



“Meditate
upon these things;
give thyself
wholly to them;
that thy profiting
may appear unto all”

I Timothy 4:15

Journal
of
Theology

Church of the Lutheran Confession

VOLUME 24

JUNE 1984

NUMBER 2

ISSN 0361-1906

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The JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY is published at Immanuel Lutheran College, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701, by authorization of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Subscriptions: \$5.00 per year, \$9.00 for two years, payable in advance. Issues are dated: March, June, September, and December.

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THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE ACCORDING TO HOLY SCRIPTURE AND THE CONFESSIONS

O clap your hands, all peoples; shout to God with the voice of joy. For the Lord Most High is to be feared, a great King over all the earth. He subdues peoples under us, and nations under our feet. He chooses our inheritance for us, the glory of Jacob, whom He loves. Selah. God has ascended with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. For God is the King over all the earth; sing praises with a skillful psalm. God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne. The princes of the people have assembled themselves as the people of the God of Abraham; for the shields of the earth belong to God; He is highly exalted. (Psalm 47 - NASB: as in all quotes herein.)

FROM ADAM TO ABRAHAM When the Lord created the world there was no separation between "Church" and "State." Both were combined in the form of one family. Adam, as the head, was both king and priest, the secular and religious leader. Yet, he was not the absolute king, for he was subject to the great King of the universe. In all things it was the will of God that was supreme.

The entrance of sin into the world did not change the unity of the secular and the religious. What did change was the manner in which man reacted to the Supreme Will. He was no longer a willing subject. The result was that he departed from the pathways of the Almighty, choosing instead the ways of sin.

Little is known about the secular and religious affairs of the early world. Enough is revealed to show us that mankind became spiritually bankrupt and chose to exercise his own will. However, the revelation demonstrates, also, that God remained supreme. Though His subjects were

unwilling, He exercised His will over them.

The two most dramatic examples of this are found in the stories of the Flood and the Tower of Babel. At the time of the Flood, man's rebellion had reached universal proportions. Therefore God exerted His dominion by wiping the earth clean of rebels. He spared only righteous Noah and his family, for they bowed in submission to their Savior-God.

At the time of the building of the Tower of Babel, there was only one State. In his pride, man sought to preserve the greatness of this State, and he exalted himself above the rulership of God. However, his attempts were unsuccessful. God asserted His absolute authority by making one united State an impossibility. "THE LORD CONFUSED THE LANGUAGE OF THE WHOLE EARTH; AND FROM THERE THE LORD SCATTERED THEM ABROAD OVER THE FACE OF THE WHOLE EARTH," (Gen. 11:9).

FROM ABRAHAM TO CHRIST Centuries later, God separated to Himself one family and built it into a nation. Prior to the nationalization of this family, there were lines of distinction drawn between civil and religious life. When the children of Abraham dwelt within the borders of another nation, such as Egypt, they were subject to the rulers of that land. These, for the most part, were heathen and did not acknowledge Jehovah. While the children of Abraham did submit to the secular rule of others, they did not submit in religious matters. Rather, they continued to worship according to the will of the God of Abraham.

However, Egypt was to learn that, despite their unwillingness, the truth was that Jehovah rules among the nations. At first, they were the unwitting tools of God. But, when the time of the Exodus came, they would know that Jehovah is supreme.

By direct revelation, God declared to Moses that it was time to forge His people into a nation, a separate State. In order to do so, the people had to be brought out from under the governance of the Pharaoh. At first, the Lord sent Moses to Pharaoh with the command to release

His people. It is interesting to note that in this, the Lord did not ignore the "powers that be."

However, Pharaoh refused to be submissive to Jehovah. Therefore, it was necessary for the Lord to demonstrate His supremacy through a series of plagues. By these He made Egypt impotent and led His people out of bondage, as a shepherd leads his sheep. Indeed, not only Egypt, but all the surrounding nations trembled before the name of Jehovah. Even when the heathen tried to bring a divine curse against Israel, they found that God merely turned it into blessing (Num. 22-24). When they tried to resist militarily, they perished. The world was to "hear" the God of Abraham proclaim to all men: "I RULE!"

At Mt. Sinai, God forged a family into a nation. With the giving of the Law, the lines of distinction between Church and State melted away, for the most part. With this nation, God had developed a theocracy. He alone ruled this church-state. He ruled in matters religious and in matters secular.

With the recording of the Law, the Bible was born. This Book of God became the guide for governing in both realms of man (i.e., in Israel). Even when the people rejected a theocracy in favor of a monarchy (1 Sam. 8:7), the Word remained the foundation for secular and religious life.

However, there were distinctions to be observed. There was a kind of separation. To the sons of Aaron was given the call to serve in the public ministry of the Church (Ex. 28:1). To the sons of Judah was given the call to serve in the public ministry of the State (Gen. 49:10). Neither was to cross over into the calling of the other. Even Moses did not try to usurp the authority of Aaron; when Aaron tried to enter Moses' calling, God showed His displeasure (Num. 12).

While such distinctions did exist, there was an interweaving of the two estates. The king was to enforce the religion of Jehovah and ban all other religions. The priest had the right to preach to the king concerning his calling. Also, the high priest was often the one to anoint

the king. — A good example of this interweaving can be found in 2 Chron. 23.

The rule that continued to appertain is that God has all authority in matters of Church and State. He alone decided who was to function in each realm. He alone decided how they were to function. No one had the right to take the helm of Church or State into his own hands. It was granted only by the calling of God: "NO ONE TAKES THE HONOR TO HIMSELF, BUT RECEIVES IT WHEN HE IS CALLED BY GOD, EVEN AS AARON WAS" (Heb. 5:4). This granting was signified by the rite of anointing. Thus, those who were chosen by God were called "the Lord's anointed."

This delightful Church-State might have continued indefinitely, except for one thing: the kings did not rule according to the Law of God and the priests were unfaithful in their calling. Indeed, the people themselves were persistently rebellious. Therefore, there came a radical separation of Church and State. God raised up Nebuchadnezzar and gave the kingdom into his hand (Dan. 2: 37f.). He delivered Jehoiachin into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 22:25; 1 Kings 24:10ff.). Finally, Judah was taken into captivity. There was no king of Israel, for God had given the State into the hands of a foreign king, and he ruled over them.

From that day on, the Jews were not ruled by the civil laws which God had established. Even after the return from Exile, the authority of foreign governments was over them. (The era of the Maccabees may be an exception. It is not dealt with here, since Scripture is silent during that period.)

Throughout the time of the Exile, the faithful Jews observed the distinction between Church and State. Though they submitted to the rule of foreigners and prayed for heathen authorities (Jer. 29:7), they did not submit in matters pertaining to their spiritual life. Only One was their Lord: Jehovah. It was because of His command that they submitted in secular matters. It was because of His command that they did not submit in religious matters. Thus, Daniel could be a great statesman for Darius, serving him better than did the natives of that empire. At

the same time, he refused to obey the decree forbidding him to worship Jehovah. Yet, he did not rebel against Darius, but submitted to the penalty for his disobedience (cf. Dan. 6).

The presence of believing Jews became a lesson to their heathen captors. The manner in which Jehovah delivered Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego was evidence that the Lord reigns over the nations of the heathen and that He is the sole Ruler over the hearts of His people.

The evidence of God's authority so overwhelmed Nebuchadnezzar that he was compelled to declare:

I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What hast Thou done?'" (Dan. 4:34f.)

The kingdom of Babylon was followed by the kingdom of the Medes and Persians. Then came Alexander, sweeping over the earth with awesome speed. However, his empire was soon to be eclipsed by the massive power of the Roman Empire. Through Daniel, God made it abundantly evident that each of these empires rose and fell according to His will (Dan. 2:3ff.; 7:1ff.).

THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST "BUT WHEN THE FULNESS OF THE TIME CAME, GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON, BORN OF A WOMAN, BORN UNDER THE LAW, IN ORDER TO REDEEM THOSE WHO WERE UNDER THE LAW, THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE THE ADOPTION OF SONS" (Gal. 4:4f.). "The fulness of the time": the Most High had controlled time and events, kings and kingdoms, so that time was filled to the brim; everything was prepared for the coming of the Kingdom of His Son.

"Though all ordinary men had to submit to foreign kings," one might think, "here surely was One who could

exert His authority over all power and dominion." Indeed, the Jews of Christ's day fully expected that the Messiah would release them from all foreign domination. For this reason, many became disillusioned with Jesus of Nazareth. He did not satisfy their requirements for the Messiah.

