

The separation of church and state in the Book of Mormon. Is there a division between Throne and Altar?

Governments, federal and local, exist for the protection (domestic and foreign) of freedom. Freedom exists for the protection of religion, for the protection of personal property and the pursuit of personal happiness (temporal and spiritual) life and liberty, without infringing on the same rights of other individuals. When the state fails to protect these *rights of the individual*, then freedom is lost. The “peaceful” demonstration is protected by law, however, when it becomes a riot that damages, destroys or injures any person(s) or personal property or infringes in their pursuit of happiness (business or employment), and the local or federal government does not intervene or refuses to protect those rights then the purpose of law and government ceases to exist.

Government policies, political programs or orders that will allow any special interest group, movement, race, culture, religion or to force an absence of religious or political belief, which infringe upon the rights of the individual citizen in their right of private property and pursuit of happiness (business or employment) beyond the rule of law, is ‘an-archy’ (against or without law). The founding fathers provided a way to change law in a peaceful and orderly way that protects the individual rights. This is through the choice of lawmakers by the electoral voice of the people. Peaceful demonstrations are protected by law to focus attention in this process, not to cause, invoke, or justify lawless destruction. There is no righteousness in any riot that steps on the freedom of others. The Governments controlled by the socialist or communistic philosophies must, of necessity ensure their throne of power by becoming the altar of faith. For socialism to exist, the government philosophy must replace God and religion in quest for temporal security and prosperity. This is a subtle replacement of faith in a higher power which any unseen and uncontrollable power is a threat to the state.

“In relation to the Church’s proclamation of the Kingdom of God, the State is more like an enemy than it is like an ally” Why would some Christians agree with this statement? Why would they disagree? What do you think?

There has never been a time when Christians have not had to consider the question of Church-State relations. From the time when Jesus and his earliest followers proclaimed the Kingdom of God in the crucible of the Roman Empire, every generation of Christians in all parts of the world have had to think about how the gospel message relates to their respective states, be they oppressive, tolerant or actively supportive of the Church. Some Christians have desired a greater distance between Church and State, suggesting that the Church’s mission is in some way contaminated by State influence. Examining the thought of Jacques Ellul and William Cavanaugh provides different shades within this tradition, with the former representing a hard rejection of the State from a Christian anarchist perspective, and the latter providing a specific critique of the modern liberal democratic state as providing a competing salvific narrative to the Church. There are copious political theologians (and theologies) which offer a defence of the State as an ally, but in the interest of depth of analysis we shall consider the work of two: Martin Luther, who provided an account typical of the magisterial Reformation which has enjoyed ongoing influence in Protestant traditions in particular, and Reinhold Niebuhr whose political realism made him one of the most prominent public theologians of the 20th century. In response to the above examples, I will argue that the question of Church and State essentially concerns the question about how Christians believe God chooses to work in the world, and while Ellul’s complete rejection of the State is going

too far, Cavanaugh's account of competing salvific myths is accurate. Utilising the work of Yoder and Hauerwas, I will suggest that both Luther and Niebuhr downplay the role of the Church in the economy of God's Kingdom by **placing too much faith in the State as a part of His redemptive plans and not enough in the Church as a political community**. Any attempt to explore these themes must posit the biblical witness at the centre, and I will explore key texts such as **Rom. 13.1-7** through the lenses of different approaches, finally concluding that what is needed is a greater theo-political imagination to really see the Church as the locus of God's salvation over and above the State.

Before diving into the content of the debate, however, it is important to briefly define what is meant by State as it is not a simple term. Indeed, Bonhoeffer notes that 'The concept of State is foreign to the New Testament' with its place being taken by the concept of government as the power which 'creates and maintains order.'¹ It is certainly true that the modern concept of State, which according to Cavanaugh has its origins in the late Renaissance and early Reformation and where *legitimate* authority is claimed as opposed to power based on coercion², is not conceived in the New Testament. If, however, we agree, again with Cavanaugh, that '**What makes a State is a disciplined imagination of a community occupying a particular space within a common conception of time, a common history and a common destiny of salvation from peril**',³ we have a working definition of 'State' that for our purposes has applied to ancient and modern times. In essence, a State includes a government, all the political and military machinery at its disposal, citizens under this authority, and perhaps most importantly, the political metanarrative or overarching mythos towards which all these apparatus are geared. Acknowledging Bonhoeffer's caution above and the important distinction between modern and ancient states, it is, therefore, still possible to apply the concept of 'State' to the Roman empire and modern Britain. Having accepted this working definition of State, it will be easier to explore the response of **the Church, defined simply as the body of people who follow Jesus Christ**, to it.

