doing so we become captive to particular publics, undermining our own reconciling and catholic polity. Many of the tensions within the churches on topics such as globalization and free trade were illustrated by the fact that there were also conservative Christian Coalition and Republican groups supporting the World Trade Organisation at Seattle.

Likewise in ecumenically oriented mainline churches such as my own Anglican Church, divisions on homosexuality and euthanasia can be partly explained by their echoing the above split in the middle class. The Pentecostal churches, by contrast, generally represent a lower middle and working class clientele with more conservative family and work values. In splitting in this way we often replicate the adversarial politics of the wider culture and exclude certain groups from the reconciling politics of the gospel. This is the heresy of party spirit, a fruit of the flesh or this secular age, not of the Spirit of the age to come (Gal. 5:20). As such it is not radical but reactionary and outdated. Is there a better notion of the people of God as a non-party political polis or public?

4. THE REPUBLIC OF GOD AS A REPUBLIC

In a global market society citizens can easily become mere consumers and the public so many market niches. Such a temptation warns us to re-emphasize the theological themes of the kingdom or Republic of God, Augustine's *City of God* versus the city of Babylon, and (the non-coercive aspects of) Christendom as the background for reconstituting the notion of a public.[61]

For the Christian, citizenship is more than modern nationalism or postmodern consumerism. It is citizenship in the Republic of God. Rather than worshipping 'the belly', and thinking only of earthly things' 'our citizenship [or commonwealth] is in heaven' (Philip. 3:19, 20). The 2nd century Epistle of Diognetus provides an excellent commentary: 'as citizens, Christians share all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers …. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives.' This is 'the dialectic of distance and belonging, of strangeness and domesticity, of surpassing the laws and obeying them'[62] that we are called to live out in our own public places as we 'seek the shalom of the city'.

The public place in the New Testament is more than just the state as mentioned in classic texts like Romans 13, 1 Peter 2:13–17 and Revelation 13. The '*politeia* encompassed matters relating to the welfare of the city'—including public benefactions by the rich, 'the meetings of the *demos,* i.e. the secular *ekklesia*' courts and city council etc.[63]

The very term early Christians took for their meetings shows that they refused to be seen as another tolerable exotic eastern private cult offering purely personal salvation. Instead they thought of themselves as an *ecclesia theou*—'the public assembly [of the city of God] to which all humankind was summoned; it was called not by the town clerk but

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[61] See O'Donovan, *Desire of the Nations*, ch. 7 on Christendom.

[62] In M. Staniforth ed. and trans. *Early Christian Writings: the Apostolic Fathers* (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1968), pp. 176–77.

[63] B. Winter, 'Public Place', p. 8–9. On the various New Testament responses to the state see W. Pilgrim, *Uneasy Neighbours: Church and State in the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).

by God. In such an assembly no earthly emperor could claim supremacy. Early Christians refused to be relegated to a cultic corner of life but claimed the whole culture.'[64]

This large claim led to Roman Stoic terms 'public' and 'republic' being re-minted biblically. Now the public or covenantal civil society was prior to the republic. The government or republic was to serve the public and above all, God (cf. Romans 13:1–7, esp. 4, 6). Ecclesia (the assembly of responsible citizens or worshipers) was 'understood to be prior to the "polis" conceived as a "state" or regime'.[65]

Christianity achieved a 'moral revolution' by expanding the public domain.

> [It] redeemed and sanctified *individual and everyday life*, especially the lives of society's victims, with a dignity only the elite enjoyed [cf. 1 Corinthians 1:26–28 'not many of you were wise … powerful, … noble' …]. The private sphere of women, children, slaves, and other outcasts was lifted from Greek contempt for its necessity and elevated to the honor of the free male public sphere of politics, philosophy and the military.[66]

The household gave its name to the church, and was much wider (including slaves or workers and extended family) than the contemporary misuse of 'family' for church. Thus the personal and pastoral became political.

Christians also challenged the typical Greco-Roman pattern of political patronage. Rather than being mere clients of patrons or 'political hangers-on', a kind of rent-a-crowd, living on handouts, Paul modelled self-support and independence, not only personally but publicly and politically (2 Thes. 3:6, 12). He challenged Christians not to be patron-ised. 'This was part of the radical Christian ethic for the public place …. No longer could they be parasitic clients. All Christians who were able had to work with their own hands and thereby be in a situation to "do good", i.e. to be benefactors and not grow weary in this calling'.[67]

Further, Christians should not restrict their welfare provision to a rigidly reciprocal patronage system (Matt. 5:46–48) of 'mutual obligation' being advocated increasingly today. Mutual obligation may be one way to call people out of crippling welfare dependence. However, in a global risk society reducing its public risk policies so that individuals bear all risks, the onus should also be on the obligation of the well-off not to withdraw from social responsibility. The allowing of non-coercive faith based groups in the US and Australia to receive government welfare funds may also be a way forward in welfare reform, though the danger of state patronage is real.[68] Whoever pays the piper often calls the tune.

5. UNIVERSAL, LIBERATION, MIDDLE AXIOM, ECCLESIAL OR PEOPLE OF GOD ETHICS

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[64] Newbigin, *The Other Side of 1984*, p. 33.

[65] M. Stackhouse, 'Public Theology and Ethical Judgment', *Theology Today* (July 1997), p. 166, n. 3.

[66] Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 56, 58, cf. pp. 55–99.

[67] Winter, 'Public Place,' p. 13.

[68] In January 2000 Australian government funding to church groups to find jobs for the unemployed came under considerable fire because these church groups hired people who shared their Christian ethos to help the unemployed.

There are a range of broad ideal types of contemporary Christian approaches to social ethics. I will examine the above types in this section. The first is a more global, universal ethic. In secular terms it is a modern, Enlightenment based approach, named Habermasian after the German sociologist Jürgen Habermas. This pattern of 'communicative action' is based on a relative form of rational consensus which characterizes progressive western societies 'where public spaces exist to permit free or uncoerced debate' over questions of truth.[69]

Many mainstream Christians adopt something like this universal approach to ethics. Max Stackhouse draws on some similar sociological sources to Habermas, but goes back behind the Enlightenment to the way 'Christians, Jews and later Muslims in the Middle East and Mediterranean combined biblical religious insight with Greek philosophy and Roman legal theories (including natural law) to form the pillars of Western civilisation'. Stackhouse sees the early church fathers developing a form of 'public theology' which solved the 'metaphysical-moral disease' of classical civilisation, providing it with 'a moral and spiritual inner architecture'. Further developments since the Renaissance-Reformation, Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution and now globalization have spread this civilisation.

In a similar way to Habermas, Stackhouse recognizes the functional differentiation of modernity and its public(s). He identifies a religious public governed by holiness, a political public or civil society governed by justice, an academic public governed by truth and an economic public governed by creativity. Each of these creational and cultural spheres and publics has its own relatively autonomous norms,[70] but in order for philosophical thought, social analysis and moral judgement to be related and dialogue rationally, ' "Logos" requires "theos".'

Stackhouse seeks to uncover the somewhat hidden Christian underpinnings of modern western and increasingly global civilization and 'universalistic ethics' of covenantally based human rights and institutions.[71] As he observes,

> True, the West's contribution to it [modernity] has sometimes been … imperialistic, colonialistic and exploitative. But we judge these as false, unjust and unethical because the same theology that prompted expansion in these ways bears within it universal principles that demand both a self-critical judgment when its best contributions are distorted and a wider willingness to learn from other publics than those of the West … In this public, the great philosophies and world religions, which have demonstrated that they can shape great and complex civilizations over centuries, must have a place.[72]

This approach tends to be Old Testament or creation and covenant based in providing a broad basis for social ethics. It is less christological, ecclesiological and eschatological,

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[69] See *Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics: A Reader, ed. Steven Seidman* (Boston, MASS, Beacon Press, 1989), p. 18, and introduction, chs 6, 7 and 10.

[70] Stackhouse, 'Global Perspective' p. 4 develops the Reformed view of creation orders—'familial, political and ecclesiastical' itself reformed by Jewish scholar Walzer's 'spheres of justice', neo-orthodox Barth, Bonhoeffer and Thielicke's 'orders of preservation' or divine mandates, Kuyper's Reformed 'sphere sovereignty' and his sociologist friends Weber and Troeltsch's 'departments of life'. Cf. also the stress in Catholic social tradition on subsidiarity or allowing each social sphere to be self-governing.

[71] Stackhouse, 'Public Theology and Ethical Judgment', pp. 166–67, 174, cf. his 'Global Perspective', p. 5–6 and more generally his *Public Theology and Political Economy* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986) and his et al. ed. *Christian Social Ethics in a Global Era* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), M.L. Stackhouse et al, ed. *On Moral Business: Classical and Contemporary Resources for Ethics in Economic Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

[72] Stackhouse, *Public Theology*, p. 178–79.

while not excluding these. Its mainly Anabaptist critics see it thinning down distinctive Christian speech and ecclesiological practice. They say that its modern universalism obscures the particularity of the church's own politics and its apologetic approach can lapse into an apology for western liberal society.

The second broad type is the ecumenical and liberationist WCC approach of direct political advocacy. Since the 1960s and 1970s the WCC has largely allowed liberationist struggles to set its agenda. Since the 1980s it has focused on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. These three slogans are all worthy and urgent but are often hijacked by an unbiblical and uncritical liberationist hermeneutic.

The WCC has largely forgotten its missionary roots in the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910; it has also forgotten the more biblical, confessional and neo-Orthodox approach of its pre-World War II precursors: the Confessing Church, the Faith and Order movement, and the Faith and Work programme on the laity's vocational role in the world. Karl Barth's adage that the good preacher should have the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other was rightly influential in the WCC. But Barth had the Bible in his right hand and the newspaper in his left. This biblical priority contrasts with the distorted views of some contemporary ecumenical thinking which equates the authority of the Bible and experience (especially the experience of those needing liberating).

Lesslie Newbigin, a great missionary involved in the WCC, sadly commented on European church social justice statements, that you can often tell which party they belong to or newspaper they have read, but not which parts of the Bible. This conflictual or party political approach ironically tears the ecumenical movement apart.