At no time during His earthly ministry did Jesus show any interest in unseating the existing government in Judea. In point of fact, the truth is quite the opposite. He urged the people to "RENDER TO CAESAR THE THINGS THAT ARE CAESAR'S" (Mt. 22:21). He Himself paid taxes (Mt. 17:27). When Caesar's representatives arrested Him and put Him on trial, Jesus did not resist, nor did He call for His followers to rebel (either actively or passively). Rather, He recognized that Pontius Pilate had a God-given right to sit upon the seat of judgment: "YOU WOULD HAVE NO AUTHORITY OVER ME, UNLESS IT HAD BEEN GIVEN YOU FROM ABOVE" (Jn. 19:11). The authority to rule in civil government had been given to Pilate. God had so given! Therefore, the humbled Son of God, Who had a natural right to universal supremacy, submitted. He had taken upon Himself "THE FORM OF A BOND-SERVANT" (Phil. 2:7) and, therefore, lived as we are supposed to live.

At one time, a man asked Jesus to make a judgment in a matter of inheritance. This was something to be determined in a civil court. Therefore, Jesus replied, "MAN, WHO APPOINTED ME A JUDGE OR ARBITER OVER YOU?" (Lk. 12:14). He would not assume an office to which He had not been called.

While Jesus recognized the civil authority in the mundane kingdom, He asserted His own authority in the supramundane kingdom. In this kingdom, it is His Word that holds sway: "YOU SAY CORRECTLY THAT I AM A KING. FOR THIS I HAVE BEEN BORN, AND FOR THIS CAUSE I HAVE COME INTO THE WORLD, TO BEAR WITNESS TO THE TRUTH. EVERY ONE WHO IS OF THE TRUTH HEARS MY VOICE" (Jn. 18:37).

Those who heard His voice were the disciples. To them Jesus gave the Keys of His Kingdom, an awesome office, indeed (cf. Mat. 16:19). In Gethsemane, however, when Peter attempted to use the sword in order to rescue Jesus, the Lord rebuked him: "PUT AWAY YOUR SWORD INTO

ITS PLACE; FOR ALL THOSE WHO TAKE UP THE SWORD SHALL PERISH BY THE SWORD" (Mt. 26:52). It becomes evident that He did not intend this Office to embrace the power of the sword (i.e., secular authority). Even so, Jesus assured Pilate: "MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD. IF MY KINGDOM WERE OF THIS WORLD, THEN MY SERVANTS WOULD BE FIGHTING, THAT I MIGHT NOT BE DELIVERED UP TO THE JEWS; BUT AS IT IS, MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS REALM" (Jn. 18:36).

THE AGE AND THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES In sending forth His servants to spread His kingdom throughout the world, Jesus did not send them forth with the sword of the State, but with "THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD" (Eph. 6:17). Like their Master, they were to bear witness to the truth. By this means alone the kingdom of Christ would hold sway in the hearts of men. Every servant of Christ was to be His minister, but not "A MINISTER OF GOD, AN AVENGER WHO BRINGS WRATH UPON THE ONE WHO PRACTICES EVIL" (Rm. 13:4). Rather, Christ gave to them "THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION, NAMELY, THAT GOD WAS IN CHRIST RECONCILING THE WORLD UNTO HIMSELF, NOT COUNTING THEIR TRESPASSES AGAINST THEM" (2 Cor. 5:18f.).

In full recognition of this, the Apostles limited themselves to the preaching of the Gospel, if this can be called a "limitation." This "POWER OF GOD FOR SALVATION" (Rm. 1:16) was sufficient for them. It is the only power that can pierce through to the very heart of a man and cut away all that is false, transforming it into a living heart of faith. Surely, the Gospel is "SHARPER THAN ANY TWO-EDGED SWORD" (Heb. 4:12). No fleshly weapon could ever accomplish this greatest of all miracles.

The Apostle Paul had a ministry which carried him across many borders, placing him under many different regional governments. Often he faced the hostility of men and governments. He was whipped by the Jews, beaten with rods by the Romans, imprisoned many times, stoned, etc. (cf. 2 Cor. 11:23ff.). If ever there was a man who had an "excuse" for resorting to the power of the sword, Paul was that man. However, he wrote:

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war ac-

ording to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. (2 Cor. 10:3-5)

Paul encouraged Christians to don not the armor of the State, but "THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD ... FOR OUR STRUGGLE IS NOT AGAINST FLESH AND BLOOD, BUT AGAINST THE RULERS, AGAINST THE POWERS, AGAINST THE WORLD FORCES OF THIS DARKNESS, AGAINST THE SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS IN THE HEAVENLIES" (Eph. 6:11f.).

In an era of situation ethics, one might say that it all depends on the type of government that exists at the time. If this were true, then the Lord and His Apostles would have had the greatest right to rebel. The Roman government was oppressive. Pilate condemned the Lord of glory. After that, the antagonism toward Christianity grew, until the State took an active stand in trying to crush the Church.

Under such a government, Paul gave the *sedes doctrinae* regarding the authority of government:

Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who oppose shall receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil. (Rm. 13:1-4; cf. also vv. 5-7.)

If God could say that the Roman government was established by Him, then which government is not? Verily, all are. Therefore the Apostles were subject to Caesar, and not

grudgingly so. Rather, they prayed for him and for his representatives:

I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. (1 Tim. 2:1f.)

The truth remains the same as it was in the days of Jeremiah: "In its welfare you will have welfare" (Jer. 29:7). (Welfare = בְּשָׁלוֹמְךָ.) The Apostles had a message to convey to the world. The succession of kingdoms, which God had raised up, paved the way, so that this Gospel could be spread quickly. For the Christians to seek the overthrow of Rome would have been self-defeating. When there is rebellion and discord, the Gospel is spread only with great difficulty.

The Apostles did not step outside the bounds of their calling. They were called to be ambassadors for Christ, ministers of the reconciliation. They did not intrude themselves into the realm of the State. They did not take the sword; they did not presume to tell the State how to perform its ministry. The only direction that they gave was to the individual Christian: submit to the State.

Some might try to point to the fact that Paul appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:11). However, Paul was not doing this in order to enlist the power of the State for the cause of the Gospel. He was acting as an individual Roman citizen. His only purpose was to receive justice for his person and not power for his cause.

The Apostles did not try to command, pressure, nor influence the State in any way. However, this is not to say that the authorities in the State did not try to do the same to the Church. It happened many times that they tried to hinder the preaching of the Gospel. The Apostles, however, recognized that the State had no authority within the realm of the Church. Therefore they disobeyed every command which required them to disobey God.

On one occasion, when Peter and John were ordered to

discontinue their preaching, they replied: "WHETHER IT IS RIGHT IN THE SIGHT OF GOD TO GIVE HEED TO YOU RATHER THAN TO GOD, YOU BE THE JUDGE; FOR WE CANNOT STOP SPEAKING WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD" (Acts 4:19f.). Their continued preaching resulted in imprisonment. Though an angel released them, they were arrested again and ordered not to evangelize. Their response: "WE MUST OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN" (Acts 5:29). It is to be noted that, while they did not submit to these specific commands, they did submit to the punishment that was administered. There was no complaint, no invective, no call to arms. They disobeyed, but did not rebel. In both the specific disobedience and the general submission, the Apostles were carrying out the will of the Supreme Master.

Therein lies the principle by which they lived. They acknowledged only one true Master: God. They did not concede authority to Caesar, because of some natural right that he had, nor because he had earned this right by the power of his own arm, for neither one is true. They submitted to him on a voluntary basis. This was out of love for their Savior, Who revealed this to be His will. Peter put it in writing:

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to the king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. (1 Pet. 2:13ff.)

As sons of God, they were free from all earthly authority (cf. Mt. 17:26). As servants of God from the heart, they willingly obeyed His commands, and therefore voluntarily submitted themselves to Rome. Whenever the authorities commanded them to disobey God, they chose to submit first to God. When the commands of the State did not require transgression of God's commands, they submitted to the government and thus to God. Always and in every way God remained their Master.

FROM THE APOSTLES
TO THE REFORMATION

After the Lord crowned His Apostles with glory, their written words remained the foundation upon which the Church continued to grow. As the Assembly of God's people, she recognized that her ministry was that of reconciliation. Her power was that of the Gospel. She recognized, also, that the ministry of the State was given by God to other hands. Even though the State often abused the power of the sword by directing it against the Church, she did not call for rebellion, nor did she try to enlist the power of the sword in support of her cause. Her power was greater than that of the sword, and she used it alone. The proof of this can be found in the fact that the Church seemed to grow the fastest during those times when the power of the sword was hard against them.

However, there came a time when the State attempted to unite itself with the Church. Emperor Constantine, after his "conversion" to Christianity, named himself "*pontifex maximus*," the chief ruler of both Church and State. He used his civil authority to protect, support, and extend the "church."

Four centuries later, one of the Christian bishops took a cue from Constantine's example and named himself "*pontifex maximus*." While he did not claim to be emperor, he did arrogate to himself authority over the State, as well as over the Church. With the crowning of Charlemagne in 800 A.D., the pope asserted his right to exercise power in the secular realm.