Since the time of Constantine and the clear drawing together of Church and State in Christendom, theological expressions of the State as enemy have certainly decreased proportionally. Biblical writings which appeared to draw a strong contrast between the rule of Christ and secular (understood as Oliver O'Donovan suggests as 'non-eternal'⁴) were beginning to be disregarded as early as the end of the second century according to Bartley, and we see the beginnings of the ideas that Christians would make better secular rulers, which carried on into Christendom.⁵ Some thinkers, however, have continued this tradition and one such of these is Jacques Ellul. Having flirted with secular anarchism earlier in his life, Ellul decided he could not abandon his faith and that true biblical faith demanded a strong divorce of Church and State. It is clear in his thought that while **Christianity does not demand a withdrawal from the world**,⁶ Christians 'Must not weaken opposition between Christianity and the world'⁷ and **their response to the world's problems is not to define them**

¹ Bonhoeffer, D., "Church and State", in *An Eerdman's Reader in Contemporary Political Theology*, ed. William T. Cavanaugh et al. (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2012), 286

² Cavanaugh, William, "Killing for the Telephone Company: Why the Nation State is not the keeper of the common good", in *Modern Theology* 20:2, April 2014, 245

³ Cavanaugh, William, *Theopolitical Imagination: Discovering the Liturgy as a Political Act in an age of Global Consumerism* (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2013), 2

⁴ O'Donovan, Oliver, *The Desire of Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), 211-2

⁵ Bartley, Jonathan, *Faith and Politics after Christendom – The Church as a Movement for Anarchy* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2006), 30

⁶ Ellul, Jacques, *The Presence of the Kingdom* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1967), 7

⁷ *Ibid.*, 16

‘in the same terms as those who have no faith.’⁸ What is clear is that reducing Christianity to a set of values which can then influence another system of thought which do not share the same epistemological foundations falls short of the radical task God has given the Church. So he attacks the idea of a ‘Christian conception’ of things, like a State influenced by Christian values.⁹ In his later writing he outlines even more clearly the suggestion that the State is indeed an enemy of the Church, lamenting the churches which ‘have scrupulously respected and often supported the state authorities...[transforming] the free and liberating Word into morality’.¹⁰ During the ‘centuries of alliance between throne and altar’¹¹ since the fourth century the Church has forgotten the biblical witness which firmly drives a wedge between the way God wants to transform the world and worldly power which all states inherently utilise. Having briefly argued that the Hebrew Bible supports anarchy (in the sense of *an-arche*: no authority or domination apart from God) because it was in fact God who does everything and the kings’ faults are named unapologetically,¹² he exegetes a number of New Testament passages from the Christian anarchist perspective. In the synoptic accounts of Jesus’ temptations, for example, he highlights the fact that *all worldly kingdoms are Satan’s to offer to Jesus* (e.g. Matt. 4.9) who does not dispute this fact: ‘according to these texts all powers, all the power and glory of the kingdoms, all that has to do with politics and political authority belongs to the devil...Those who receive political power receive it from him and depend upon him.’¹³ Again in Matt. 20.25, all rulers of the world (οἱ ἄρχοντες τῶν ἐθνῶν), no matter what nation or regime are characterised disparagingly by Jesus so that ‘When there are rulers and great leaders, there can be no such thing as good political power.’¹⁴ Nowhere is this more forcefully suggested than in discussing Revelation where ‘Throughout the whole book there is a radical opposition between the majesty of God and the powers...of earth...The whole book is a challenge to political power.’¹⁵ Rev. 13.12-17 for example is equated to propaganda in association with the police of a state¹⁶ and the Babylon of chapter 18 is firmly corresponded to the Rome, as long as it is understood that ‘Rome is equated with [all] supreme political power. All nations have drunk the wine of the fury of their vices.’¹⁷ With regard to Rom. 13.1-7, Ellul argues that Paul is writing in the context of a Church hostile to the authorities and Paul is simply reminding them that the State consists of people too and Christians have a responsibility to love them by accepting their rule.¹⁸ Undergirding all of Ellul’s thought is the assertion of *omnis potestas a Deo* – all power is from God. Because of this and the fact that God has chosen to work through the Church to achieve His purposes, any institution or body that uses power apart from the Church are in a sense an enemy in conflict; *if powers like states try and tell us what to do [or believe] they are revolting from their position* as powers defeated by God (Col. 2.13-15) and undermining their claim to authority.¹⁹ In Ellul’s thought the Church is set up as a marginal and alternative society with *only* God as its authority, naturally putting it in conflict with the State. This should manifest itself in conscientious objection to military service, taxes and voting as these