The WCC's early Faith and Work programme was particularly influenced by our third type, the Anglican *via media* and 'middle axioms' method of layman J.H. Oldham and Archbishop William Temple.[73] Though respecting the relative empirical and policy expertise of economists, they held that established religion nonetheless can subject economics to moral criteria as it had before the rise of 'technical' or Enlightenment economics in the 17th century. They sought bridging principles or 'middle axioms' between basic theological (God's nature and purpose), anthropological (humanity's dignity, tragedy and destiny) and social principles (freedom or respect for personality, fellowship and service) on the one hand, and specific economic and political issues on the other, such as unemployment policy. Such 'middle axioms' were that every willing worker should have a job and have a voice in their business or industry and know that their work serves the common good. These are distinguished from more specific policy proposals or political programmes (e.g. industry policy, paid holidays etc.), which Temple relegates to an appendix of his *Christian Social Order*. By doing this, he indicates that they have lesser authority and that there is room for disagreement, which is a way of preserving Christian unity. Though Temple is still influential, in their political advocacy for the poor and oppressed, some Church Social Responsibilities Committees and welfare groups have forgotten his important distinction, which causes division among God's people about issues of legitimate difference.

However, Bernd Wannenwetsch rightly argues against Temple's Platonic-Hegelian idealism and his modern universalism. For Temple there is 'one public discourse in one society'—'whether shaped by the ... unity of reason or by the vision of a basically "Christian society" instead of a postmodern situation of a variety of discourses'. Surprisingly for an Anglican, the church and its 'political worship' through reconciling practices of baptism, fellowship and eucharist get short shrift. They are the missing

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[73] W. Temple, *Christianity and Social Order* (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1942).

middle axioms between Temple's broad theological and anthropological principles, his general middle axioms and specific policies left to experts.[74]

A fourth 'ecclesial ethic' or Hauerwasian as opposed to Habermasian approach (named after Methodist theologian Stanley Hauerwas but similar to Anabaptist John Yoder and Anglo-Catholic John Milbank[75]) argues that the Christendom and liberal Enlightenment models are both bankrupt. The former is bankrupt through its complicity with violence, the latter through using the former's abuses to absolutize the state and allow only a thin Christian freedom of worship at the price of it having no public relevance. Unlike Stackhouse and Habermas, if Hauerwas were asked with Ghandi what he thought of western civilisation he would likewise reply, 'it would be a good idea'.

Ecclesial ethics opposes the Constaninian or Reformed church model of running the world through its members' various vocations as these implicate them in violence. Nor is the church to be privatised by liberalism. Instead, the church's polity or social structure provides an alternative public political model. This will be judged eschatologically by its faithfulness to Christ's way of peace, not by its ability to get specific policies implemented by grabbing the levers or ears of power. The church's main contribution is through a renewal of political imagination and vision embodied in its own life. For Hauerwas, the church does not have, but is a social ethic, an alternative polis.[76]

Hauerwas cites Czech playwright-president Vaclav Havel's wonderful unintended description of this when asked why their non-violent Velvet Revolution was successful. 'We had our parallel society. And in that parallel society we wrote our plays and sang our songs and read our poems until we knew the truth so well that we could go out to the streets of Prague and say, "We don't believe your lies anymore"—and Communism *had* to fall.'[77] The ekklesia is that parallel society with similar social and identity forming stories and practices—the drama of salvation, songs of praise and psalms and poetic visions.[78]

Similarly, Newbigin warns against ecumenical and denominational diminishment of the role of the local gathered congregation as 'the primal engine of change'. He explains:

> Our powerful denominational and interdenominational agencies for social and political action develop ways of thinking and speaking which distances them from the ordinary congregation .... Our political and social programs are detached from the gospel of

[74] Bernd Wannenwetsch, 'The Political Worship of the Church: A Critical and Empowering Practice', in *Modern Theology* 12:3 (July 1996), pp. 272–73.

[75] Despite differences of ecclesiological tradition and accent. See S. M. Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: a Primer in Christian Ethics* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), idem, *After Christendom?* (Homebush W.: Lancer; Nashville: Abingdon, 1991); J. H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); J. Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory* op. cit.; J. Milbank, C. Pickstock and G. Ward eds. *Radical Orthodoxy*, (London: Routledge, 1999). For 'ecclesial ethics' see Packer, op. cit.

[76] On vision, see S. M. Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue. Essays in Christian Ethical Reflection* (Notre Dame IND: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974); on church as polis, see idem, *A Community of Character* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1981); idem *In Good Company: The Church As Polis*; cf. on Hauerwas, Arne Rasmusson, *The Church as Polis* (Notre Dame IND: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

[77] Quoted without source in Marva Dawn, *Is it a Lost Cause? Having the Heart of God for the Church's Children* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), pp. 48–49.

[78] Bernd Wannenwetsch, 'The Political Worship of the Church: A Critical and Empowering Practice', in *Modern Theology* 12:3 (July 1996).

forgiveness … announced in Church …. They become simply programs of, or meshed with, the programs of political parties and secular pressure groups.[79]

We become either the conservative or radical party at prayer, praying on only our right or left knee with either our right or left eye open to gain our political information.

On the other hand, in Havel's apt illustration, the going out into the streets represents the scattered dimension of the life of God's people and leads into our fifth view—people of God ethics. Sojourners leader Jim Wallis tells the story of a gunman in an anarchical American city shooting at someone all the way into the sanctuary of a Sunday morning church meeting, as worshippers took cover. At a press conference church leaders denounced this violation of sacred space only to be challenged by a young Pentecostal street pastor saying that 'if we don't take the church to the streets, the streets will come to the church'.[80]

We need both gathered and scattered aspects of the people of God, for both identity and relevance. Ecclesia ethics prophetically reminds mainstream and Reformed churches of the centrality for their identity and social ethics of the reconciling practice of Jesus embodied in the church.[81] Their important reaffirmation of ecclesial practices such as worship, community and non-violence among Anabaptists or preaching and evangelism among Evangelical Anglicans should not be neglected. Yet Yoder (less so) and Hauerwas (more so) operate with a restrictive 'canon within the canon' that sometimes fails to do full justice to the whole scriptural narrative and trinitarian counsel of God. An extreme ecclesia ethics results in a kind of Jesuology or Christological reductionism of the Word. This neglects God's universal trinitarian action as Creator and Spirit which is moving the world towards the kingdom, in part, through the vocations of ordinary Christians.[82] Also, O'Donovan's *Desire of the Nations* has shown that some non-coercive notion of Christendom is still necessary to do justice to Christ's conquest of the powers and the gospel's implications for government. Further, Stackhouse and others ask how many churches are a genuine alternative to the world, though Hauerwas has provided examples from churches to which he has belonged.[83] Of course, the big challenge for those who want the ecclesia or the people of God to provide a thick cultural alternative and polity to the world is how to make the thin nourishment of one hour a week on Sunday found in many churches sustain such an alternative.

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[79] Unable to trace source.

[80] From an address on 'The Conversion of Politics', Whitley College, Melbourne 26 Aug 1995.

[81] 'For the radical Protestant there will always be a canon within the canon: namely, that recorded experience of practical moral reasoning in genuine human form that bears the name of Jesus' (J.H. Yoder, *The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gospel* [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984], p. 37). Cf. Richard Hays' friendly critique of Hauerwas in *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (San Francisco: Harper, 1996), pp. 253–66 esp. 260–61. Others also use a canon within the canon, but the best position from an evangelical perspective most comprehensively covers the canon.

[82] See G. Preece, *The Viability of the Vocation Tradition in Trinitarian, Credal and Reformed Perspective* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1998).

[83] See S. M. Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today* (Durham NC: Labyrinth, 1988); 'The Ministry of a Congregation', pp. 111–31 and idem *Sanctify them in the Truth: Holiness Exemplified* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998) ch. 9—'In Defense of Cultural Christianity: Reflections on Going to Church'.

A better alternative to ecclesial and other systems of ethics, (which at the same retain retains their strengths), highlights the primary and most inclusive biblical image of who we are as the people of God.[84] Ecclesial ethics,

> if left conceptually isolated from the more inclusive [concept] of the people of God .... may ... promote ghettoism, sects and a remnant mentality.
>
> . . .
>
> In the Scriptural depiction, the destination of Christians is not, in ultimate terms, participation in the heavenly *ekklesia*, but participation in the life of the city of God on a renewed earth. Their job description includes reigning on the new earth (e.g. Revelation 5:10, 22:5) .... Indeed the Adamic task of dominion (Gen 1:26–28) will be consummated in the new world (Heb 2:5–9; 1 Cor 15:10–28).
>
> . . .
>
> The concept of the people of God, however, covers both the gathering and the scattering of believers, both Old Testament and new; Israel in the land, Israel amongst the nations; Christians gathered, Christians scattered as a dispersion.
>
> Particularly important is the witness of 1 Peter.[85] For in a letter addressed to Christians in a troubled and troubling environment, *ekklesia* does not feature, but *laos* does quite explicitly. The Christians' corporate self-understanding is to be shaped by the great concepts of Israel's past: dispersion, children, exile, brethren, house, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, aliens, exiles, household of God, flock and brotherhood. Christians, who thus see themselves as the people of God, have a face towards the world (1 Pet 1:1, 14, 17, 22; 2:5, 9 especially 10, 11; 4:17; 5:2, 9).
>
> . . .
>
> The divine purpose is consummated not in an *ekklesia,* but in a city, not the city hall.[86]

A 'laology' like this gives equal emphasis to the public role, mission and vocations of God's people scattered. As Stephen Mott says: 'The Twelve were chosen to be *with* Jesus so that he might *send* them to proclaim the Good News and to cast out demons'.[87] This is minimized not only by more extreme ecclesial ethics but by the liberationist WCC dominance of advocacy over vocation. The WCC's clerical and radical agenda often forgets the church's central task and expertise in proclaiming Christ, oversimplifies complex economic and technical questions and obscures the scattered role of God's people through

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[84] See the seminal article revising the influential ecclesiology of Sydney Evangelical Anglicanism by G. A. Cole, 'The Doctrine of the Church: Towards Conceptual Clarification' in B.G. Webb ed. *Church, Worship and the Local Congregation* (Homebush W., Lancer, 1987), pp. 3–18. As Cole summarises Paul Minear (in G.A. Buttrick ed., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1972], p. 611 and P. Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament* [London: 1971]) 'The use of this term (*ho laos tou theou*) in the New Testament is more frequent, more ubiquitous, more evocative of the sense of identity and mission than the use of the term ecclesia.' (p. 9). Cf. M. Barth, *The People of God* (Sheffield, 1983), p. 49.