It was a gradual process that led up to this moment. Likewise, the process increased until the pope declared himself to be the supreme authority in all matters of Church and State. (Note well that the Church never did submit to him, even though the visible church did.) Pope Innocent III declared: "As the moon receives her light from the sun and is inferior to the sun, so do kings receive all their glory and dignity from the Holy See."

For centuries, the audacious popes declared their right to rule over kings. Many a king found himself in great trouble when he tried to resist the pope. He was required to bow down before the bishop of Rome and to use

his power to extend the Roman church. One king had to crawl on his knees in the snow to beg forgiveness.

THE REFORMATION AND THE CONFESSIONS At times there were men who questioned the right of Rome to do whatever she desired. Their tongues were quickly silenced at the fiery stake. So the papacy dominated the Holy Roman Empire until the fifteenth century.

Then there arose a certain German monk who was led to question papal authority. He could not be so easily quieted, for the power of God surrounded him. As a result of his labors, the light of God's Word began to shine once again. Thus, the clear distinction between Church and State was set forth. In answer to the papal claim that the possession of the Keys gave the pope the right

to transfer kingdoms of this world, and to take the Empire from the Emperor ... our teachers ... were constrained to show the difference between the power of the Church and the power of the sword, and taught that both of them, because of God's commandment, are to be held in reverence and honor, as the chief blessings of God on earth.

But this is their (the Lutheran) opinion, that the power of the Keys, or the power of the bishops, according to the Gospel, is the power or commandment of God, to preach the Gospel, to remit and retain sins, and to administer the Sacraments ... thereby are granted, not bodily, but eternal things. ... Therefore, since the power of the Church grants eternal things, and is exercised only by the ministry of the Word, it does not interfere with civil government. ... For civil government deals with other things than does the Gospel. The civil rulers defend not minds, but bodies and bodily things against manifest injuries, and restrain men with the sword and bodily punishments in order to preserve civil justice and peace.

Therefore the power of the Church and civil power must not be confounded. The power of the Church has its own commission. ... Let it not break into the office of another; let it not transfer the king-

doms of this world; let it not abrogate the laws of civil rulers; let it not abolish lawful obedience; let it not interfere with judgments concerning civil ordinances or contracts; let it not prescribe laws to civil rulers concerning the form of the Commonwealth. (A.C., Art. 28, p. 83:2ff., Concordia Triglotta — as are all quotes herein.)

In the Smalcald Articles, our fathers spoke similarly:

Christ gave to the Apostles only spiritual power, i.e., the command to teach the Gospel, to announce the forgiveness of sins, to administer the Sacraments, to excommunicate the godless without bodily force, and that He did not give the power of the sword, or the right to establish, occupy, or confer kingdoms of the world ...

Now, it is manifest that Christ was not sent to bear the sword or possess a worldly kingdom, as He Himself says ... (S.A., Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope, p. 513:31.)

Thus do the confessions of the Lutheran fathers renew the true teaching of Scripture as to the distinction of Church and State. Each has different ministries to perform, and each ought to keep to her own realm and not intrude into that of the other.

Thus far, we have addressed ourselves primarily to the duty of the Church to keep her fingers out of the operation of the State. In these matters, we find that the Bible speaks to the Church and not to the State. Indeed, such is the nature of the Bible. It is not a handbook by which the State is to govern herself. Under the Old Covenant it did serve that purpose, but only for Israel and only so long as God kept Church and State united. When He saw fit to place Israel under foreign authorities, the Bible ceased to be the handbook for civil authority. Likewise, under the New Covenant, Church and State remain separate, and the Bible gives no commands to the State. Rather, it commands the members of the Church to submit to the State. What is stated concerning the State is spoken with this in mind and not in order to instruct the State.

... it is lawful for Christians to bear civil office, sit in judgment, determine matters by imperial laws, and other laws in present force ... (Apology, Art. 16, p. 329:53 - emphasis added.)

Neither does the Gospel bring new laws concerning the civil state, but commands that we obey the present laws, whether they have been framed by heathen or others, and that this obedience we should exercise in love. For Carlstadt was insane in imposing upon us the judicial law of Moses. (Ibid., p. 331:55.)

The State is governed not by the written Law of God, but by natural law, i.e., the works of the law written in man's heart. Therefore, whether the king be heathen or Christian, his commands are to be obeyed. The only exception to this is when his laws cause us to disobey God. Then he is to be disobeyed as to his command, but honored as to his office.

... it is our duty to honor them and to esteem them great as the dearest treasure and the most precious jewel on earth. (Lg.Cat., The Fourth Commandment, p. 625:150.)

Therefore, Christians are necessarily bound to obey their own magistrates and laws, save only when commanded to sin; for then they ought to obey God rather than men. (A.C., Art. 16, p. 51:6f.)

With such words as these, the confessions speak to the Church. Do they have anything to say to the State, also? It would seem inconsistent, considering the distinction made between Church and State, for our fathers to have commanded the State regarding its functions.

In each age of history, the Church has found herself operating under various forms of government. At the time of the Reformation, the Church existed among rulers who were very much involved in the religious affairs of their realms. Once the Reformation had taken firm hold, it became the law of the Empire that each prince was to determine the State-supported religion of his province. Thus,

the power of the State was exercised in the realm of the Church, whether the Church approved or not.

When the Church exists under such governments, she must learn to function, accepting the reality, while not sacrificing doctrine in faith or life. Even so, our fathers had to conduct the ministry of reconciliation under the support and governance of the State. While they may have preferred it otherwise, they had no other choice. How then do they speak to those princes, who had embraced the cause of Lutheranism?

But especially the chief members of the Church, kings and princes, ought to guard the interests of the Church, and see to it that errors be removed and consciences be healed. ... For it should be the first care of kings to advance the glory of God. Therefore it would be very shameful for them to lend their influence and power to confirm idolatry and infinite other crimes, and to slaughter saints. (S.A., Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope, p. 519:54.)

But since the decisions of Synods are the decisions of the Church, and not of the Popes, it is especially incumbent on kings to check the license of the Popes, and to act so that the power of judging and decreeing from the Word of God is not wrested from the Church. (Ibid., p. 521:56.)

While such statements may not be heard coming from the Church under our form of government, the reader must remember that the circumstances were much different in those days. For one thing, the Pope had claimed for himself complete supremacy in all matters of Church and State. He declared that "no one shall judge the first seat; for the judge is judged neither by emperor, nor by all the clergy, nor by kings, nor by the people" (Op.cit., p. 519:50). Under this false premise, he felt free to perform all manner of illegality.

Our fathers were not proposing that kings and princes assume the ministry of reconciliation and enforce it by the power of the sword. Rather, they wanted their rulers to, first of all, keep the Pope in check, so that he

could not enter into every church with impunity and assert his authority. They were asking that the State simply offer protection to the churches, so that they could function without unlawful hindrances.

Indeed, the Church does have the right to expect the State to protect her from external interference. The Apostle Paul, also, called upon the State for protection of his person, so that the Jews could not hinder him from preaching his message. Even so, an individual church can expect the State to protect its corporate body from coercion by outsiders. Thus a church may enlist the police, if being threatened or attacked by outsiders.

If, on the other hand, false teachers arise from within the corporate body, a church must deal with this by itself (1 Cor. 5:12f.; 6:1ff.). Should it happen that the prince of the commonwealth is a member of this church, he, too, like any other member, should lend his aid as a church member in carrying out the divine command.

It was not only the papacy that plagued the Church. Other false teachers arose, who twisted Scriptural doctrine in this matter. Chief among these were the Anabaptists. They taught:

8. That under the New Testament the magistracy is not a godly estate.
9. That a Christian cannot with a good, inviolate conscience hold the office of magistrate.
10. That a Christian cannot without injury to conscience use the office of magistracy in matters that may occur against the wicked, neither can its subjects appeal to its power.
11. That a Christian cannot with good conscience take an oath before a court, nor with an oath do homage to his prince or hereditary sovereign.
12. That magistrates cannot without injury to conscience inflict capital punishment upon evil-doers. (Formula of Concord, Thor.Decl., Art. 12, p. 1099: 17ff.)

As aforementioned quotations clearly demonstrate, the Lutherans held government to be ordained of God and

to be honored and treasured by God's people. In addition, they declared:

... that lawful civil ordinances are good works of God, and that it is right for Christians to bear civil office, to sit as judges, to judge matters by Imperial and other existing laws, to award just punishments, to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers, to make legal contracts, to hold property, to make an oath when required by the magistrates, to marry a wife, to be given in marriage. (A.C., Art. 16, p. 51:1f.)

Therefore, private redress is prohibited not by advice, but by a command, Matt. 5:39; Rom. 12:19. Public redress, which is made through the office of the magistrate, is not advised against, but is commanded, and is a work of God, according to Paul, Rom. 13:1sq. (Apology, Art. 16, p. 331:59.)

While the Church, as the body of Christ, does not assume the ministry of the State, the individual Christian, as a citizen of his nation, may enter into such a ministry or make use of it for the support and protection of his body.