⁸ Ibid. 18

⁹ Ibid., 14

¹⁰ Ellul, Jacques, *Anarchy and Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 6-7

¹¹ Ibid., 13

¹² Ibid., 46-55

¹³ Ibid., 57-58

¹⁴ Ibid., 62

¹⁵ Ibid., 71-72

¹⁶ Ibid., 72-73

¹⁷ Ibid., 73

¹⁸ Ibid., 80

¹⁹ Ibid. 84-5

things uphold the State's power apart from God.²⁰ *[There is a separation of church and state by the temporal and spiritual kingdoms, however the faithful feel justified to fight a temporal battle, if it is for the preservation of their spiritual freedoms]*

A second example of regarding the State as an enemy is that of Cavanaugh. While his focus is the genesis of modern Western democracies his critique, like Ellul's, could theoretically span across the centuries. The purpose of exploring the origins of **the modern nation-state [and especially socialism, Marxism, or Communism cannot function properly, in their mind, with religion. This because faith in god calls for independence from the state for salvation and creates a mindset of freedom for a self chosen salvation with God, and free will to choose heaven or hell. The socialistic state wants total dependence of the masses on the state to maintain control and power, and the only way to maintain that is dependence on the state for survival and life in the exercise of control and dominion and compulsion, by law and tax which then becomes the coercive force for mandatory adherence.]** for Cavanaugh is to expose the competing salvific narrative painted by such states which inherently contradicts the Church's. Plotting a historical interpretation similar to that of the Radical Orthodoxy school, he suggests that **from the late Renaissance period** the 'complex space' between the individual and **the state which held people's allegiances and associations, including the family, guilds, the local church and villages began to be swallowed up by greater centralised administration for the purposes of 'elites'-inspired war.** As opposed to the narrative **that nation-state growth came for the sake of increased political rights and protection against violence, in fact 'the state itself created the threat and then charged its citizens for its reduction' through increased bureaucratic control.**²¹ In the Enlightenment period this centralised control was further strengthened by thinkers such as Locke, Rousseau, Bodin and Hobbes as a response to the wars of religion of the 16th and 17th centuries. **The favoured narrative of the Enlightenment liberal tradition is that the nation-state evolved significantly during this period to 'save' citizens from the inevitable consequence of public expressions of competing religious truth claims, namely war. The response of Enlightenment thinkers, therefore, was to strip religion of its social character and limit its content to 'moral truths, rather than theological claims and practices which take a particular social form called the church.'**²² Changing the nature of Christianity then allowed the sovereign (and by default the State) to safely utilise it in service of the State's saving mythos and narrative of the State as peacemaker. In Bodin, for example, **once a religion has been embraced by a people, the sovereign must forbid any public discussion and thereby threaten his authority,**²³ *[this control is offered to the church by the state in a 'tax free' status if they (the church) will not exert any influence in the political processes and choices]* and for Hobbes religion is a way of binding the individual to the sovereign.²⁴ From this it is a short step to Locke who privatises the Church and simplifies political space where only individual rights and state sovereignty interact because all other forms of common life are relegated to the private voluntary society.²⁵ It is important to reiterate that for Cavanaugh, two soteriologies are at work here with two foundational anthropologies: in Enlightenment thinking, **the state of nature is essentially individuality which leads to a conception of the State (in the form of Hobbes' Leviathan) in which individuals come together only on the basis of (Rousseau's) social contract so they can protect possessions from others who naturally want to take them.** This is