[85] 1 Peter is particularly significant as the source for S. Hauerwas and W. Willimon's image of Resident Aliens, Nashville, Abingdon, 1989. Cf M. Volf, 'Soft Difference: Church and Culture in 1 Peter' *Ex Auditu* vol 10, 1994, pp. 15–30

[86] Cole, 'People of God', pp. 7, 8, 10–11, 13.

[87] S.C. Mott, *Biblical Ethics and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 139.

lay vocational and ethical expertise and influence.[88] The indirect and persuasive role of the laity living out their calling as salt, light and leaven in the working world is overshadowed by emphasizing political power and direct action. Resolutionary Christianity (which thinks resolutions by Social Responsibilities groups will change the world) takes over from the quiet but revolutionary doctrine of vocational liberty and recognition of varying expertise and gifts. It is the laity that are the experts on the frontline of most ethical issues today.

However, as ecclesial ethicists rightly stress, for the *laos* or the people of God to be faithful disciples in diaspora, they need constant reminding of their identity as the people of God gathered. The individualizing, secularizing and privatizing of the doctrine of vocation that leads many to put individual career before God's kingdom must be countered. For many Christian professionals their professional group has a more profound socializing effect than their church—in effect it becomes church to them. In it they find their identity and security and in the light of its standards and ethos they make their major life decisions—what car to drive, clothes to wear, which school for their children, suburb in which to live and even what church to attend.

Most local ecclesias are little help to public Christians struggling with vocational and professional issues.[89] These Christians' sense of pastoral isolation is palpable. The sheep are not being fed or pastored in a way that promotes the Kingdom of God outside the four walls of the church gathered. Only when the theological and practical primacy of the people of God image is maintained through small work-based and other groups and when the strong Reformed emphasis on vocation is connected with the Anabaptist emphasis on ecclesial formation, will many Christian professionals stop finding their primary profession of Christ subverted or privatized by their secondary one. We need in some ways a form of Monday monasticism—a corporate discipline for workplace disciples.[90]

As Lesslie Newbigin again reminds us:

> if the congregation sees itself in Exodus 19 and 1 Peter's terms as a 'holy priesthood' for the sake of the world, and its members are equipped for the exercise of that priesthood in their secular employments, then there is the point of growth for a new social order. Even if it is a very small congregation … it can thus become the growing point from which the subversion for the principalities and powers [Eph 3:10] and the first shoots of a new creation can develop … without which political action on the macro scale will always fail.[91]

The local church as the catholic people of God in a particular place affirms what Scripture and many sociologists set over against global capitalism—the significance of place, creation and engagement with reality rather than a postmodern retreat into a

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88 Robert Benne, *The Paradoxical Vision: A Public Theology for the Twenty-First Century* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995). Cf. Paul Ramsey (*Who Speaks for the Church?* [1967], pp. 13, 15) who calls this the 'church and society syndrome' whereby a 'social action curia' assumes expertise in all of life.

89 As Australian surveys show. See John Bottomley 'The Ministry of Lay People in Paid Employment' Research project for an M. Min degree at Melbourne College of Divinity, 1999 and Philip J. Hughes, *Faith and Work* (Hawthorn VIC, Christian Research Association, 1988). For the US, cf. R. Wuthnow, *The Crisis in the Mainline Churches: Spiritual Malaise, Fiscal Woe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

90 See J.H. Yoder, 'Reformed Versus Anabaptist Social Strategies: An Inadequate Typology', and R. J. Mouw, 'Abandoning the Typology: A Reformed Assist', *TSF Bulletin* 8 (May-June 1985) and their 'Evangelical Ethics and the Anabaptist-Reformed Dialogue', *Journal of Religious Ethics* 17 (Fall 1989). See G. R. Preece, 'Everyday Spirituality: Connecting Sunday and Monday', *Zadok Paper* S76 (July 1995), pp. 10–14 for a range of practical suggestions for implementing such a Reformed-Anabaptist 'Monday monasticism'.

91 *Truth to Tell: The Gospel as Public Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), pp. 85–87.

private linguistic world.[92] Through a strong sense of being God's people, both gathered and scattered, local and global, called out of the world (*ekklesia*) and into the world (*vocatio*), God's people seek to hold the tension between those dimensions of the church's and world's life that threaten to tear apart under the momentum of the global economy and fragmented pluralistic publics which they participate in as producers, consumers and citizens.

Further, when Christians disagree on public issues or encounter difference, the unity of the people of God and the gospel as the ground of that unity (Eph. 4:1–6) should relativize party political differences. In doing so we demonstrate an alternative politics of reconciliation, not politics as usual, but the politics of Jesus. Yet as David Yeago notes:

> Disunity has … exacerbated the problem of the church's relationship to society: disunited churches have bound themselves, wittingly or unwittingly, to the powers of culture, ethnicity, and class that hold sway among the nations, seeking both an *ersatz* cohesion in the absence of true ecclesial unity, and protection against other churches with which they were in conflict …. This … applies both to the religious Right and to the religious Left with equal rigor. Whether the church presents itself as the mainstay of throne and altar, bourgeois morality, and true Americanism, or world peace, social justice, and the world-wide struggle against oppression, … the church defines its mission, and thus its reason for being, by claiming relevance to this or that struggle to control and use the coercive power of the state. The church legitimates itself by taking on the socially recognized role of a motivational support-system for socio-political struggle.[93]

A church is secure in its primal identity in Christ when people can disagree about non-essentials, or adiaphora, on the basis of being welcomed and accepted by God's gracious hospitality in Christ (Rom. 14–15, esp. 15:7). A church of this kind will provide a model that goes beyond the hostility of party politics, the adversarial nature of our industrial and racial relations and the hostility towards immigrants and refugees. It will have room for diversity and become a truly hospitable public space.

This requires structural reform of our often adversarial parliamentary (synods), media and legal practices. Sandel's 'procedural republic' often seems to dominate church processes as the language of party politics, numbers games and managerialism obscure the distinctive theological language,[94] gospel practices and polity of God's people.[95]

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[92] Cf. the significance of Pauline epistles addressed to *ecclesiai* in particular places, Corinth, Thessalonica etc highlighted by Miroslav Volf, 'Theology, Meaning and Power: Conversations with PostLiberals on Theology and the Nature of Christian Difference', in Phillips and Ockholm, *Evangelicals and PostLiberals in Conversation*

[93] D. Yeago, 'Messiah's People: The Culture of the Church in the Midst of the Nations', *Pro Ecclesia* VI/1, pp. 147, 166 citing R. Wuthnow's *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since World War II* (Princeton University Press, 1988) showing that US religious identity now has more to do with one's pet socio-political projects seeking religious blessing than with commitment to a particular church. R. L. Frame and A. Tharpe, *How Right is the Right? A Biblical and Balanced Approach to Politics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) ch. 5 provide 'Ten Commandments of Moderate Political Behavior' to counter this tendency.

[94] See Anthony B. Robinson, 'At the UCC Synod The Procedural Church', *Christian Century* (August 13–20 1997), pp. 717–18. 'Procedures Replace Pastoral Leadership. Catch phrases like "inclusive," "just peace," "multicultural" and "multiracial" replace a substantive teaching office …. Somehow the absence of even one real meal together seemed to symbolize a deeper emptiness and hunger at the center of the procedural church. "Each one," Paul wrote to the factionalised church at Corinth, "goes ahead with their own meal." '

[95] See J.H. Yoder, *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community Before the Watching World* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1992).

Christians should never go to law against each other, and, by extension of Paul's principle (1 Cor. 6:1ff),[96] preferably, not go to the secular media against one another also, although this is often the first move many make. For others such recourse arises out of immense frustration at not having been heard within the church due to its often non-dialogical structures. We need to keep on asking with Erik Wolf: 'What might it not mean for the world if church order and law were not merely spiritual adaptations of worldly constitutions and codes, but genuine and original witnesses to the brotherly fellowship of Jesus Christ!'

CONCLUSION

In short I have argued that the increasingly blurred postmodern perception of the relationship between private and public spheres of life provides a window of opportunity for the people of God to break out of its privatized modern captivity to be an alternative public and polity. Step by step I argued that:

1. In contrast to modernity's misguided attempts to confine Christianity to a private, pastoral domain of bare, inconsequential belief in order to keep the public peace, biblical shepherding imagery is anchored in Jesus' profoundly political embodied kingship. The christological and pastoral is thus political, and the church's pastoral ministries have a divinely political dimension in terms of leading people towards God's kingdom.

2. The modern 'naked public square' can no longer claim neutrality regarding narratives and values. It needs to be clothed with a master narrative other than market individualism. Various attempts to clothe the naked public are only partly helpful. Only a full-blooded biblical 'master narrative without masters' focused on the city of God can clothe the public square and redefine the public and its space.

3. Modern privatization of faith and postmodern fragmentation of society mean there is no single public, but rather a plurality of local publics constituted by many forms of media, yet often globally connected. Christianity's distinctive polity and unity should not be destroyed by political captivity to particular publics and issue based groups.

4. This distinctive polity is that of the republic of God. We are citizens of heaven and also members of God's global people. As the household of God personal issues and those confined to private life are made public and political. As the *ekklesia* or town hall of the city of God, the church publicly proclaims Jesus as Lord of all life. As representatives of his Lordship and republic, we are to be independent of the world's party spirit and patronage systems.

5. Various social ethical visions which are put forward expressing the way Christians should operate in public were examined. These included Universal, Liberationist, Middle Axioms, Ecclesial paradigms and my own preferred People of God paradigm. The latter is the primary biblical image of who we are and includes both gathered and scattered aspects of our identity and polity. As a gathered community it provides an alternative polis or hospitable public space to party hostility, modern privatized religion, and postmodern pluralism. As a scattered community it also allows space for the distinctive public, worldly vocations of Christians; it also permits us to relate our gathered polity to social policy. The polity of the people of God acts as a kind of middle axiom between theological and anthropological principles and wider social application and policy. However, it must be embodied in distinctive Christian social practices of reconciliation and pastoral/kingdom political support systems rather than letting its own polity and

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[96] Again the Anabaptists should be our model here. See S.M. Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today*, pp. 74–85. Cf. O' Donovan, *Desire of the Nations*, p. 150.

unity be subverted by the importation of adversarial processes or thin culture-forming practices. As such it is an enormous challenge for the people of God to truly practise being the people of God—both gathered and scattered.