By the grace of God, our fathers were given the light of truth and confessed the same. In so doing, they were instrumental in liberating Church and State from occupations, which only tended to hinder them in their true ministries. Moreover, they liberated burdened consciences from the fears and doubts laid upon them by false teachers.

The years that followed the Reformation saw repeated intrusions by churches and governments into one another's realms. Troubles of every sort ensued. The bodies of men lay upon battlefields in religious wars. The souls of men were tormented and slain by errorists. However, the disciple of Christ knew where to take his stand. He stood upon the foundation of Holy Scripture and embraced the Lutheran Confessions.

The troubles that arise, because of an intermingling

of Church and State, have not ceased, nor shall they until the end of time. There will continue to be evil church men who will want to return to the economy of the Old Covenant. They will try to assume the position of those priests, dictating policy to the government or enlisting its support for their errors. — There will always be governments which will attempt to control the Church and change her doctrines.

In following articles, this Journal will deal with present troubles on the basis of the Scriptures of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church. May the Spirit of the Lord guide us, so that we maintain our proper ministry. We have no greater power at our disposal than the power of the Gospel of forgiveness. This is the power that changes hearts, rescuing them from sin and error, comforting them with the assurance of full and free forgiveness, guiding them on the pathways of eternal life. No sword of the State can ever accomplish such marvels. — And may the Lord of all creation, Who rules in Church and State, bless our government, so that we may practice our faith in peace and without hindrance. Amen.

John K. Pfeiffer

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE WITH REFERENCE TO MORAL ISSUES

THE MORAL BREAKDOWN "Christian citizens in our country are justifiably alarmed by the breakdown in national morality. The state no longer upholds basic morality, particularly in matters of sex and the sanctity of life. We are witnessing the degradation of our nation to the infamy of Sodom and decadent Rome. The laws of the land now countenance and in effect promote fornication, abortion, and homosexuality."¹

Times are changing, and hardly for the better. On our part we have never harbored the illusions of the millennialists with their dreams and hopes of an ever-improving, more godly society. The Bible leaves no question that evil will increase and abound with the passage of time. And how is it going? In the past the supporters of amorality and immorality pretty much kept their thoughts to themselves, or sinisterly within the confines of those who felt as they felt, thought as they thought, practiced as they practiced. However, what we are seeing in this latter third of the twentieth century is that the espousers of anti-christian moral philosophy are coming "out of the closet" with a blatant openness seldom seen before.

Of major concern to us in this article is that in many cases churches and courts are rallying to the support of this moral breakdown: "Even in the first half of this century secular moral standards still paralleled those proclaimed by the church. Now the moral principles of conservative churches are being rejected and repudiated by our culture, with the High Court lending its weight and authority to the moral breakdown." In the same article the writer touches on what is an even more frightening fact: "God's Word has fallen upon evil days. Gone from the American scene is the respect it once had." And he explains: "Because the state and its courts no longer acknowledge the basic morality of the Bible, and the hedonistic materialism of stage, screen, and press defies and ridicules the Bible's ethical pronouncements, its authority is being corroded and destroyed before our eyes."

and grace has preserved for us and among us a holy respect for His precious and steadfast and only-saving Word. The attempted discrediting and disabling of that Word by Satan's hordes does not mean that life-giving Word has suffered or must suffer the same fate among us. Though many black clouds hang over our nation, we are still privileged to look to God's Word, study and follow it, without fear of Neronian-type persecution.

And so long as the Heavenly Father determines we have time remaining to us on this earth, we have an urgent calling as His sons and daughters by faith. No small part of that calling is to do what we can, wherever and whenever we can, to stem if possible the rot and decay which threatens to engulf and destroy us. "Ye are the salt of the earth," says Christ our Lord. With a consistent, persistent testimony, both of faithful words and an active Christian life, our calling is to seek to retard the spoilage.

LEGISLATING MORALITY? In connection with any discussion which touches on the proper distinction between Law and Gospel in Christian theology, invariably the statement will be heard: "You can't legislate morality." Is this a true statement?

If we could answer an unqualified "yes" to that question little more need be said. If we were living in God's perfect Garden of Eden prior to the Fall, indeed no legislation would be needed, for the immutable will of God had been written into man's heart. Were we already in heaven, the same would be true. In addition, if all men now living were "righteous" men, void of sinful flesh and blood, no law (compulsion or coercion) or legislation (law interpretation and enforcement) would be in order at all. (Cf. 1 Tim. 1:9.)

But what is the reality? It is that all men, including Christians, are sinners. And in a world of sinners "law" (divine and human) has its very necessary and important place (again, see 1 Tim. 1:9-10). That place is above all to expose man's sinfulness, and then to curb (restrain) to a certain extent the coarse outbreak of sin. The law is also needed to instruct the "righteous"

inasmuch as they retain the sinful flesh, lest they presume to practice good works which are, in fact, self-serving and not in keeping with the immutable will of God.

Where is this law of God to be found? Thank God it is not found only and alone in the Scriptures! If it were, every success at discrediting and disabling the Scripture message in this world of sinners would result in ever increasing, yet untold, and hopelessly unchecked lawlessness. But no, it pleased God to leave a remnant of His law within the hearts of men by nature. This so-called "natural law" is referred to by St. Paul in Romans 2:13-15. Though this natural law is insufficient to delineate God's perfect will for man, when allowed to do its thing it works to a certain extent to restrain the gross darkness and wickedness of the depraved human heart.

It is in the realm of "natural law" that earthly governments, their representatives and judges can and should function, yes, legislate. Consider these words: "Natural law is the basis today for all civil law. Natural law is related to the moral law of God, but natural law is not identical to the moral law. Moral law is an expression of the holy, immutable will of God. Moral law governs our relationships to one another and to God as members of God's family, the Church. Civil law governs our relationship to one another as members of the human family, the state. ... Martin Luther refused to confuse natural law with moral law and their functions. Luther distinguished between God's left hand and God's right hand. According to Luther God employs his left hand to rule his world. He employs his right hand to rule his church. ... When Christians join hands to insist upon a Christian public policy or morality, they are ignoring God's method of operation in church and state. They are confusing his right hand with his left hand, and when that happens no one gets a fair shake. It creates confusion."³

The writer concludes: "Does this mean that as Christians we have no interest in public policy or morality? Of course not. It means that in such matters we will, as good citizens, argue our points and base our case on natural law rather than on God's written law in the Scrip-

tures. We will recognize that in a pluralistic society we cannot demand that non-Christians submit to biblical perspective on public policy or morality."⁴

The Bible is clear in its support of this perspective. Jesus told Pilate that His (Christ's) kingdom was "not of this world" (Jn. 18:36). Our Lord refused to rule on economic and civil matters when He asked: "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Lk. 12:14). And Paul declared more than once that the power and authority to be wielded by Christ's followers is of a far different kind than that which is within Caesar's sphere and at his disposal (Cf. 2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:13 & 17).

In other words, it is not the Christian stance to maintain that the state has absolutely no business to enact legislation in areas touching on natural law or "natural" morality. While Romans 13 is basic to our understanding of the (restricted) role of government on the one hand, on the other hand what is said there implies that the state is also a servant of God! As "the minister of God to thee for good" and as "a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil," the state shirks its God-given role if it ignores or retreats from its responsibilities in those areas where it has a duty to legislate and enforce.⁵

Well-meaning but misguided Christians go a step further when they expand the role of Caesar to include the responsibility of legislating all Christian moral law. This is what the espousers of the "Moral Majority" are found doing these days. They are endeavoring to have a "Christian" public policy imposed upon the citizens of our country. If such a policy would prevail, the latter state (pun intended!) would in the end be worse than the first.

As to obedience, in areas where the state legislates within its proper sphere a Christian citizen can, must, and will submit to, heartily obey, and even publicly and vociferously defend those laws (Cf. 1 Pet. 2:13-14). On the other hand, the Christian is not conscience-bound to follow blindly the laws enacted by the state. Absolute obedience is something owed only to God, not man — even

though they be God's human agents. Where the frailty of natural man, sinner that he is, succeeds in legislating laws which positively conflict with the high authority of God, the principle applies: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

We are generally sympathetic with the statement, "You can't legislate morality." Yet, in the light of what has been said, in most cases a truer statement and more to the point would be: "You can't change men's hearts by legislation." Certain kinds of morality (civil law) can be, are, and should be legislated and enforced by courts of the land. Those who claim to speak for the Christian church, however, should recognize that their task goes far deeper and beyond rallying the populace to the achievement of legislative victories in the area of morality. You don't reform man, change his heart, by the law, by any law whatever. Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ can accomplish that!

We now address ourselves to some specific moral issues which have been suggested as sub-topics for treatment in this essay — such matters as abortion, prayer in public schools, war and peace, nuclear freeze, and conscientious objectors.