²⁰ Ibid., 14-15

²¹ Cavanaugh, "Killing for the Telephone Company", 249

²² Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 34

²³ Ibid., 34

²⁴ Ibid., 38

²⁵ Cavanaugh, "Killing for the Telephone Company", 245

contrasted with the biblical insistence that sin is ‘scattering into mutual enmity’ between God and humans and within humanity.²⁶ Rather than Rousseau’s famous saying ‘Man was born free but everywhere is in bondage’, Cavanaugh suggests the dictum, ‘Humankind was born for communion, but is everywhere divided.’²⁷ *[hence, the supreme and heavenly society will be all things in common under the making of all aspects of life sacred, i.e. con-secra-tion]* The way the biblical God chooses to ‘save’ from this anthropological situation is not through a Nation-State which stops people killing each other, to which a Church, stripped of its inherent public political soteriological message, can offer guidance and support, but through a Church existing as an alternative social space where it publicly preaches and practices what holistic salvation means. *[the laws of each nation-state are intimately connected to the church and the morals taught by the church]* Cavanaugh does not argue, as Ellul does that all states are inherently evil and that they have no role in creating a degree of order, but he does encourage Christians to ‘choose’ between the salvific narratives of Church and State (be they modern nation-states or ancient), and acknowledges that if this ‘is a plea for the social and political nature of the Christian faith, it is also a plea for a Christian practice that escapes the thrall of the State.’²⁸ *[the perfect government would then be a theocracy that is governed by God not man]*

In contrast to Ellul and Cavanaugh our first example of Church-State allegiance is Luther whose emphasis on the ‘two kingdoms’ metaphor shaped his political theology. After his ‘Reformation breakthrough’, Luther wrote forcefully that states were created by God for order in society, and even more, that there were barely any limits on states’ authority: ‘since the temporal power is ordained of God to punish the wicked and protect the good, it should be left free to perform its office in the whole body of Christendom without restriction.’²⁹ *[Joseph Smith in a later Lutheran doctrine put it in the words of God that we are to be subject to kings, rulers and magistrates.]* This was in the context of his view of the corruption of the Catholic Church, and accordingly he thought the State’s role was to step in and re-order broken ecclesiastical structures. Luther, however, refused himself to obey temporal authority at Worms in 1521 and Catholic princes began outlawing his works in their provinces, meaning he needed to reconsider. In his major work on ‘Temporal Authority’ he established the principle that the State has legitimate earthly authority alongside the Church, and ideally they should work as allies in different spheres or kingdoms. Accordingly, when Christians are acting as individuals they exist in the Kingdom of God where they ‘need no temporal law or sword. If all the world were composed of real Christians...there would be no need for...Prince, King, Lord, sword or law’³⁰ (arguably contradicting his earlier point that temporal law ‘existed from the beginning of the world’,³¹ before the fall). The temporal sword is needed, however, because Christians ‘live for the benefit of others and therefore need to defend them’³² as it says in Eph. 5.21-6.9 and so that the ‘un-Christian and wicked’ will be ‘obliged to maintain an outward peace.’³³ Although God has created everything, there arises a clear dichotomy of jurisdictions and standards of behaviour: the spiritual, where only the Church has authority and the State should remain clear, and the temporal, where the State

²⁶ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 13

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 9

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 46

²⁹ Luther, Martin, “To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation”, trans. C.M. Jacobs, rev. James Atkinson, in *Three Treatises* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970), 15

³⁰ Luther, Martin, “Temporal Authority: To What Extent it Should be Obeyed”, trans. J.J. Schindel, rev. Walter Brandt, in *Luther’s Works: Christian in Society II* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962), 89

³¹ *Ibid.*, 86

³² *Ibid.*, 94

³³ *Ibid.* 90-1

properly rules by the sword. Luther suggests this is the clear meaning of Rom. 13.1 where Paul 'is speaking...of external things that should be ordered and governed on earth.'³⁴ When the State encroaches on the spiritual kingdom (like when it confiscates Luther's books), obedience is not required,³⁵ showing Luther falls short of a defence of close Church-State relations no matter what. Ideally, however, when both Church and State adhere to their roles, everything functions as God desires. [As Christ teaches when Pilot questioned 'don't you know who I am' the Savior responded that 'you would not be where you are but by me'] creating an allegiance between the two in his thought. Bequeathing the State its own God-given standards of behaviour and jurisdiction had tragic effects in the 1524-5 Peasants' Revolt, where, encouraged by Luther, German princes slaughtered thousands of peasants in the name of peacekeeping. This legacy of the State as peacekeeper only gathered pace in the Protestant West as we saw with Cavanaugh, and forms an important part of the thought of our next thinker, Reinhold Niebuhr.