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Prospects for an 'Evangelical Political Philosophy'

Jonathan Chaplin

Keywords: Democracy, government, ideology, community, egalitarian, history, justice, love, power, human nature, distribution, liberation

INTRODUCTION

The leading American social activist and theologian Ronald Sider has been foremost among those urging politically engaged evangelicals to develop an integrated framework of political thought to guide their political interventions. Commenting on the explosion of evangelical political action during the last two decades, what he reports of American evangelicals probably also applies in many other regional contexts:

> Evangelical political impact today is weakened because our voices are confused, contradictory, and superficial. We contradict each other. Our agendas are shaped more by secular ideologies than divine revelation. We have no systematic foundational framework for careful dialogue about our specific policy differences or even for successful repudiation of extremists.... Evangelicals urgently need a political philosophy. It would not solve all our political problems. But it would help.[1]

Although I would not construe the primary purpose of an evangelical political philosophy as the creation of evangelical political *unity* (desirable though that is), I think Sider's judgement is essentially accurate. The incoherence and indeed disarray of American evangelical political thought, first documented by Robert Booth Fowler in 1982,[2] was just as evident by the end of the decade, as illustrated by James Skillen's

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[1] 'Towards an evangelical political philosophy and agenda for Christians in the United States', *Transformation* 14/3 (1997), pp. 1–10.

[2] *A New Engagement: Evangelical Political Thought 1966–1976* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982).

broader analysis of *The Scattered Voice: Christians at Odds in the Public Square.*[3] And at century's end there was little evidence that this situation was set to change significantly in the near future.[4]

Acquiring a political philosophy would not—and should not—be the most decisive factor in determining the shape and direction of evangelical political action, but it would certainly help provide a valuable source of orientation, or at least a framework for more constructive debate about what that orientation should be. In this article I want to probe further into what the requirements and contours of such a political philosophy might look like. I will do this by engaging critically with one of the most substantial attempts so far to produce one on the basis of a recognizable evangelical methodology—i.e., one in which biblically-derived principles play the leading role—namely Stephen Mott's book *A Christian Perspective on Political Thought.*[5] This work illustrates the dynamic potentials of such a methodology but also reveals some of its limitations. But first let me briefly consider Sider's own proposal.

I THE NATURE OF THE ENTERPRISE: SIDER'S PROPOSAL

Sider rightly warns that guidelines for evangelical political engagement do not emerge unproblematically from an analysis of biblical material about politics, and he is fully aware of the complexity, difficulty, and precariousness of the task of generating them. Such guidelines require, he suggests, four components:[6] first, a 'biblical normative framework' based on a 'comprehensive summary of all relevant canonical material', including both the overall biblical story and specific themes such as justice, work, or dignity; second, a 'broad study of society and the world', drawing widely upon historical and social-scientific analyses; third, a 'political philosophy', namely 'a road map, a handy guide' through all relevant material, and which should emerge from and be controlled by the first two components and not adopted uncritically from non-Christian sources; and finally, 'detailed social analysis on specific issues' (e.g. an economic analysis of the effects of raising the minimum wage). In the article cited, Sider presents outlines of the first and third. He also appends concrete suggestions for a political agenda for the U.S., on which I shall not comment. I will, however, remark later on the general relationship between biblical-theological material and the use of the social sciences.

His 'normative framework' is rooted in the biblical drama of creation, sin, redemption in Jesus Christ and final restoration, which, he rightly suggests, should shape our understanding of key biblical-theological themes including human dignity, freedom of belief, the family, justice, concern for the poor, work, peacemaking, and individuality and community.[7] The components of the political philosophy which Sider sees as emerging—in interaction with the 'broad study of society and the world'—from this framework are

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[3] Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. I am not, of course, suggesting that American evangelicals are fully representative of the diversity of the global movement, but they are the most influential politically.

[4] A major research project based at the Oxford Centre for Misson Studies (UK) and at the Ethics and Public Policy Center (Washington, D.C.) on evangelical political action in developing countries, sponsored by the International Fellowship of Mission Theologians (INFEMIT), may, however, throw up some encouraging counter-examples.

[5] New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

[6] 'Towards an evangelical political philosophy', pp. 2–3.

[7] Ibid., pp. 4–5. Elsewhere, of course, Sider has produced valuable and extensive statements of such a biblical framework for social and political engagement.

as follows:[8] democratization and decentralization of political power; a democratic political order; the institutions of civil society; decentralized private ownership and a market economy; full religious freedom; human rights; the family; ecological responsibility; the role of government as restraining evil and promoting the common good; protection for work and workers; the priority of the poor; a consistent ethic of life; and a commitment to peacemaking.

I agree with most of what Sider recommends here, though I would want to supplement it with other components (and no doubt some evangelicals would find more to object to than I have). As a provisional attempt at a summary of a balanced, biblical political orientation, it serves as a valuable and helpful starting-point.[9] But it is misleading to describe it as the outline of a 'political philosophy'. If this term is to be used in anything like its conventional sense, a political philosophy is not a 'handy guide', nor even 'a helpful tool for navigating complex political decisions'.[10]

If a political philosophy was *no* help in the process of reaching political decisions it would, in my view, be redundant, but its primary purpose should be seen, not as shaping policy but rather as *deepening understanding*, forming the mindset with which we approach the political arena and providing a set of coherent principles with which we order our objectives and approach policy-making. Sider's seemingly instrumentalist conception of political philosophy reflects, perhaps, the continuing influence of a characterictically evangelical activism which underestimates the scope and purpose of the enterprise.[11] Nor, apart from a brief tribute paid to Catholic political thought, does he acknowledge that an indispensable element in the development of a Christian political philosophy must be a critical appropriation of the two millenia-long legacy of previous attempts to do so.

Sider's list of key components of a political philosophy in fact turns out to consist of an *ad hoc* selection of middle-range political principles plus an endorsement of some desirable institutions or political objectives, lacking any unifying philosophical or theological theme which might enable us to discern any coherence in the theoretical framework he proposes. There is, however, one leading candidate for such a theme in his list, namely 'the role of government'. This, I believe, gets us closer to the core of what a political philosophy is about, and I return to it later.

Sider's laudable objective of producing a political philosophy shaped by biblical revelation and capable of informing contemporary Christian political action is shared by Stephen Mott, whose *A Christian Perspective on Political Thought* (henceforth CPPT) is one of the fullest attempts by a thinker proceeding from an evangelical methodology to rise to the kind of challenge issued in Sider's article.[12] What happens, then, when that challenge is taken up? My argument will be that, while Mott's work goes a long way towards responding to Sider's call and represents a major advance on most earlier evangelical

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[8] Ibid., pp. 5–7.

[9] Compare a shorter summary to which selected British evangelical political thinkers were invited to respond some years ago: Jonathan Chaplin, ed, *Politics and the Parties* (When Christian Disagree) (Leicester: IVP, 1992).

[10] Sider, 'Towards an evangelical political philosophy', p. 5.

[11] Sider writes: 'It is simply impossible, every time one wants to make a political decision, to spend days (actually years) reviewing the mountains of relevant biblical material and complex studies of society. We need a framework, a handy guide—in short, a political philosophy' (op cit., p. 3).

[12] Since Mott's book was published four years prior to Sider's article, it is puzzling why Sider makes no mention of it. One would have expected him to cite it as a primary example of what he was urging.

treatments, it too is vitiated by an inadequate understanding of the constitutive requirements of a Christian political philosophy, and by a neglect of systematic reflection on the nature and purpose of the state and the scope and limits of its competence in distinction to those of other social institutions.[13]

In so arguing I will, of course, reflect the influence of particular strands of Christian political philosophy, but this, I suggest, is an inevitable element of any attempt to take up the tasks just noted. An '*evangelical* political philosophy' can never be *just* that, never merely a freestanding distillation of the fruits of biblical study dissociated from existing traditions of Christian political theorizing.

II AN EVANGELICAL POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY: MOTT'S CONTRIBUTION

Part I of CPPT ('Focusing Theologically') presents the substance of a Christian political philosophy, while Part II ('Observing the Visions') employs this in critical dialogue with, respectively, traditional conservatism, liberalism, democracy, laissez-faire conservatism, Marxism, Socialism and Fascism. I concentrate on the first part, referring to the second part mainly to clarify or elaborate on Mott's systematic conceptions.

Mott seeks to ground his substantive political theory as far as possible in biblical analysis, employing a 'dialogical' hermeneutic in which Scripture interacts with experience and reason under the guidance of the Spirit.[14] However, in addition to Scripture, he utilizes the thought of leading members of the 'Christian socialist realists' writing in the 1930s and 1940s (especially Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich and Eduard Heimann). He also draws frequently on the American social ethicist James Luther Adams, on various liberation theologians, and on the democratic ideas of the American Puritans. This exercise in appropriating the work of earlier Christian political thinkers is commendable, though it completely bypasses most of the major classical (medieval and Reformation) and modern Christian political philosophers.

Mott uses various terms to denote his enterprise: a 'Christian political theory'; a Christian 'social and political philosophy'; a 'theological' approach to politics; a 'political theology'; a 'Christian political ethics'; and others. A standardization of this terminology would be salutary, not primarily for reasons of linguistic tidiness but because disciplinary appellations disclose what one is really about. Is Christian political philosophy really just an application of the fruits of biblical exegesis; a branch of theological ethics; a department of systematic theology? Where it is treated as any of these its relevance to students (and practitioners) of politics dealing with issues like electoral behaviour, constitutional change, party systems, democratization, citizenship, welfare policy, and so on, is limited.

Mott's *Biblical Ethics and Social Change* (henceforth BESC)[15], as a work of theological ethics, is certainly valuable as a theological prolegomena for Christian political philosophy, but only a work like CPPT is of direct assistance. This is because the object of that enterprise does not stop at reflection on the Bible or on theology, but moves on to reflection on *political reality* in the light of biblical and theological insights.

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[13] Some passages in what follows draw on my review of CPPT in *The European Journal of Theology* V/1 (1996), pp. 71–73.

[14] CPPT, p. 7. I shall not directly discuss his hermeneutical method nor his biblical exegesis, but I comment later on problems in his employment of the social sciences, included under the 'reason' component of this hermeneutic.

[15] New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Mott's use of the term 'theology' is itself ambiguous. He claims that 'politics is about theology', meaning that politics necessarily betrays an 'orientation to reality, nature and human existence'. 'As this orientation is grounded in religious belief, it expresses theology.'[16] His focus would be clarified if he were to distinguish between 'religion' as a fundamental phenomenon of human experience, 'religious studies' as reflection on that phenomenon, and 'theology' as reflection on revelation. We could then certainly say that 'politics expresses religion', and also that theology has something to say about politics.