ABORTION We are certain that, as far as the readers of this journal are concerned, there is general agreement that the question of abortion is one of the premier moral issues of the day. Nevertheless, there are those who would disagree with us. These are they who see abortion as having no more of an ethical aspect than does the cutting of a toenail. From that viewpoint it follows: nobody, including the state, has anything at all to say to me on the matter; the question of whether or not a woman chooses to have an abortion is her decision and hers alone; a pregnant woman can do as she well pleases with her own body, including with the "blob of protoplasm" that through fertilization has become attached to the wall of her womb. This attitude (and it is far more prevalent than we might like to think) should not surprise us who are aware of the impact of the philosophy of secular humanism on the society in which we live. With good reason our church body in recent years has had study assignments

(at both teachers' and pastoral conferences) zeroing in on the thrust and impact of the humanistic philosophy on our traditional values and culture. We can be thankful that we are not alone in warning against the radical influences humanism has had and is having.

Francis Schaeffer is one who has spoken out against the humanistic influence as it becomes evident also in liberal attitudes toward abortion questions. Lecturing to a group which included many Congressmen and their wives, Schaeffer gave this definition: "(Humanism) means Man beginning from himself with no knowledge except what he himself can discover and no standard outside of himself. In this view Man is the measure of all things ... Humanism can be seen, then, as the ultimate attempt to pull one's self up by one's own bootstraps."⁶

After going on to explain the irreconcilable contrast between the respective world views of the humanist and the Christian, Schaeffer listed some of the inevitable results of humanism. After postulating that humanism rules out all divine revelation, he continues: "We are left with only an arbitrary basis for law as well. Law becomes only the decision of one person or a small group of people and what he or they decide at a given moment is for the good of society or is to their own advantage (situation ethics -PGF) ... The whole matter is left up to us - one man or some group, some caucus or committee, or the Supreme Court - to make the decision as to what is good for society at the moment."

Which, in turn, leads to this: "There is also the loss of any intrinsic dignity attached to the individual person. Here, significantly, lies the reason that today there is general acceptance of what would have been thought to be an abomination just a few years ago, namely, abortion on demand. The practice has expanded rapidly into infanticide, that is, the killing of babies after they are born if they do not measure up to someone's notion of 'life worthy to be lived.' This in turn proceeds toward euthanasia, especially with respect to the aged. This is a natural result of the materialist view of final reality and the consequent diminishing of the value of human life."⁷

Our contention has always been and remains that God is the Creator of all life and that only He has the right to take it. Furthermore, that God begins human life at the moment of conception in the womb. Though no Scripture passage says this in so many words, it is clearly implied from such verses as Luke 1:41; Psalm 51:5; Psalm 139:13; Jeremiah 1:5; Ecclesiastes 11:5; et al. To us it is clear that the Creator-God is involved with man's history not only from the moment of his birth, but prior to it! Dr. John L. Grady observes that even modern medical science has the capacity to show that the "potentiality for personhood" is present already at conception, and that the fetus or embryo is far more than a specialized form of parasite or cancerous growth of tissue foreign to the mother!⁸

In his excellent booklet, *Abortion - Yes or No?*, Grady itemizes the following conclusions against the arguments used by many legislators and physicians who advocate liberal abortion laws:

1. Life - some type of growing, metabolic organism, which has all the potentials necessary for developing, fully and only (his emphasis), into a human being - begins at conception.
2. Legally, philosophically, and scientifically, this life has always been regarded as human. Modern medical science now clearly demonstrates the human nature of this life.
3. Aborticide has been condemned throughout history by Law, Medicine, and Judeo-Christian teaching.
4. There is no medical necessity, physical or mental, for aborticide. Convenience, yes; real necessity, no.
5. The right of the unborn child to life must outweigh the desires of others to destroy it, whatever the basis of these desires.
6. The liberalization of abortion laws now will ultimately lead to legalized extermination of other humans, and will be another step in the decaying moral values of our current society.⁹

While prior to 1973 there were movements afoot, yea, laws enacted, in favor of liberalizing abortion, the dam

did not break until the Supreme Court ruling that year. On January 22, 1973, in Roe vs. Wade the High Court, by a 7 to 2 majority, struck down all restrictive laws against abortion which some states had on the books and prohibited the states from having any compelling interest in the protection of the fetus until it is "viable" or "capable of meaningful life." This in effect approved abortion on demand through the first six or seven months of pregnancy. The flood gates were opened so that an estimated 1.5 million pregnancies have been terminated by abortion each year since.

Theologian R. C. Sproul, in speaking of abortion, ties together natural law, legislation, and the duty of the government. He says, "As Christians we recognize, I hope, that there is a profound difference between a moral right and a legal right. Ideally legal rights reflect moral rights, but such is not always the case. How does one establish the moral right to choose abortion? From the law of nature? From the law of God? Hardly. Natural law abhors abortion and divine law implicitly condemns it. The real basis of the right to choose abortion is based on want. The unspoken assumption of the right-to-choose position is the assumption that I am free to choose whatever I want — an assumption repugnant to both God and nature. I never have the moral right to do evil. I may have the civil and legal right to sin, but never the moral right. The only moral rights I have are to righteousness."¹⁰

He continues by asking: "Is not the issue more complex? Does it not hang together with the broader issue of the extent of government intrusion into our private lives? Surely it does ... But the primary purpose of government, biblically, is to exercise restraint on mankind in order to promote, preserve, and protect the sanctity of life (Our emphasis). This is the very *raison d'être* of human government." And he concludes: "If abortion-on-demand is evil, no one has the moral right to choose it. If it is an offense against life, the government must not permit it. The day is being captured by the moderate middle who have not faced the ethical implications of this position. This is the moral cop-out of our day — the shame of our churches and her leaders. It is time to get off the fence.

Pro-choice is pro-abortion. Be clear about that and abandon the muddled middle."¹¹ (All emphases ours.)

Abortion is a sin against both natural law and divine law. Are we doing what we can and ought to be doing as Christian citizens in the midst of the holocaust of abortion? Are we letting our voices be heard and our votes speak? Though we may hesitate to pass a synodical resolution condemning abortion for the purpose of forwarding it to one or another of the representatives of "God's left hand," our individual weight needs to be brought to bear in those citizen arenas open to our voice and vote! We dare not be silent or smug in our orthodoxy on this issue without sharing the blame!

We are encouraged when we hear of a conference of pro-lifers held in Chicago in April of this year. Speakers knowledgeable on such things held forth on the possibilities of "Reversing Roe vs. Wade Through the Courts." One law professor is quoted as saying: "Roe vs. Wade is on a collision course with itself. The Supreme Court never declared that there is a constitutional right to abortion. If it had, we never could have won the abortion-funding cases we won." He then urged that the state's interest in life "be expanded to include all fetal life, that the fetus' right to life be guaranteed by the 14th Amendment and that the right to privacy be limited so as to exclude the right to have an abortion."¹² — May God speed the day!

PRAYER IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS If abortion is a most highly charged emotional issue, the issue of whether or not to allow prayer in public schools is not far behind. And while there may be those who contend, however blindly, that abortion is not an issue affecting the religious conscience of the nation, this is not the case with regard to the school-prayer issue. Friend and foe of the recently proposed amendment to the Federal Constitution at least agree that it is a religious issue and that, as such, it bears on the broader question of church-state separation.

But there is where the agreement ends! Just about everyone has strong views one way or the other, including

the atheists. There are those who contend that the question is a simple one: one who is "pro" public school prayer endorses religion (Christianity); while those who are "con" public school prayer are favoring atheism over religion (Christianity). But as more than one person has said, the issue is hardly that simple. Since prayer, if it is anything at all, is an act of worship, questions naturally arise in the area of the separation between church and state.

As matters stand today, we have reason to give thanks for the wisdom God has granted those lobbyists and groups both within and without the Congress and High Court of our country who, though we may not always share their reasoning and argumentation, have worked to defeat the various bills and proposed amendments which would see the state intrude, by legislation, upon either our religious beliefs and/or upon what we understand to be our constitutionally-guaranteed freedoms.

Two of our highly esteemed CLC forefathers, Professors E. Reim and E. Schaller, have written scripturally and eloquently on this issue in earlier volumes of the *Journal of Theology*.¹³ Their writings were prompted by the fact that this issue came up initially in 1962 when the Supreme Court handed down its decision declaring prayer in public schools to be an infringement of the First Amendment of the Constitution.