The thought of Niebuhr had a significant impact on both Western Protestant thought and secular politics more generally throughout the course of the 20th century. He is perhaps best known for his political 'realism' and defence of liberal democracy which he bases firmly on his Christian faith, and the 'Biblical insistence that the same radical freedom which makes man creative also makes him potentially dangerous.'³⁶ Central in his thought is that the love Christ commands to his followers is an unrealistic expectation to actually achieve, and exists to convict us of our inherent sinfulness. This is especially the case in group settings, of which public or political life is instructive: 'The Christian religion has an ideal of self-sacrifice...obviating the necessity of conflict...But this ideal...is achieved only rarely in individual life and is not achieved in group life at all.'³⁷ The 'law of love' which Christ prescribes can, however still be normative (though not in the way Christ described) and find 'indirect and imperfect expression in history through regulative principles prescribing social equality, liberty and the like.'³⁸ Like Luther, he cannot be said to defend Church-State relations no matter what, and indeed always held a certain distance between them (it is the Church's job to critique the State), but he also emphasised the crucial role the State plays in enforcing an equilibrium of power so that the weak are not overpowered by the strong. In this sense, although it is impossible to rid history of sin, a 'relative' but still meaningful justice is possible through the political system: 'We will know that we cannot purge ourselves of the sin and guilt in which we are involved by the moral ambiguities of politics without also disavowing responsibility for the creative possibilities of justice.'³⁹ According to Niebuhr, it was therefore good that after the 'dissipation of the eschatological hope and the concomitant political irresponsibility of the early Church,'⁴⁰ the Church was able to take a more responsible role through influencing states and compensating for the inevitability of sin. He was deeply critical of Christian idealists or moralists who he believed 'fatuously hope that Christian conference will speak some simple moral word which will resolve by love the tragic conflict in the world,'⁴¹ which inevitably 'degenerates into an intolerable other-

³⁴ Ibid., 110

³⁵ Ibid., 125

³⁶ Niebuhr, Reinhold, *Christian Realism and Political Problems* (London: Faber & Faber, 1954), 99-100

³⁷ Niebuhr, Reinhold, *Essays in Applied Christianity* (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), 83

³⁸ Werpehowski, William, "Reinhold Niebuhr", in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, ed. Peter Scott et al. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 181

³⁹ Niebuhr, Reinhold, *The Nature and Destiny of Man II – Human Destiny* (London: Nisbet and Co. Ltd., 1943), 294

⁴⁰ Ibid., 282

⁴¹ Niebuhr, *Christian Realism*, 106

wordliness,⁴² and ends up only ‘supporting the status quo and any injustices that it reflects.’⁴³ He felt this was the danger of a theology, like Barth’s, which rejected natural theology and the possibility of God working through non-Church institutions like states: ‘Barth’s belief that the moral life of man would possess no valid principles of guidance, if the ten commandments had not introduced such principles by revelation, is as absurd as it is unscriptural.’⁴⁴ He argues that Paul clearly stated this in Rom. 1.20 and 2.14, and his injunction in Rom. 13 may have been ‘overly emphasised’ but ultimately did not crush the Church’s responsible critique of states when they veered from their rightful role throughout history.⁴⁵ Niebuhr’s conception of Church-State relations can be said, therefore, in the name of historical responsibility, to create an important alliance between Church and (especially liberal democratic) State. This does not mean that the Church accepts everything the State does in an inseparable relationship, nor an irresponsible divorce, but a healthy and critical engagement that certainly can be characterised. God has ordained that ‘**Any conception of Christianity which gives social consent to its message makes a certain overlapping between Church and State authority inevitable.**’⁴⁶