He also employs the term 'ideology', though without making explicit its relationship to these other terms. He uses it in the descriptive sense to refer to a comprehensive framework of beliefs about society, or a social 'vision', rather than in the critical (Marxist or Mannheimian) sense to refer to the distortion of social reality in the interests of the powerful.

I prefer the term 'Christian political philosophy' (or 'theory') for Mott's enterprise. His own definition is again ambiguous, however: Christian political theory 'clarifies the values of the common life and the range of legitimate alternatives in approaching them'; it contains 'criteria that Christians should use in evaluating political theory'.[17] The implication is that it is merely a framework of ethical values by which 'secular' political theories might be critically assessed, rather than an alternative political theory with a distinctive content; a filter rather than a substance. Indeed, Part II reinforces this appearance, where Mott outlines in some detail the content of alternative ideologies, and then offers selective evaluative comments on certain aspects of them. However, what he elaborates in Part I indeed begins to resemble a political theory with a distinctive substance, rather than a mere filter; this is what makes the book interesting.

Merely to stipulate that, whatever the political philosophy we adopt, it must be compatible with a series of Christian ethical principles not themselves of a distinctively political character (such as love, equality, community, etc), is of limited help to someone wrestling with the concrete particulars of politics. What such a person needs is not general principles of ethics, but institutionally particularized principles, principles of *political* ethics, concerning the nature, source and limits of political authority, the legitimacy of democracy, the purpose of the state, the nature of law, justice and rights, the political implications of liberty, equality, property, welfare, class and so forth. Mott goes some way towards providing these, but his apparatus of political concepts is insufficiently developed, making for ambiguity or lacunae at certain points, and for an uncritical appropriation of elements of secular ideologies at others, as I shall now try to indicate.

Mott's substantive argument is unfolded in terms of the successive themes of power, human nature, social groups, government, justice, love and time. However, to disclose the structure of his thought more clearly, I have opted to rearrange his themes as follows: first, human nature and history (chs. 2 and 7); second, love and justice (chs. 5 and 6); third, society (chs. 3 and 1); and fourth, justice and government (chs. 4 and 5).

HUMAN NATURE AND HISTORY

Mott distributes his discussion of the most fundamental themes of biblical faith across chapters 2 and 7, obscuring somewhat their foundational status and their intimate connections. Nonetheless, the account of those themes is a convincing one: the core of the biblical narrative tells of our creation in the image of God, our fall into sin with all its

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[16] CPPT, pp. 4–5.

[17] CPPT, p. 7.

ramifying consequences for personal and social life, and the present reality and future hope of our redemption in Christ. The inextricable mixture of good and evil in human nature (ch. 2) must condition our political aspirations. Government is inherent to human community as created by God, though since in a fallen world it also deals with human sin, we may say that government 'is a necessary extension of our nature as beings with responsibility under God for creation and as beings who are sinners'.[18]

Following Niebuhr, Mott remarks that a Christian politics must be 'realist' both in the sense that it should do all it can to unlock the human potential for good, and in the sense that it should vigilantly sustain safeguards against the excesses of personal and social sin. Politics cannot remove the propensity for human evil—conversion remains permanently necessary; and sin also makes politics permanently necessary, for unchecked by politics, sin will run amok and the weak will be consumed by the powerful. The same biblical realism informs Mott's eschatological perspective, his 'politics of time' (ch 7).

We must be realistic both about the limitations placed on human political aspirations by the ineradicability of our sin,[19] but equally about the action of God in breaking into our fallen history and opening up new possibilities of social transformation. A biblical perspective must hold past, present and future together: 'The Reign of God is the new and updated force in history which makes the injustices and exploitations inherited from the past outdated as remnants of a past which is already being destroyed'[20].

I agree that such an eschatological perspective reliably grounds the meaningfulness of political struggle, though in my view Mott needs to state more explicitly here that the creational origin of politics is more fundamental than the additional remedial functions it acquires on account of sin. Yet it may be noted that this perspective has no privileged association with political activity, as Mott at times implies: God's reign is not only personal but also public, not only psychological but also political. 'If history is meaningful, then politics is meaningful.'[21] History, however, encloses *every* potentiality of created reality— political, social, intellectual, artistic, emotional—and God's historical salvation also embraces all of these, so we should avoid implying, as some early liberation theologians were wont to do, that a biblical eschatology privileges the politically active as some kind of missiological vanguard.

LOVE AND JUSTICE

In characterizing the relationship between love and justice, Mott rejects a two-kingdom model in which a gospel ethic of love is seen as operative in a realm separate from an ethically less-demanding realm of justice. Rather, justice is the necessary social outworking of love. Yet while love is self-giving, justice 'does not give; rather, it fulfills claims and rights'.[22] Justice is necessary where claims require adjudication, as is the case

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[18] CPPT, p. 58.

[19] Classical liberalism's faith in the inevitability of historical progress on the basis of rational control of nature fails to come to terms with this (CPPT, p. 140ff). For comments on Marxism's vulnerability to Enlightenment historical optimism, cf. CPPT, pp. 194–6.

[20] CPPT, p. 109. The reverence of Conservatism for historical tradition prevents it from allowing the future to criticize the present (CPPT, p. 128). Rather we should 'retain as much continuity with the past as justice allows' (CPPT, p. 130).

[21] CPPT, p. 111.

[22] CPPT, p. 91.

in most social situations beyond the inter-personal: 'more than any other concept', Mott rightly proposes, justice 'provides the positive meaning of politics. It identifies what is most essential in life shared together in community and indicates the proper tasks of the government in supporting the common good'.[23]

Three conceptions of the meaning of justice are considered: the positivist conception of justice as conformity to law; the communitarian conception of justice as what is due by the laws of a particular society; and the naturalist conception of justice as natural right. Mott rather hastily rejects the first two, but suggests, rightly I think, that the third can be adapted to a biblical understanding—but unfortunately this suggestion is nowhere followed through.

Narrowing his account still further to distributive justice, he emphasizes that justice goes beyond procedural matters to substantive ends, and notes the association in modern thought between justice and equality. But these complex concepts are dealt with summarily and superficially, as I shall illustrate later on in relation to his treatment of the concept of equality. Yet in spite of this his account of biblical justice[24] is provocative, wide-ranging, and amply documented with biblical references. It can be summarised as follows:

i. Human justice is grounded in God's character and his acts of justice.

ii. Justice is not separate from, but overlaps with, 'righteousness' understood as 'right conduct'. Hence biblical injunctions to act 'righteously' often mean act 'justly'.

iii. Justice is understood in both OT and NT as a central duty for all God's people, indeed for all humanity and is closely linked with love.

iv. Justice is dynamic not static, more a call to action than a principle of evaluation: justice 'means taking upon oneself the cause of those who are weak in their own defense'.

v. Justice is more than mitigating the consequences of oppression, rather it delivers the oppressed from their situation by releasing them from their bonds.

vi. Justice displays a 'bias toward the weak', not in the sense that the weak should receive more than their just claims, but in the sense that 'in the raging social struggles in which the poor are perennially victims of injustice, God and the followers of God take up the cause of the weak'.[25]

vii. Justice is a restoration to full participation in the community.

viii. Justice provides an equality in basic needs.

ix. Justice implies both freedom rights (or negative, or civil, rights) and benefit rights (or positive, or economic, rights).

SOCIAL ORDER

Mott's opening chapter is a discussion of 'power'. This is not a helpful place to start. The biblical-theological themes considered above are more fundamental and would have been better starting-points. Earlier I noted Mott's claim that politics is 'about theology'. But politics, he says, is also 'about power'. 'The political process is the shaping, distribution,

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[23] CPPT, p. 74.

[24] CPPT, pp. 79–87. This builds upon that in BESC, ch 4.

[25] Mott is right that God's favour for the poor does not imply that they should receive more than their due, but if so, then retaining the term 'bias' is misleading. Bias is something always to be avoided, as Scripture repeatedly makes clear precisely with respect to those in judicial roles (judges and kings). The primary point surely is not that God is on the side of the poor *per se* but that he is on the side of justice, and that simply means that he is on the side of those who are the victims of injustice (i.e. the biblical 'poor').

and exercise of power'.[26] This is offered as a 'sociological' definition of power. But the assertion that 'politics is about power' is of limited value; it means as much or as little as saying that it is 'about' economics, or status, or community, or action. Power is a universal dimension of social relationships and its use must be qualified by the structural context in view.

Political philosophy is indeed centrally concerned with power, its sources, nature, types and uses, but not just any type of power. *Political* power is power employed by *political* actors, whether individual citizens, interest groups, political parties, or government agencies. Mott uses the term in an undifferentiated sense to refer to numerous kinds of social power in diverse contexts, even though what is true of one kind of power is not necessarily true of others. This leads him to advance the fundamental claim that 'the structure of unequal power leads to exploitation'.[27]

This assertion is clearly false if we are referring to the context of the family, where unequal power is a precondition for successful parenting. But it is also false if applied to the state. Mott cites OT texts (such as the 'Jubilee' provisions in [Leviticus 25]) which support a broadly equal distribution of productive resources across extended families, but it does not follow that *political power* can or should be distributed on an equal basis.[28] Political authorities necessarily and rightly hold superior political power, commensurate with the distinctive political rights and responsibilities arising from the very office of government. The problematic assertion that 'the structure of unequal power leads to exploitation' turns out to be a central assumption throughout the whole book. The coming Kingdom of God will be an 'egalitarian age',[29] Mott asserts—but what that means politically today requires careful examination. I will suggest that his accounts of both justice and government are weakened by a misplaced egalitarianism.

It turns out that Mott has in mind especially power attaching to material resources and to social status. He rightly observes that these and other kinds of power frequently also give the holders varying degrees of political power, and exposing the actual distribution of effective political power is an indeed an essential task of a Christian political analysis. While it is necessary and legitimate that political authorities have superior power, it matters greatly in whose interests this political power is exercised. So he is right to emphasise that huge divergences in the possession of social and economic power almost invariably distort government policy in favour of the powerful.[30] And he is able to cite ample biblical warnings against such maldistributions of power.

Alongside a 'sociological' definition of power, Mott also introduces a 'theological' definition, power as a good gift of God in creation, 'the ability of a particular existent to act in accordance with its being'[31] (a definition indebted to Tillich). The link between the two, however, is not made clear, leaving entirely open the question of whether the latter might legitimately control the interpretation of the former, or indeed vice versa, or whether the two simply stand over against each other, dualistically, as quite separate

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[26] CPPT, p. 9.