For the sake of those readers who may not have access to these writings from past *Journal* issues, we will quote from them. For example, Prof. Schaller wrote: "The issues are certainly clear; and the conservative Lutheran position has long been unequivocal — in theory, at least. Prayers spoken in tax-supported school rooms are unconstitutional. Almost inevitably they are in each instance also unionistic and a violation of scriptural directive. The ruling of the Supreme Court (in 1962 -PGF) could contribute greatly toward the abatement of a wide-spread evil which has brought offense into the lives of countless Christian children, their parents and their shepherds."¹⁴ "Our historic position has now been vindicated by Engel vs. Vitale (The Supreme Court case prompting the ruling-PGF); and we reaffirm our considered judgment that all

religious exercises initiated and supported by government, whether in the schools, the armed forces or the legislatures, are both unconstitutional and an offense to Christians."¹⁵

Prof. Schaller continues: "We pray that as individuals they (men and women in positions of governmental authority-PGF) may be led to honor the true God and in His fear seek out the measures best adapted to the promotion of the general welfare. This does not mean that they shall by virtue of their powers make of government a functioning religious body which seeks to impose a form of religious exercise upon the citizens. It means that we want godly people in government, the sum total of whose efforts will be such that the Providence of the true God may operate peaceably in our land under the laws which have been established."¹⁶

Two years later (1964) Professor Reim, then editor of our *Journal*, wrote as follows: "Those who believed that the Supreme Court decision of 1962 had settled the question of prayer or other forms of worship in public schools by reaffirming the principle of separation of church and state as it is defined in the First Amendment of the Federal Constitution may experience a rude awakening. Hearings are now being held before a Congressional Committee to determine whether the First Amendment shall be amended so as to permit what so many are vociferously demanding, namely, the return of prayer in public schools. ..."17

In a sense those words were prophetic. With our nation's "number one citizen," its current President, as an outspoken supporter, the issue has been resurrected to new and vigorous life now two decades later. In March, 1984, President Reagan "threw the full weight of his persuasive powers behind the drive for school prayer; in fact, one of the amendments up for debate was drafted under the supervision of the White House."¹⁸ In an address to the National Association of Evangelicals, Reagan argued: "I firmly believe that the loving God who has blessed our land and made us a good and caring people should never have been expelled from America's classrooms."¹⁹

In spite of this emotional and vocal support of the President, the school-prayer amendment failed to achieve the necessary two-thirds support needed from the Senate to become law. Thus, though the vote was 56-44 in favor, the Amendment was defeated.

But surely we have not heard the end! The reason why is brought out most basically and with commendable insight by Prof. Schaller when he traces the argumentation of the bulk of the school-prayer supporters back to their Calvinistic theological origins. He writes: "The Calvinist of our day stands committed to chiliastic beliefs in one form or another. He understands the nature of the invisible church no better, in the main, than does the Romanist. For him the kingdom of God assumes concrete form and shape as a growing entity which will eventually conquer the earth and bring to pass a spiritual and, in the extreme view, a political entity among men and nations. In the pursuit of this dream he loses the strict confessional tone of the Christian faith. He becomes a unionist, a politician in the name of Christ, a mixer of church and state and an oppressor of the individual conscience in the cause of true religion."²⁰ (Our emphasis.)

In our opinion, this compelling assessment remains accurate. We can be sure that Calvinists will continue to join hands with Romanists so that issue which, if enacted into law, would have the result of blurring church-state separation principles will not go away. (It is noteworthy that representatives of the generally non-millennialist Lutheran churches, be those churches liberal or conservative, have for the most part stood against the idea of legislating prayer into the public schools.) Since those who favor it lost in their bid for the proposed amendment, they are not on that account relenting. Buoyed up and spurred on by what the Gallup poll said is the will of 81% of the American citizenry (interestingly, the same poll in 1962 was 79%²¹), public school prayer supporters are continuing to test the courts on peripheral issues.

For example, in the short time since the proposed amendment lost, a Federal district court judge was asked to rule on the constitutionality of requiring students to

observe a "moment of silence" in New Jersey public schools. The judge ruled against such a law saying that, in effect, it established a time and place for prayer and therefore violated First Amendment separation of church and state requirements. By way of another example, just as this article is being written the national news wires favor us with the report that the nation's House of Representatives rejected (by a vote of 250-151 — short of the two-thirds majority needed) a move to allow student religious meetings during non-class hours in public schools. Critics of the bill claimed that its approval would open the way for the brain-washing of teen-agers in classrooms by cults and devil-worshippers. Supporters of this latter bill used the now-familiar argument that its intention was "to protect students seeking to exercise their constitutional rights of free speech and the free exercise of religion."

In each case our concerns and arguments in 1984 are identical to those set down by our previously-quoted CLC forefathers.

By way of summary, we would say that here the phrase "You can't (or shouldn't seek to) legislate morality" comes into play. It is no official concern of, nor business of, the state whether a child prays or not, is trained in religious values or not. That is for the parents, the homes, the churches, and if desired, private church schools. For these entities to function there is no need for amending the Federal Constitution! As things now stand (and let us thank God for this!) any child may pray silently in the public school voluntarily, individually, and personally!

And only under such conditions can questions disturbing to the Bible-based faith of conscientious, confessionally-minded Christians be avoided. We refer to questions such as these: Prayer to whom? Prayer with whom? Prayer regulated by whom? Prayer according to which "holy book"? Such questions would cry out for answers from the moment a public school prayer amendment passed in state or Federal legislatures. May God spare us that day, for there is no way those questions can be answered without a wholesale selling out to a liberal, watered-down Christianity!

Equally frightful would be the prospect that if "Caesar" decided to rule here (and of necessity then enforced such a ruling), what other demands might we expect him to make in the sphere of religion?

With all this, we breathe somewhat easier when we read the opinion or observation favored us by a *TIME* magazine writer who said: "Since the Supreme Court rarely reverses its precedents, it is not about to overturn its 1962 school-prayer decision. The court moves slowly and incrementally."²² And though that happy observation is qualified with this remark: "But it may see in a moment of silence a chance to bend without breaking," we recall the example of the New Jersey judge's ruling which indicated a hesitancy to bend even for the "moment of silence" argument. (The fact that the Supreme Court rarely reverses its precedents is disconcerting, on the other hand, when applied to its abortion rulings!)

As we did the first section, so also with this one we close with an appeal. Even though on school-prayer issues we find ourselves with such strange bed-fellows as atheists, Christ-denying Jews, and others who for reasons of their own oppose public school prayer, we have no excuse for either equivocation on the one hand or silence on the other. We conservative, confessionally-oriented Lutheran Christians "need watching and more industrious prayer in behalf of those things which Truth requires and our convictions hold dear. We need more forthright public testimony on the part of our informed Christian citizens."²³

Paul Fleischer

(TO BE CONTINUED)

NOTES

1. Carleton Toppe, "The Smalcald Articles Today," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 80, No. 4, Fall, 1983, p. 276.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 277.
3. Joel Gerlach, "'Christian' Public Policy a Hotly Contested Issue," *The Northwestern Lutheran*, August 15, 1982, p. 233.

4. *Ibid.*
5. R. C. Sproul, *Ethics and the Christian* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1983), p. 84f. In full, Sproul writes: "The final question is that of church and state. Many Christians have taken the position that it is not the church's business what the state legislates, since the church is not to legislate morality. However, the state does have the responsibility of legislating morality. Traffic laws deal with the moral issue of how one drives one's car. Justice is a moral issue; laws are an attempt to promote justice. The essence of legislation is morality. The church has the responsibility to speak to the legislature. The state's primary function is the preservation of society and the preservation of life. When the state is involved in legislation that does not respect and promote the sanctity of life, the church must speak out. While we recognize the separation of power between church and state, we cannot recognize the autonomy of the state before God. The state is also a servant of God. If there is any legislation on which the church has the responsibility to speak, it is on this one, since the heart of the issue is the sanctity of life." (From chapter seven, "Ethics of Abortion.")
6. Francis Schaeffer, Vladimir Bukovsky, James Hitchcock, *Who Is For Peace?* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1983), p. 13. Schaeffer was speaking in May, 1982, at a Washington D.C. hotel on the subject "The Secular Humanist World View Versus the Christian World View and Biblical Perspectives on Military Preparedness."
7. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
8. John L. Grady, M.D., *Abortion Yes or No?* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books), see section entitled "Is It Human?", p. 21ff.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 28. Perhaps of particular interest are also the testimonies from reputable representatives of the medical community against the frequent arguments for thereapeutic abortions; e.g., "Anyone who performs a thereapeutic abortion is either ignorant of modern methods of treating the complications of pregnancy or is unwilling to take the time to use them."
10. R. C. Sproul, *op. cit.*, p. 86f.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

12. "Pro-Life Meeting Told Key Abortion Ruling is Legally Vulnerable," *Christian News*, April 9, 1984, p. 1.
13. The three articles referred to are the following: Prof. E. Reim, "None so Blind..." Vol. II, No. 3, June, 1962; Prof. E. Schaller, "Engel vs. Vitale," Vol. II, No. 4, October, 1962; and Prof. E. Reim, "Prayer in Public Schools," Vol. IV, No. 2, April, 1964.
14. Prof. E. Schaller, "Engel vs. Vitale," *loc. cit.*, p. 2.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
17. Prof. E. Reim, "Prayer in Public Schools," *loc. cit.*, p. 34f.
18. "Mixing Politics With Prayer," *TIME*, March 19, 1984, p. 12.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Prof. E. Schaller, *loc. cit.*, p. 6.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
22. *TIME*, *loc. cit.*, p. 14.
23. Prof. E. Schaller, *loc. cit.*, p. 11.