[Any social doctrine, teaching, moral or value taught by the church makes the overlapping of the church and state inevitable. The question should be asked; To what extent does the church or the state have authority in the demand of adherence to the moral law of the other? The answer must come down to the infringement of the rights of the individual. The rights and freedoms to be protected by the State, are guaranteed in the Constitution and Bill of Rights, beginning with ‘all are created equal, the right to private property, the pursuit of happiness (business and employment) religious freedom, etc. etc. These “rights” are to be protected at all costs and should be defended and prosecuted by the State. However, religious ‘morals and values’ must remain in the venue of the Church and not the State if religious freedom is to exist. The defence of equality by creation and under the law is a protection that should be guaranteed and enforced by the State, and taught by the Church. But, Does the State have the right to determine the moral law that must be embraced by the Church or visa versa. One would argue that equality under the law is a moral value, and it is! If there is to be freedom of religion then there must be a freedom to choose and accept a moral value that lies within the doctrine, teachings and standards of the Church. This is especially true if one is to use a sacred text or scripture as a standard for any religious belief. In this, each individual should be allowed the freedom to choose their morals and values without infringing on the same freedoms of others to believe differently. The State-Church is created when the State enacts laws that favour any one group or interest over another, and has more than crossed the line of separation and religious freedom no longer exists. The blatant and overt example today is that of the choice of alternate lifestyles. All are created equal and should have the freedom to live to the moral standard of their choosing so long as it doesn’t infringe upon the same rights of any other person. People should be punished ‘according to their crimes and not for their beliefs’ (Alma 30). The law of equality exists in the Constitution, each person has the right to pursue happiness in the way they desire, and to accept the morals or values of their choice. Laws are now passed and enacted that make it unlawful to teach from the Church pulpits that alternative lifestyles are unacceptable in their choice of faith and religion.

⁴² Ibid., 111-2

⁴³ Berg, Thomas, “Church-State Relations and the Social Ethics of Reinhold Niebuhr”, in *North Carolina Law Review* 73 (1995): 1610-11

⁴⁴ Niebuhr, *Nature and Destiny of Man II*, 263

⁴⁵ Ibid., 280

⁴⁶ Niebuhr, *Essays in Applied Christianity*, 86

These laws are turning the religious choice of morals, within that particular religion, into racism and inequality. When the State, by law, turns a religion's concept of a sin into a 'civil rights' the separation of Church and State disappears. The State will then control the faith, by dictating the belief and interpretation of scripture by law. Where then is religious freedom. The Church, like the State, should fight to defend the right of every individual to have the freedom to live to the moral standard of their choice. The Church should fight for the right of every individual to choose to live whatever lifestyle they desire, but at the same time they must fight for the same right to determine what lifestyle is acceptable to belong to that faith and be in good standing. If a religious faith cannot have the ability to set the standards for membership and activity, without the interference of the State, then religious freedom is lost for all and the precedence is set. When any morality becomes law, the State will have the power to dictate all religious belief and faith as seen in. (3 Nephi). The beginning of the State-Church here began many years ago; as taxes are leveled that purposefully allows, endorses, ensures, promotes and pays for teachers and curriculums that teach the morals and values that should fall into the cloister of responsibility belonging to the Church rather than the State. If State employees teach any moral, value, political correctness or choices, that might be contrary to the teachings of any religion or religious text, the State has obtained control of the future of every Church. The State has already crossed the line of separation as citizens stand by giving the State control of all religious freedom and belief. The State has outlawed prayer in school, the Ten Commandments from being displayed, and even the Pledge of Allegiance being read because of the mention of God, but can at the same time teach our children what morality or immorality is acceptable, what lifestyles are acceptable These are religious doctrines, not just concepts that should be left to the chosen faith and religion of the parents of the children, not the State. The State, by law takes your money by tax, so they the State can indoctrinate your children in the schools with the religious morals values they and the teachers chose, mocking your religion and scripture in the process. Anciently the government was always a Church State governed by the patriarchs and prophets and their religion that revolved around their faith. Armies were organized to protect the religion. Centres of education were set up that taught the faith always surrounding the temples. The religious festivals and holy days governed the calendar and everyday life. The time came when the masses, by choice or assimilation and immigration the religion no longer became the force behind order and peace. Governments were set up to maintain the peace and prosperity for the populace when religion was no longer the governing force. Even in the ancient world, in Greece and Rome governments recognized the need for religious choice and tolerance to ensure the peace. The Founding Fathers studied the historical record searching to find the key for an enduring successful government. Within these historical texts and in the pages of Scripture they found the necessary answers to construct best constitutional government for the people by the people. It was a government that embraced the Church and the State working together in a mutual concert of Justice and Mercy, God and Man, equality and religious freedom. The pit that's dug to bury religious freedom will be eventually be filled by those who dig it. Today's liberal scream for a separation of Church and State will provide the State with the power to weaken the Church and destroy the faith and goodness of the people. To teach concepts or enact laws that are aimed to destroy the faith and morals of a religious society will result in a Godless Society and eventual anarchy, (Alma 30). Today the liberal State is gaining the power to control religious beliefs in a subtle and underhanded way, while we pay them to do it. We as parents and adults may think we are secure in our faith, but the terrible question all must ask: Will our children be ensured the freedom of Religion?