[27] CPPT, p. 19.

[28] This is in fact acknowledged in BESC, p. 71.

[29] CPPT, p. 19.

[30] On this point, he rightly notes, classical liberalism and laissez-faire conservatism fail because their faith in the naturally self-regulating mechanisms of society blinds them to the distorting impact of unequal power (CPPT, pp. 139–141; 162 ff; 172).

[31] CPPT, p. 15.

sources of knowledge. Nonetheless, he helpfully clarifies what he means by a theological perspective by interpreting power in a creation-fall-redemption framework. Power is a creaturely gift. Citing the original mandate to 'subdue the earth' ([Gen. 1:26–30](#)), Mott states: 'Carrying out power faithfully is to share in one's human heritage and destiny received from God'; the purpose of power is to serve.[32] Like everything creaturely, however, power is fallen and is thus routinely misused at the expense of the vulnerable. But God acts with redemptive power to restore creaturely power to its proper use.

Further distinctions between 'defensive', 'exploitive' and 'intervening' power flesh out this illuminating perspective.[33] Creaturely power is a positive ability but it also has negative or 'defensive' features, since a creature's power of being is also a power to defend itself against that which would frustrate its being. This is especially important for those with little power, and Mott shows how the biblical 'poor' are often referred to as those with insufficient power to confront the 'exploitive power' of the oppressor. Sin has created 'conditions of destructive differentials' in resources, and defensive power is needed to rectify this. But defensive power will often not be enough, making 'intervening power' (or 'substitute defensive power') necessary to oppose exploitive power by redressing the power imbalance. 'Intervening power is creative as it re-establishes power of being by thwarting exploitive power.'[34]

It is necessary to note, again, that Mott's three kinds of power are not necessarily political in character. His own biblical examples of intervening power are indeed mainly cases of *political* authorities intervening to secure justice. But the same threefold distinction (and the same creation-fall-redemption framework) applies for *all* institutional contexts in which power is used. Thus, for instance, parental power is a certain power of being, can be exploitive when abused, and is also defensive and intervening when it protects children against harm. Mott's analysis needs a more complex classification of types of power, but to develop that he would require a broader theory of social institutions and the relationships between them.

Pointers towards such a theory are found in his chapter on 'social groups' (ch. 3).[35] Social groups are not simply instruments by which individuals pursue their ends. Rather, humans are created as social beings to live within a variety of diverse communities or associations, each answering to particular human needs and capacities, and providing contexts of personal and moral growth. Human nature comes to expression in a richly pluralistic society, one in which the independent character and purposes of multiple self-governing social groups should be protected against undue state control.

Multiple groups ensure a wide dispersal of power, initiative, and cultural influence, which help protect individuals against domination by any one of them. 'Secondary associations' in particular, such as lobby groups or producer and professional bodies, make possible independent criticism of society and thus provide 'social space for freedom.'[36] Groups are thus an important source of 'defensive power'.

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[32] CPPT, p. 22.

[33] CPPT, pp. 16–23.

[34] CPPT, p. 21.

[35] A group is 'a structure of individual relationships that has the capacity of engaging in joint action or having common interests' (CPPT, p. 42).

[36] CPPT, p. 47. The church as a group with a unique purpose must also defend its independence from any other group. But it must use this independence to equip its members to take up their other associational tasks. Too often it has fallen into an 'associational slumber', thus failing to use multiple groups as channels of Christian influence in society (CPPT, pp. 47–49)

Following Niebuhr, Mott argues that groups display the limitations as well as the possibilities of human nature. Groups not only enhance the creative potentials of individuals, they can also intensify their evil inclinations, especially larger groups such as nations. As a consequence, social change requires the transformation of the nature of groups as well as individuals, and pursuing justice will involve conflict and coercion, requiring strong government interventions. On the other hand, the capacity of the state alone to secure justice is limited. An effective strategy of social change must 'work through the matrix of group life'.[37]

This pluralistic model of society is both plausible and promising. The necessary next step, however, is a much fuller analysis of the identity and structure of diverse types of groups in terms of a normative account of the human needs or capacities or purposes they serve. For example, the manifestation of 'egoism' is very different in families compared to corporations or business. The ethical responsibility of parents to children is much more exclusive than that of states to members of the nation; in the former case a high degree of 'exclusivism' is essential, while in the latter it is pernicious.

The sense in which groups guarantee individual liberty differs greatly according to which group is in view. Families enhance liberty by nurturing the moral and affective inclinations of children, while trade unions do so by resisting corporate exploitation. Further, a fuller account of which groups are excessively dominating others is also required, and here the relationship between political and economic types of power needs to be critically elucidated. Today the leading players are multinational corporations and global financial institutions, yet neither receives significant attention in Mott's analysis.

JUSTICE AND GOVERNMENT

Mott rightly rejects the secular liberal concept of freedom as the leading motif of a Christian political philosophy. Rather the content of freedom must be determined by the requirements of justice.[38] He shows how justice in Scripture is more than a general principle of right conduct and more than merely formal or procedural; instead, it has substantive content which favours a distinctive form of social order (summarised above in points vi-ix). Distinguishing a variety of possible distributive criteria of social justice, he claims that the one most faithfully reflecting the biblical vision is 'distribution according to needs in community'.[39] He thus takes a definite and controversial position within a complex philosophical debate—as any interesting Christian political philosophy must. What are its further implications for a modern society?

Since basic needs are broadly equal between human beings, justice calls for an equal satisfaction of such needs. Denied such satisfaction, people are excluded from the human community, and so justice does not simply distribute a package of resources to a series of discreet individuals, but rather restores their full participation in the life of the community.[40] Mott's vision, then, is not 'collectivist' but 'communitarian'. His underlying model of society could be summed up in the term 'equal community'. The basic needs of members of the human community include physical life, political protection, political decision-making, social interchange and standing, economic production, education,

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[37] CPPT, p. 56.

[38] CPPT, p. 143.

[39] CPPT, pp. 88, 82.

[40] CPPT, pp. 80–83.

culture and religion. Membership implies full participation in each essential aspect of the community, and justice provides the conditions for that participation.

It might be noted that this is also the core of a socialist vision, and, not suprisingly, his own favourable definition of socialism closely resembles his account of biblical social justice.[41] He perceives 'a high degree of correspondence to biblical justice in the socialist commitment to justice'.[42] On the other hand, he qualifies this by speaking of 'socialism in the light of Christian realism'.[43] His central aspiration is a version of what political philosophers call 'market socialism': an economy of small producers, many constituted as workers cooperatives, yet competing in a free market. He claims that a participatory, decentralized market economy will not only be more ethically satisfying, but also more efficient.[44]

Mott's view of justice as 'restoration to community' is, at first sight, an attractive one, but his account begs many questions in the absence of the fuller analysis of social institutions (and social power) I proposed earlier. The term 'community' needs much greater specification and differentiation than Mott lends it. As his own analysis shows, a modern pluralistic society is far more differentiated than that of ancient Israel, so that when applying an OT conception of justice to contemporary society, we need to indicate *which* community it is to which justice is supposed to restore us: is it the political community (national or local), the economic community, the family community (or all of the above)?[45] Justice itself creates plural obligations: different communities constitute distinct spheres of justice in which different packages of rights and obligations obtain.

Mott's main concern seems to be with the rights and obligations attaching to membership of the *political* community (i.e. to citizenship), though this is not sufficiently distinguished from economic community (a term which itself demands much fuller explication). I take the core of his view to be the claim that citizenship implies a political guarantee of both freedom rights and benefit rights, especially guaranteed access to the minimum resources necessary to participate in society.

Not only does Mott's account suffer from an undifferentiated communitarianism, but it also runs into difficulties because of an insufficiently specific egaliarianism (though he is aware that equality is 'a shifty word in political science'). Biblical equality is, he suggests, a 'relative equality'. It does not mean a 'mathematical division of all property and power or a leveling of all social goods'.[46] The problem is that equality *is indeed* a mathematical, quantitative term, whereas many essential human needs are not capable of precise quantification.

Strictly, things can be distributed *equally* only if they can be *quantified*. Consider two examples of things which can be quantified, and which also should be distributed equally. First, certain kinds of rights. A right is an entitlement or claim or privilege attaching to a

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[41] Cf. CPPT, p. 199. For another sympathetic account of socialism from an evangelical viewpoint, see Stephen Timms, 'Salt to the World', in *Transformation* 14/3 (July/September 1997), pp. 16–19.

[42] CPPT, p. 204.

[43] CPPT, p. 206.

[44] CPPT, pp. 208–211; 213–217.

[45] At times Mott seems to imply that justice restores us to 'the human community'. I see his point, but it is not easy to speak of 'participation' in a community as extensive as this. We always participate in this universal community in particular ways, in specific communities, though our humanity is not exhausted by membership of any one of those particular communities.

[46] CPPT, p. 82.

legal personality: each such personality, by definition, has just one right. Rights are thus entities which are capable of an equal (or 'universal') distribution, and at least some of them should be so distributed. Many rights cannot and should not be distributed equally, such as those attaching to particular offices (civil servants, medical practitioners, police officers, etc.) or relationships (parent-child, employer-employee, etc.). Certainly we must distribute equally those 'human rights' which have come to be defined in positive law as civil or political rights. Mott refers to these as 'freedom rights'. He also suggests that certain 'benefit rights' ought also to be distributed equally, such as is implied by the OT right to family land tenure.[47]

However, clarity about the relationship between equality and needs now becomes crucial. For one thing, a universal legal entitlement—such as a social security benefit—a prime example of a 'benefit right'—does not necessarily confer an equal (identical) material benefit, since these can also depend on need and contribution. The same issue arises in regard to a second category of (more or less) quantifiable things, namely biologically determined needs, such as shelter, food, clothing. Yet even here, a *strictly* equal distribution of such goods would produce injustice, since different people need different amounts (depending on family size, climate, etc.). Of course, *each* person must have their essential needs met, though that will in fact involve treating some of them unequally, which is what actually happens in many welfare states. There are, then, limits to the applicability of the concept of equality as a distributive criterion.