STATE AND CHURCH - POLITICS

Scripture teaches the separate spheres of state and church (Matt. 22:21). Scripture also teaches the dual citizenship of believers (Rom. 13; Phil. 3:20). Scripture furthermore teaches that our Savior-God rules over all, including both state and church (Ps. 95:3; 99:1; Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-23). Scripture teaches that the Kingdom of God is not of this world (Jn. 18:36). The Kingdom of God is not coextensive with any kingdom of this world. When the Lord shakes, the kingdoms of this world topple; the final shaking will destroy all the kingdoms of this world, leaving only the Kingdom of God standing eternally (Rev. 18-19). From this it is evident that all kingdoms, all states, all governments are temporary, used by the Lord God either as a blessing (Rom. 13) or as a scourge (Rev. 13). God governed His Old Testament people under a monarchical form of government, but Scripture prescribes no form of government for a "Christian" state.

Politics is "the science or art of political government," effected in a democratic state by the art of compromise. The word, however, has taken on a pejorative taint because politicians all too often sacrifice the interest of all for the interest of a few or their own self-interests. When we consider state and church from the viewpoint of politics, we find that each tries to use the other for its own interests with the result that both are corrupted. Scripture provides examples that give insight into this phenomenon and that are profitable for the understanding of the present political scene.

A turning point occurred in the history of God's chosen people when, at the time of Samuel, they asked for a king: "Now make for us a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8:5). God's people wanted to be "like all the nations." The spirit of Cain, of Lamech, of Babel, and of Nimrod asserted itself in God's people. Samuel misread the situation; his feelings were hurt, for he felt that he was being personally rejected. The Lord corrected Samuel, advising him that the people "have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, that I should not

reign over them" (1 Sam. 8:7). When God's people reject Him, no good can come of their enterprise!

God gave His people Saul, and He gave Saul His Spirit (1 Sam. 10:10). After Saul became disobedient and the kingdom was taken from his family and he was personally rejected, Saul sought to compensate by carnal zeal. He strictly enforced the Law of Moses (Ex. 22:18; Lev. 20:27; Deut. 18:10-11) by putting "the mediums and the spiritists out of the land" (1 Sam. 28:3). His unholy zeal, combined with religious racism, moved him to slaughter the Gibeonites (2 Sam. 21:1) after Israel had guaranteed their safety by solemn treaty (Josh. 9:15). Both of these actions were designed to shore up the kingdom. Religious zeal was used for political ends in the hope of compelling divine approval and support. It failed, breeding racism and persecution; it was unacceptable as a substitute for repentance, faith, obedience, and trust in the Lord.

David was a man after the heart of God. When he sinned in his private life (the affair with Bathsheba, 2 Sam. 11) and in his public life (the military census, 2 Sam. 24), the Lord chastised David. He repented in humility. But David did not use "religion" to achieve political ends nor religious zeal to camouflage his own sin. With Solomon things began to change, for Solomon abandoned trust in the Lord and faithfulness to Him in favor of political alliances contracted through marriages to strengthen his kingdom. The effect was just the opposite. The marriages caused Solomon's spiritual decline (1 Kings 11:1-13); the political alliances did nothing to prevent the division of his kingdom.

With the division of the kingdom as a result of the rebellion of Jeroboam, religion and politics became so entwined that the only solution was the disintegration of both kingdoms. Jeroboam made two calves of gold and established Bethel and Dan as official centers of worship for the Northern Kingdom (1 Kings 13:25-33). His motivation was purely political. He felt compelled to counter any possible nationalistic feelings that would certainly arise when the people traveled three times a year to the festivals at Jerusalem. Jeroboam's politicizing of the places of worship immediately involved him in attempted

persecution (1 Kings 13:1-10, esp. 4). This was the sin of Jeroboam, "who sinned and made Israel sin" (1 Kings 14:16). It is a historically correct observation that the politicizing of the places of worship in Israel by Jeroboam was the direct cause of the destruction of the nation some two hundred years later.

King Ahab was extremely adept at using religion to further his political ambitions and nationalistic yearnings. His marriage to Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon, secured his northeast boundary. But he had the pesky Syrians to deal with in the northeast. They had taken Ramoth of Gilead. That was an affront to Ahab. Self-respect, as well as national interests, demanded the recapture of Ramoth of Gilead, but Ahab wasn't quite sure of his strength. So first he secured the assistance of King Jehoshaphat, king of Israel. (King Jehoshaphat's political maneuvering brought upon him divine rebuke and, except for divine intervention, would have caused the destruction of the Davidic line through the marriage of his son, Jehoram, to the pagan daughter of Ahab, Athaliah.) Ahab secured the help of Jehoshaphat, but he felt the need for divine approval of his proposed expedition against the Syrians. 1 Kings 22 presents a dramatic picture of Ahab and Jehoshaphat sitting on their thrones at the entrance of the city. Ahab had no problem securing approval from his house theologian, a certain Zedekiah who was backed up by four hundred fellow prophets. They were aware of the polls; they knew what the king wanted. Zedekiah delivered the go-ahead in a dramatic manner. He had made horns of iron, apparently put them on his head, assumed the stance of a charging bull and declared: "Thus says the Lord: 'With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed'" (1 Kings 22:11). We twentieth century readers may easily miss Zedekiah's powerful appeal to Scripture, for had not Moses in his final word of blessing blessed Joseph with these picturesque words (Deut. 33:17): "His (Joseph's) glory is like a firstborn bull, And his horns are like the horns of the wild ox; Together with them he shall push the peoples to the ends of the earth." Zedekiah was a clerical politician of the first rank, combining an appeal to Scripture with the known nationalistic ambitions of the king.

But the other politician in the case wasn't convinced. Jehoshaphat wanted another opinion, this time from a prophet of the Lord. Ahab had one of those on hand too, kept conveniently in the local jail, but he didn't like the man. Micaiah had a nasty habit of telling King Ahab what the Lord wanted him to hear; he refused to echo what Ahab wanted to hear. So Micaiah, spokesman of the Lord, directly contradicted the testimony of Zedekiah, spokesman of the opinion pollsters. With what result: Micaiah went back to his cell; Jehoshaphat got the scare of his life when the Syrians mistook him for Ahab; and Ahab met his predicted end from an arrow shot "at random" with divine accuracy. This episode reveals the corrupting effect of the mixture of religion and politics on man's relation to God, genuine patriotism, the clergy, and appeal to Scripture with inevitable persecution.

In the Southern Kingdom the prophet Jeremiah suffered much of his ministry from clerical politicians who echoed the current opinion of the court and from kings who were supposedly servants of the Lord but who had abandoned the Lord in favor of political alliances. Jeremiah's patriotism was questioned; he was accused of subversion; he experienced persecution (Jer. 38).

At the time our Lord walked this earth we find the same mixing of politics and religion. King Herod carried the favor of his Jewish subjects by lavishly rebuilding the temple in a conscious effort to fulfill the prophecy of Haggai concerning the greater glory of the latter temple (Hag. 2:9). Caiaphas was the ranking clerical politician in the Jewish hierarchy. He was a quisling twenty centuries before Vidkun Quisling served the Nazi as a puppet in Norway (Jn. 11:48-50). It was the politicizing of the great promise of the Kingdom of God that caused the Jews to turn a deaf ear to the Baptizer's and our Lord's repeated calls to repentance as the way to enter the Kingdom.

We must pass by the Middle Ages with the clashes between popes and emperors, the Reformation era with Luther's appeal to the civil authorities and the later "*cuius regio, eius religio*," and the rise of national states with their state religions, followed by the struggle for reli-

gious liberty which result in the First Amendment guarantees of our Bill of Rights.

The present national and international scene reveals many strange mixtures of religion and politics. In the Arab world we are witnessing and as a nation being victimized by a renaissance of Moslem fundamentalism combined with nationalism. The Ayatollah Khomeini, together with his Shiite followers, has seized power in Iran. Again the pattern is God (Allah), country (extreme nationalism), the book (Koran), and the inevitable persecution. Dissent, both political and religious (the Bahiis) becomes blasphemy, and blasphemers are to be stoned according to the Koran — but the firing squad is more efficient. At the time of the hostage crisis we witnessed the Moslem Fundamentalist Khomeini pitted against the born-again Baptist Carter who was opposed by Fundamentalists in his own country. The Fundamentalists won out both in Iran and in our country. That was round one. Now we have the Moslem Fundamentalist, the Ayatollah Khomeini flexing the muscles of his religious nationalism, against President Reagan who identifies himself with the religious Fundamentalists of this country. As the Ayatollah was instrumental in bringing about the defeat of President Carter, so he has contributed to the failure of President Reagan's policy in Lebanon in the withdrawal of our Marines after the massacre of some 260 of them.