In evaluating the proper nature of Church-State relations, it is important to reiterate that this ultimately concerns a question of how Christians understand God working in the world. How Church and State are understood within a theological system reflect a deeper understanding of the Christian mythos and narrative in the world. Emphasising, for example as Niebuhr and Luther do, the crucial political role of the State in the world in achieving at least relative justice arguably means the State is embraced as the principle agent of social and political change. This inherently diminishes the role of the Church within God's plans. As Bell succinctly puts it: 'to begin the conversation once the state...[has] been ensconced in our imaginations such that [it] has attained the status of a "given"...is to have acquiesced, perhaps unknowingly, in a crucial theological judgment regarding the character of Christianity's political presence in the world.'⁴⁷ In other words, as soon as Christians accept that *real* politics is about statecraft it ceases to be what the Church does and lives. In the words of Hauerwas, using the word 'and' when speaking of faith *and* politics 'prematurely ends any serious theological reflection from a Christian perspective'⁴⁸ because it assumes faith (and Church more broadly) is *not* political. The problem with this, as is the case with Luther and Niebuhr, is that the Church then finds itself caught in a 'ceaseless crisis of legitimation'⁴⁹ where it seeks justification for its existence based on epistemological foundations that do not declare the Jesus of scripture as Lord. Luther is guilty of this when he claims a separate standard of behaviour for states than what Jesus commands which naturally led to states reducing the influence of Christianity to private morality. Niebuhr's insistence that sin tells the human story ends up with a narrative remarkably similar to that of the Enlightenment where the best people can hope for is achieving a lesser evil where liberal democratic regimes succeed in stopping people killing each other. In a persuasive critique, Hauerwas even accuses Niebuhr's natural theology of producing a 'pale theism' rather than the God revealed in Christ.⁵⁰ Niebuhr's insistence that speaking 'of God as Creator of the World is to regard the world in its totality as revelation of His majesty and self-sufficient power',⁵¹ essentially allowed him to construct a political theology where the epistemological foundations were found in the Enlightenment as opposed to scripture because this seemed rational in a world where rationality comes 'naturally' from God. It is a short step to then reject Jesus' commands as unrealistic and buy into the State-as-saviour mythos where 'power' is defined apart from the Christian narrative and the job of the Church is just to modify this given entity as one pressure group among many.

What is required in response to this conceding of ground to the State, is a recovery of the Church's political nature as the body entrusted by God to proclaim true salvation and a belief that, in the words of Yoder, the Church precedes the world epistemologically. Once this is done, then it is possible to see the seemingly weak actions of the Church as, in fact, power-creating actions. For Hauerwas this means that 'the Church is the fundamental and density-creating form of God's power in the world. If you and I are shaped by the Church, then...we are ready projectiles to be lobbed against the threatening, but ultimately hollow forces

⁴⁷ Bell Jr., Daniel, "State and Civil Society", in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, ed. Peter Scott et al. (Malden/Oxford/Victoria: Blackwell Publishing), 424

⁴⁸ Hauerwas, Stanley, *Approaching the End – Eschatological Reflections on Church, Politics and Life* (London: SCM Press, 2014), 73

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 71

⁵⁰ Hauerwas, Stanley, *With the Grain of the Universe* (London: SCM Press, 2002), 122

⁵¹ Niebuhr, Reinhold, *The Nature and Destiny of Man, I – Human Nature* (London: Nisbet and Co. Ltd, 1941), 142