It appears, however, that Mott's main position is that distribution according to need is indeed primary. Thus, for example, while 'the principle of justice does not prevent unequal accumulations after the basic needs of all have been met',[48] yet distribution according to needs prevails over other possible criteria where there is a conflict.[49] The view that justice requires unconditional satisfaction of the basic needs implied in membership of the human community is, I think, incontrovertible (and politically far-reaching), though precisely what public policy measures would be required to attain this objective is not immediately obvious; they do not simply flow out of the concept of need (nor simply out of a social scientific analysis of current patterns of distribution). Clarity about distribution according to needs requires detaching the notion from any necessary association with equal treatment.

A more important question is *who is responsible* for securing the distribution which justice requires (whatever ordering of criteria we eventually settle on)? It is certainly true, as Mott notes, that justice has a special relationship to political authority. But this clearly does not imply either that the state has exclusive responsibility for justice or that in every case its responsibility is primary (or that its only responsibility is to do justice). Indeed, he recognizes that justice is a duty of all people, and many of the biblical texts he cites are universal imperatives. For example, corporations today are directly and primarily responsible for avoiding environmental pollution or unsafe working conditions. The state's duty to protect the environment is in this case subsidiary (though potentially wide-ranging).

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[47] For a valuable discussion of this question, see Paul Marshall, 'Universal Human Rights and the Role of the State', in Luis Lugo, ed., *Sovereignty at the Crossroads: Morality and International Politics in the Post-Cold War Era* (Lanham, MD.: University Press of America, 1996), pp. 153–175, and the reply by Joseph Boyle.

[48] CPPT, p. 82. In fact he goes further, acknowledging that many basic needs are efficiently provided for by the market. In other words, distribution according to merit or ability itself helps guarantee satisfaction of basic needs. Defenders of capitalism go further, of course, claiming that basic needs can be met only if the dominant mode of distribution is merit.

[49] CPPT, p. 88.

Mott strikes upon an important principle here which invites much further reflection. While justice restores people to membership in community, it does not itself actually provide the benefits of membership, but rather sustains the conditions for people to be 'active agents of their own well-being'. This takes us to the question of the scope of the state's responsibilities, one which is at the heart of the concerns of political philosophy. Mott approaches this in terms of a discussion of how we might 'seek and distrust government' (ch.4). But before considering his view of the role of government, let us briefly remark on his view of the source of political authority.

As we saw, he holds that community is a universal feature of created humanity, and that government—the political community—is also. The specific form of authority exercised by government is judicial authority, its sphere of operation the interactions among individuals and groups making up a society. Mott suggests that authority in general is created by the voluntary transfer of the power of those subject to it. There are, however, many instances where this is not the case (e.g. family, church), and on the classical Christian view it applies to political authority only in a very special sense.

Although he rejects the contractarian explanation of the origin of government as individualistic, he comes close to endorsing the voluntaristic liberal theory of political obligation attached to it. He is indeed right to emphasize that the source of the legitimacy of political authority is the divine mandate to do justice, and that God works through various human instruments in order to select rulers. Yet it needs to be clarified more explicitly than he does that popular consent does not as such generate political authority.

The radical democratic doctrine of the sovereignty of the popular will is incompatible with the assertion of the divine origin of such authority. It may indeed be argued that citizens do have a right to participate in the selection of those who hold the office of government. That authority, however, resides in the God-given office, not in the will of the voter. Mott draws here on the American Puritans, but could have clarified his position considerably by delving deeper into the centuries of Christian political reflection on this question.

Ambiguities continue in Mott's account as he applies the democratic principle more widely: 'Because of the freedom and authority possessed by the individual, his or her communities must be democratic themselves. Democracy reflects the people's power to control every aspect of their lives and also to change the way in which they live together.'[50] This again is too sweeping, because it fails to distinguish between the different types of human community which exist, and which may require different decision-making structures to reflect their distinct identities. It is important to distinguish between participation, which is indeed a principle applying to every member of any community and is perhaps even implied in the very idea of 'membership', and democratic decision-making, which is only one form of participation and which may be inappropriate in, for example, families, or certain economic, educational or security organizations.

He does, however, recognize a truly vital point: that democratic decision-making must be subjected to the normative purposes of the political community. Democracy may be seen as one implication of justice, but is itself circumscribed by other, weightier demands of justice. Herein is found a core insight lying behind the emergence of the principles of limited government and constitutional democracy. In particular, he notes, the tyranny of the majority over minority rights must be resisted. To do this requires constitutional restraints on what democratic states may will, such as a separation of powers, or

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[50] CPPT, p. 155.

constitutionally guaranteed rights to protect individuals (and, we might add, groups) against the state.[51]

What then is the purpose of the state so authorized by God? Mott suggest that its purpose is to perform certain tasks which no other group could perform, notably securing goods which can be provided only collectively, such as criminal justice, defence or diplomacy, environmental protection, water and transport infrastructure, or those which could be provided by other means but which tend not to be, or not adequately, such as social insurance, or compensation. This point is a valid one, though Mott does not link it explicitly enough with his earlier claim that the state's mandate is to do justice.[52] His account at this point resembles a 'common good' argument, but the principle of the common good is not identical to the principle of justice. Again, large bodies of Christian political thought could have been drawn upon to clarify this central point.

Mott clearly recognizes that the scope of state authority has definite bounds. Much social regulation is done apart from the state, through diverse social groups, relationships or customs; the state must avoid undue domination of group life. The state must prevent excessive power falling into the hands of any one type of group and stand ready to intervene to make up for the deficiencies of voluntary activity. Its role thus involves arbitrating conflicts between groups and also stimulating mutual group support.

This involves maintaining an equilibrium among conflicting social groups, though one designed not simply to restore order, but to fulfil the requirements of justice. This will require redressing imbalances of power where they exist, and so will probably disturb social peace by evoking opposition from those groups controlling an excessive degree of power.[53] 'The positive meaning of the state is justice. Its essence is to bear, posit and enforce justice'[54]—and for Mott this essentially means guaranteeing distribution according to the minimum needs of community membership.

Mott's proposal that the role of the state is to realize a 'just equilibrium' among individuals and social groups is potentially a highly significant one, and converges with much classical and modern Christian political thought (as well as with the ideas of the radical wing of Christian Democracy). However, by premising it on an undifferentiated communitarianism and egalitarianism, Mott curtails its potential and skews its application. I am far from suggesting that a Christian political theory should not be communitarian nor egalitarian. Indeed I would argue that the notions of community and equality are indispensable for such a theory, but only so long as their application and limits in different contexts are precisely specified.

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[51] CPPT, p. 160.

[52] Mott amply supports the claim that justice defines the task of the state with copious references to the OT figure of the ideal monarch, whose role as guarantor of justice is seen as a universal model for all kings (CPPT, pp. 66–70). This role appears to be well-established in the ancient Near East, although it is sharply contrasted with the corrupt Canaanite model of kingship, which was aristocratic, militaristic, and economically exploitative. Repeatedly, the ideal monarch is depicted as the one who intervenes to defend the poor and needy against the predatory ambitions of 'the mighty'. He was 'both a legislator of just laws and the ultimate judge to whom unjustly treated persons could appeal' (p. 68).

[53] CPPT, pp. 64–5. Mott rightly observes that the liberal notion of government as a neutral arbiter of free social interactions fails to acknowledge that justice challenges both the processes and the outcomes of such interactions; justice 'trumps' freedom (p. 169). There are, however, areas in which markets are better than state or cooperative structures at allocating productive resources (cf. 176–7).

[54] CPPT, p. 66.

CONCLUSION: PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

I have suggested that, notwithstanding its richness and promise, Mott's evangelically-inspired formulation of a Christian political philosophy needs a clearer articulation of the nature of political philosophy and its relationship to biblical-theological themes and to the social sciences. I have also proposed that his substantive theory invites a fuller explication of the nature and authority of the state and its role in relation to many other diverse social institutions. His employment of an undifferentiated communitarianism and egalitarianism both derive from and contribute to these deficiencies.

Part of the explanation for such deficiencies seems to derive from his hermeneutical method. I refer not to the 'dialogical' nature of this method as such (with which in principle I agree), but to the role played within it by the element of 'reason', which, as we saw, includes the employment of data and concepts drawn from 'secular' social science and political philosophy. Mott has underestimated the difficulty of using these resources critically and selectively. His problematic appropriations of the notion of equality show that such notions are more heavily laden theoretically than may at first be apparent, and indicate that the first necessary task when using them is to deconstruct their origin and content and explore whether they need to be recast, perhaps radically, if they are to serve as suitable conduits for biblically-directed insight into social reality.

This analysis of a substantial evangelical work suggests, I think, that evangelical political philosophy must become more genuinely philosophical. It must not only fulfil the conditions suggested by Sider, i.e., be grounded in a foundational biblical-theological framework (to which both Sider and Mott have made substantial contributions), and be based on a sound understanding of the relationship between such a framework and the various social sciences (which, however, neither Sider nor Mott sufficiently elaborate); it must also aspire to the formulation of a coherent and comprehensive conceptual apparatus addressed to the fundamental and recurring problems of political reality.

As I indicated earlier, these problems include the origin, nature and role of the state and its authority in relation to other social institutions, the source and scope of law, the meaning of citizenship, political power justice, equality, rights, liberty, property, representation, nationality, the legitimacy of dissent or revolution, and so on. Much valuable work is currently being done, by evangelicals and many others, on several of these themes. It is, however, perhaps not surprising that over the last century and also today much of the best and most original contributions in this area are emerging from those Christian traditions which have been associated with, and which continue to draw upon, distinct and well-established schools of Christian philosophy.

Let me conclude by suggesting that at least three such traditions have generated substantial works during the twentieth century and are proving most productive of significant Christian political reflection today: Catholicism, Calvinism and Augustinianism.[55] Among leading Catholic political thinkers from which we have much to learn are Jacques Maritain, John Courtenay Murray and Yves Simon.[56] Among Calvinist writers, Herman Dooyeweerd ranks as foremost, and a number of valuable texts have been produced by writers indebted to his thought. Emil Brunner's political writings also

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[55] An example of a work of Liberation Theology which is an exception to this generalization would be Charles Villa-Vicencio, *A Theology of Reconstruction: Nation-Building and Human Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Interesting pointers from an Anabaptist perspective are found in Duane K. Friesen, ' Towards an Anabaptist Political Philosophy', *Transformation*, 14/4 (Oct-Dec 1997), pp. 1–6

[56] Contemporary works inspired by the writings of Germain Grisez—for example the extensive writings in legal philosophy by John Finnis or Robert George—are also profoundly significant.

represent a significant Reformed contribution. The revival of a broadly Augustinian approach to political thought has been promoted by a range of thinkers but the most substantial works of which I am aware have been produced by Oliver O'Donovan (drawing mainly on pre-modern sources) and John Milbank (drawing on both pre-modern and post-modern writers).