arrayed against righteousness.⁵² If God really elected to work in and through the Church as the New Testament seems to suggest, then the role of the State within God's plans naturally diminishes politically. Ellul might agree with this statement and suggest it proves the essentially anti-Christian nature of all states, however, this is paradoxically also going too far. To arrive at a satisfactory Christian understanding of the State, considering perhaps the most quoted scripture regarding the role of the State, Rom. 13.1-7 more closely is instructive. Having rejected Luther's view that Paul gave almost unrestricted authority to states in external matters (a position historically abused to justify obedience to any State), Yoder persuasively argues that the passage cannot be read apart from its context of Rom. 12.9-21 and 13.8-10 where Christians are specifically commanded to 'never avenge yourselves' (12.19) and 'Owe no one anything, except to love one another' (13.8). Challenging both the 'positivistic view' of God's ordination of a particular state and the 'normative view' that the general concept of state is upheld, he asserts that 'God is not said to *create* or *institute* or *ordain* the powers that be, but only to *order* them,...sovereignly to tell them where they belong'.⁵³ Rom. 13.1-7 does not actually say Christians should partake in the actions of the State or to *obey* the state, but simply to be *subject* to the State even if it is unjust. Christians *are*, however, commanded to follow commands in 12.9-21 and 13.8-10 which disqualify them from State-roles. Unlike liberal pacifism, the Christian does not impose Jesus' non-violence onto the State because 'What holds down...the standards that apply in the world is the weight of sin, not a divinely revealed lower order for secular society.'⁵⁴ Unlike Niebuhr, however, who affirms the role of the State as the *primary* social actor which the Church assists, Yoder stresses that 'The State...exists according to the message of the New Testament for the sake of the work of the Church and not vice-versa,' and its use of force is limited to the police function (i.e. not the death penalty).⁵⁵ Ellul is wrong, therefore, to completely disregard and reject the role of the State. Properly understood the State has a *depoliticised* role of creating conditions in which the Church can truly be the political community of God, proclaiming the Kingdom. In this sense it can be called an ally, corresponding to the message of 1 Tim. 2.1-4 where kings help Christians live 'a quiet and peaceable life' where God's desire for 'everyone to be saved' can come true. A State ceases to be an ally and becomes an enemy, however, when it forgets its depoliticised role and begins claiming salvific significance as Cavanaugh warned earlier. Comparing Rom. 13 and Rev. 13 is illustrative here, as two passages that have often been contrasted as presenting contradictory views of the State. Having agreed with Yoder regarding Rom. 13, we must disagree with Ellul again on Rev. 13 where the actual focus is not on the evils of government but the 'unfaithfulness of spokesmen of the *Church* who relate to the State in an idolatrous and unfaithful way'.⁵⁶ The second beast (vv.11-18) is in fact the Church which accepts the first beast's (State's) idolatrous claims and encourages others to do the same (v.14). In this light, Rom. 13 and Rev. 13 represent the two aspects of the life of any State: self-glorification which the Church must resist and provide an alternative mythos; and the fact that even the worst states are 'under God' (Rom. 13) and will be shaped to serve the Church by Him.⁵⁷

In conclusion, the Church's proclamation of the Kingdom of God *necessitates* seeing the State as neither an ally or an enemy. While some, like Ellul, consider all states as enemies of

⁵² Reno, Rusty, "Stanley Hauerwas", in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, ed. Peter Scott et al. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 308

⁵³ Yoder, John H., *The Politics of Jesus*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1994), 201

⁵⁴ Yoder, John H., *The Christian Witness to the State* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 2002), 72

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 36

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 76

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 76-7

the Church to be at best avoided and at worst rebelled against, Yoder's suggestion that the New Testament considers states as un-ordained but still mouldable by God to create conditions in which the Church can be truly itself is more persuasive. This demands acceptance of the view that the Church precedes the world epistemologically, however, where *true* political density-creating power is the preserve of the Church in God's economy and His primary social and political actor in the world. This also calls for a rejection of close a Church-State allegiance seen for example in Luther and Niebuhr where the Church is effectively stripped of its political existence and made nearly weightless and invisible. Wherever the State begins to claim allegiance because of its perceived soteriological task, it should rightly be called an enemy. The response of the Church in this latter situation, is not, however, active rebellion and devising a 'proper theory of the State', but one of subjection (not obedience) and prayer for the authorities for the sake of the Church as in 1 Tim. 2.1-4. In doing this, it will naturally de-mystify any pretensions of the State and affirm that the true correlate of the Christian mythos is not the State but the Church. Ultimately, 'There, in that space where humanity is eucharistically joined once again in communion with one another and with God, we see the true community, the true polity, the true politics – a politics that modern statecraft, embedded as it is in the (dis)order of *dominion* and the endless conflict of self-interested individuals, cannot even dream of, but only mock.'⁵⁸

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⁵⁸ Bell, "State and Civil Society", 437

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