Philosophically-informed writing from these traditions take us deep into the territory in which creative, Christian political theorizing can be attempted. This is made possible, at least in part, by means of a confrontation with the invaluable historical legacy of Christian political reflection. Without such a critical confrontation, we approach contemporary political reality deprived of the constructive wisdom which centuries of wrestling with the political meaning of Scripture have afforded. This can only make our own necessary attempts to re-read Scripture in the light of our own political situations more burdensome and more likely to go astray. An 'evangelical political philosophy' must, therefore, be historically-grounded and ecumenical in scope and sympathy. If it thereby succeeds in disclosing the wisdom and liberative power of the biblical gospel, it will also be   'Evangelical'.

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Book Reviews

AMERICAN EVANGELICALS AND THE UNITED STATES MILITARY, 1942–1993

Reviewed by Duff Crerar, Grande Prairie Regional College, Alberta, Canada
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Arbeitsgemeinschaft kirchlicher Zeitgeschichte)
NEWSLETTER vol. VI, no. 4, April 2000

During the Gulf War, rumours of revivals among the troops thrilled American evangelicals, helping to balance other rumours about rampant immorality within the gender-mixed forces. Stories emerged of dedicated 'Bible-believing' chaplains (who were found in greater numbers than ever among the padres) effectively 'getting through' to their men, and evangelicals having great influence with fellow-soldiers. While the revival tales were nothing new to students of American wars and religion, what was new was the high profile of evangelical Christianity over there—the culmination of trends in both the United States military and society since the Vietnam War. Not since the 1860s had evangelicalism so dominated the chaplaincy—in fact the entire military establishment. How did this come to pass?

Anne C. Loveland's fine book provides a careful examination of this complex but profound and growing interrelationship between fighting Americans and evangelical Protestantism. She thoroughly and convincingly documents the growth of evangelicalism in American society after the Second World War and correlates it to the growing numbers and influence of evangelicals in both the chaplaincies and officer corps as well as the ranks of the military. Whereas other denominations increasingly turned away from war, and often became outrightly anti-military during the turbulent Vietnam years, evangelicals identified military men and women as a vital mission field, and, as loyal Cold Warriors, became increasingly pro-military in their orientation. Whereas many secular American soldiers found Vietnam a spiritually searing experience, evangelicals found it an energizing crucible of faith. Loveland provides several convincing studies of prominent chaplains, flag officers and Chiefs of defence staff who played leading roles in fostering this mutual reinforcement.

Such renewed interest in the soul of the military corresponded with the increasing stake in mainline American society held by the socially, economically and politically rising evangelical classes of American society (remember the endorsement of the Eisenhower presidency by the young Billy Graham?). Just as the Cold War and Vietnam crisis hardened

mainline evangelical militancy (and we can talk about evangelicalism becoming 'mainline' in American public life by the 1980s), so embattled officers and soldiers, thanks to the legacy of Vietnam, came to trust and even welcome the only segment of American Protestantism which faithfully supported their wars. American soldiers learned that they could count on the evangelicals, both in public life (and controversy), and in the field. By the 1980s, even flag officers and staff officers of the highest rank were found at prayer-breakfasts and upholding the work of evangelicals such as James Dobson, the Navigators, and Full Gospel Christian Businessmen among the troops.

Such close mutual relationships, however, have their weaknesses. It is especially poignant for a scholar of First World War chaplains to read the religious phrases and preaching sentiments of the trenches repeated in the boonies of Vietnam, given the profound disillusionment felt by many veterans after both wars. Chaplains, by the 1960s, could no longer exercise as prophetic a role as they had when militarism and evangelicalism were mutually suspicious (a situation before and during much of World War Two). Evangelicals still wince when they remember how the Nixon presidency turned the tables on them, and impaled even Billy Graham on the horns of the religion-state policy dilemma. Parallels with the 1980s and the Reagan administration are obvious. The alliance of evangelicals and officers works well when American civil religion embodies evangelical values, but what happens when (as in the early 1990s) the Commander-in-Chief wants to bring gays into the military? As Loveland points out, the steady and stubborn resistance to the Clinton administration on this issue may well have been the last victory of the military evangelicals, as new secular—and religious—movements arise to challenge the public Christianity of United States politics and society. As evangelicalism continues to fragment and divide in American public life, how will this affect the troops? This, and other religious developments in and around the United States Armed Forces, obviously bear watching.

Clearly anyone arguing that armed forces are representative cross-samples of their host societies will find Loveland's book of interest. Especially provocative are the implications of the growing divorce between American society and its increasing pluralism and the conservative military creed of its fighting men and women. Pluralism will certainly remain a fundamental challenge to the evangelical military consensus. But Loveland's book is still only a first word on the subjects of American civil and military religion. Roman Catholics have not by all means been anti-war through this period, and call for detailed study. Loveland's work concerns, primarily, officers and chaplains, as well as public and policy relationships: what about the effects at the level of the rank-and-file? What about 'folk religion' in United States forces: that blend of fatalism, patriotism and the cult of honour and duty which so resembles the Mithraism of the late Roman Army?

Loveland's book is dispassionate, but sensitive to the sincerity and depth of the people who bear their creed and wear the United States uniform. Her book will be an essential part of any study of the U.S. military and its religions. It will have to be taken into full account by both secular—and secularist—as well as evangelical scholars who want to monitor the subject in future. Above all, it profoundly adds to the growing understanding of the interrelationship of all of a society's elements with the men and women who guard it.

JESUS WEEPS: GLOBAL ENCOUNTERS ON OUR DOORSTEP
By Harold J. Recinos
Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, c1992. 142 pages. Paper. N.p.
Reviewed by Henry Rowold
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The image of Jesus weeping over the city of Jerusalem is one of the most touching and haunting in the Gospels. Recinos (professor of theology, culture, and urban ministry at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., USA) builds on that image to reclaim the city for Christian vision and ministry, and to call the Christian church to focus its fascination with globalization on global encounters in cities among and around us. Though those cities for Recinos are North American, his concern and vision can be easily transferred to other national contexts.

What gives this book its impact is Recinos' vibrant and forceful style, and what gives that style credibility is his rehearsal of his own youth in the inner city, including broken home, drug addiction, day-to-day survival. Recinos is a product of the city…at its worst. Having seen and lived the worst, he feels no need to sugar-coat reality or to pamper the church. Having come to faith in Jesus Christ, he infuses reality with deep Christian conviction and hope. Having filtered this reality and hope through theological reflection, Recinos offers us a book that is both compelling and challenging.

His gripping autobiographical chapter provides a powerful entry to the book, a tour of the inner city from the inside. To that Recinos juxtaposes a rehearsal of the positive place of the city in the biblical record. Following a chapter documenting how globalized the city has become, Recinos gives accounts of some of the struggles of various ethnic-cultural groups in the American city: Jewish people living in the shadow of the holocaust, African-Americans and the black church, feminist-womanist-mujerista strivings, native Americans, Arab-Americans with an Islamic heritage, Latinos of a wide variety of backgrounds (Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran). Finally, he offers an informed and nuanced process by which a church community can become global in its neighbouring city: studying culture through immersion, discovering how a culture puts life together, using key informants in the process, mapping, taking life histories, and finally the encounter which leads to transformation.

Recinos brings a rare combination of passion and reflection, practicality and scholarship, realism and hope. Mention should also be made of upwards of twenty of his poems which he intersperses throughout the book, giving poetic expression to the realities he expresses more prosaically in the text.

The no-nonsense approach which characterizes the book serves well his purpose of challenging and jolting the reader, though it does raise a few questions. As often happens in the liberation theology paradigm, for instance, tensions can ossify into archetypal forces. As true as it may be that struggles of life for minority peoples in the cities are due to a 'racist ideology' and 'systemic oppression', aren't at least some due also to the realities of simple immigration, i.e. integrating into a society without benefit of language or job or education or knowing how life works in a new culture? Again, Recinos identifies the down-trodden as 'Latinos, blacks, Native Americans, Asian, women, and the elderly (p. 50)', which presumably leaves white males, young and middle-aged, as the down-treaders. On the other hand, he did not hesitate to direct some strong challenges to the African-American churches to be more supportive of the Latino community.

One thing for certain is that Recinos leaves no doubt about his convictions and his love and passion for the city. Though one may not buy into with his diagnosis, his prescription is convincing, namely that the church should not by-pass the global community in its own city for the sake of the real but distant and easily distanced global world across the ocean. His concrete suggestions for doing that are most helpful, and can be used and adapted by the church/es of all kinds and in all places.

ISLAM IN BOTSWANA, 1882–1995

Reviewed by Fidelis Nkomazana, University Of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana

The book entitled *Islam in Botswana, 1882–1995* by Professor James Amanze deals with the history of Islam and its institutions in Botswana. The book also discusses the way Islam has been affected by wider developments in the region, while playing a role in these developments. The book has brought together a fascinating story on the basis of first hand interviews and archival research, tracing the history of Islam in Botswana from the period of British colonialism to independence. The study illustrates the development and emergence of the Muslim community through the establishment of mosques and other socio–religious institutions. The mosques manifest the desire on the part of Muslims to establish a distinctive religious community, while welfare projects, media involvement and women's organizations display the changing contexts in which the Muslims find themselves.

Professor Amanze's work has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter discusses the introduction of Islam in South Africa, from where it was introduced to Botswana. The second chapter discusses the beginning of Islam in Botswana. The chapter examines the nature of Islam in Botswana during the colonial period and assesses its strengths and weaknesses. The third chapter discusses the development of Islam in post-independent Botswana. It was during this period that Islam won a number of converts. The final chapter examines recent developments in the Muslim community and the impact of Islam in the socio-economic transformation of Tswana society.

This book is a major contribution towards our knowledge of Islam in Botswana. It does not only provide an account of the origin and development of Islam in the country from the pre-colonial period to the present day, but also makes it evident that, although very little has been written about Islam in Botswana, it is increasingly gaining a firm foothold and is already a religious force to reckon with. Its steady growth and socio-economic impact in Tswana society is felt in many parts of the country.

Islam in Botswana, 1882–1995 (1999) is easy to read, informative and scholarly written. It will be a very useful teaching material for those who are interested in the study of religion in Botswana.

Book and Journal Information

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