An interesting sideview into the "fundamentalist" entanglements is provided by our relations with the Moslem nation of Pakistan, considered to be an ally of the USA. The Moslem Fundamentalists in Pakistan are putting pressure on President Mohammed Zia ul-Haq to outlaw the Ahmedia sect. The Ahmedis are followers of Mirz Ghulam Ahmed, a 19th century prophet and reformer. Moslem Fundamentalists consider him a heretic since the traditional Islamic Creed holds that the 7th century Mohammed was the last of the prophets. Four million Ahmedis, who have a disproportionately high literacy rate and traditionally have been influential in the civil service and armed forces, are forbidden by law from calling themselves Moslems, from propagating their faith, from using the term "masjid" (mosque), and from using the "azan," the traditional call to prayer. Fundamentalists are pressing for death

by stoning for the apostates. Thus Fundamentalist Reagan is currently losing the diplomatic war with Fundamentalist Khomeini while allying himself with Moslem Zia who is being pressured by Khomeini to reshape Pakistan according to the Moslem Fundamentalist paradigm. The mixture of religion and politics makes for strange bedfellows.

The Jewish-Fundamentalist political alliance in our country also produces some odd combinations. Israel also has its Fundamentalist movement, spearheaded by ultra-orthodox rabbis. ABC's "Nightline" discussed this problem in a program the week of May 13th. The ultra-orthodox Jews recognize no civil law, but appeal only to the Torah. They are allegedly guilty of terrorist attacks against Palestinians in the West Bank. Again the extremes are "God," extreme nationalism, the man (Moses "*redivivus*"), the book (Torah), and persecution in the form of terrorism.

The Jewish minority in this country operates the unquestionably most powerful lobby in Washington. Politicians seem ready to sacrifice national interests to secure the Jewish vote, especially in large swing states as New York. Recently two of the Democratic presidential hopefuls vied with each other in making extravagant promises of support for Israel, currently promising to support the transfer of the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a move which is opposed by President Reagan, who is allied politically with the pro-Israel Fundamentalists.

The Fundamentalist support of Israel is deeply rooted in "religious" conviction. When the Lord called Abraham, He made this promise: "I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you" (Gen. 12:3). This promise, made to Abraham as the father of believers (Rom. 4:11), has been transferred to Abraham as the father of the nation Israel. Israel, however, in the course of its history hardened itself against the Lord God of Abraham and His promised to Abraham of One to come, in whom "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (also Gen. 12:3). This self-hardening on the part of Israel caused the God of Abraham to harden Israel judicially (Is. 6:9-13). This historic process of judicial hardening reached its climax when Israel rejected the One

promised to Abraham and consequently was rejected as a nation by Him Whom they rejected — Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers (Matt. 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19). Despite this national rejection, Fundamentalists still hold the Jews, and so the nation of Israel, to be God's chosen, special people.

Fundamentalist eschatology is also based upon the belief that the promise of the land of Canaan from the Nile to the Euphrates to Israel was unconditional and remains to be fulfilled. Some see the beginnings of the fulfillment in the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent military expansion of Israel at the expense of their Arab neighbors. Others look for fulfillment in the future alleged millennium. Regardless of these differences of opinion in this area of eschatology there remains unanimity in the belief that a vote against Israel is a vote against God's chosen people and will bring down the curse of God. Who knows how many votes, giving billions to Israel from the pockets of American taxpayers, were not motivated by this gross misinterpretation of prophetic Scriptures.

The alliance between the secular State of Israel and American Fundamentalists, who support Israel as a matter of conscience as God's chosen people, has united politically people whose "*raison d'etre*" is to urge others "to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior" and those who adamantly reject Jesus Christ as Israel's Savior and who forbid the free proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in their land. Thus we had the anomaly of Christ-denying Begin, head of the State of Israel, being invited to address Christ-accepting First Baptist Church of Dallas, TX — the largest Baptist congregation in the nation. So also Christ-proclaiming Jerry Falwell of the "Old Time Gospel Hour" functions as a lobbyist for the supposedly "chosen nation," whose government would most assuredly forbid Falwell or any other American evangelists from conducting a "decision for Christ" rally in Israel. The common ground between the American Fundamentalists and some of the leaders of Israel is said to be the verbal inspiration and literal interpretation of the Old Testament, specifically the "chosen nation" concept and the alleged unconditional promise of the land. But what of

the messianic promises, believed by the Fundamentalists to have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ but by the Jews in the secular nation and state of Israel?

The same confusion and contradiction appear in the matter of the US government's relation to the Vatican. President Reagan maintains personal liaison with four religious groups in this country — the Jews, Catholics, National Council of Churches, and the Fundamentalists. But in addition special relations in the form of an ambassador to the Papal See are maintained with international Catholicism. Catholics defend this action on the grounds that Catholicism, unlike any other religious community, is both a religion and a state. Thereby they give unwitting confirmation of the judgment that the Pope is The Antichrist, who exercises his tyranny "in the temple of God" (2 Thess. 2:4) and in governmental affairs as the Beast that arose out of the earth (Rev. 12:11-18). Thus we find a president, who has aligned himself politically with "decision for Christ" Fundamentalists, seeking closer alignment with the Papacy that at the Council of Trent pronounced its official anathema on the gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. Pope John Paul barnstorms the world as an international statesman, not as a Christ-the-Savior-confessing evangelist. The Fundamentalists confess Christ as Savior, but cannot recognize the Pope as The Antichrist because their eschatology calls for The Antichrist to arise as a charismatic political leader from the ruins of the Roman empire.

Politics and religion are inseparably intertwined in our country. A poll recently taken by *U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT* (May 14, 1984) reveals that three of the 30 most influential Americans are clergymen. Ronald Reagan heads the list, but number 15 is Jesse Jackson (Democratic presidential candidate in alliance with black racist Louis Farrhakan, leader of the Nation of Islam), and tied for 24 are Billy Graham (longtime friend of presidents and political leaders of other nations) and Jerry Falwell (president of the Moral Majority). The same poll established a list of the 20 most influential people outside government. We find four clergymen on that poll: #6 Jerry Falwell, #7 Jesse Jackson, #8 Billy Graham, and #16 Cardinal Joseph Bernardin.

Further evidence of the interrelationship of state and church is the granting of tax dollars by the Federal government to churches. Howard Phillips, President of The Conservative Caucus Research, Analysis and Education Foundation, reports that "Church Councils receive at least \$27,501,233 from Federal government." The April, 1983, issue of "Eye on Bureaucracy," published by The Conservative Caucus, Research, Analysis and Education Foundation, features an article entitled "The National Council of Churches: Your Taxes Help Fund This Establishment of 'Religion.'" It comes as a surprise (at least to this writer) that in 1980 the Church World Service, a branch of the National Council of Churches, received more than \$12 million in Federal contracts from the Department of State, some of which is channeled to pro-Soviet communist causes.

Our sampler survey reveals that the mixture of religion and politics all too often results in a corruption of both state and church. Such a mixture breeds religious nationalism, government by The Book (Koran, Torah, or Bible), and intolerance of opposing opinions that leads to persecution where the government has the power to harass or execute and "hit lists" of opposing politicians to be liquidated at the polls, certainly a more humane method of execution. But the fact remains that a Christian is both a citizen of the state and of the Kingdom of God. The great spiritual leaders in the Bible, men like Moses and Jeremiah, were patriots in the highest sense of the word. So also was Martin Luther, and so are most religious leaders and church members in our day. The question is: How is a Christian citizen to exercise his citizenship in the political arena without compromising faithfulness to his or her Lord? We shall examine three approaches.

The first two approaches are similar in method but differing in aim and purpose. The method is that of advocacy, which in the political realm means lobbying. We consider first the Moral Majority. The Moral Majority was organized by Jerry Falwell, a Baptist preacher from West Virginia, who is currently pastor of a large Baptist congregation in Lynchburg, Virginia, and founder of the electronic church known as the "Old Time Gospel Hour."

The Moral Majority "is made up of millions of Americans, including 72,000 ministers, priests, and rabbis, who are deeply concerned about the moral decline of our nation, and who are sick and tired of the way many amoral and secular humanists and other liberals are destroying the traditional family and moral values on which our nation was built." Supporting the Moral Majority are Catholics, Jews, Protestants, Mormons, and Fundamentalists – according to their 1981 brochure. It is safe to assume that the Fundamentalists are the majority of the Moral Majority. The same brochure states the Moral Majority's stand on vital issues as follows:

1. We believe in the separation of church and state.
2. We are pro-life.
3. We are pro-traditional family.
4. We oppose the illegal drug traffic in America.
5. We oppose pornography.
6. We support the state of Israel and Jewish people everywhere.
7. We believe that a strong national defense is the best deterrent to war.
8. We support equal rights for women.
9. We believe that E.R.A. is the wrong vehicle with which to obtain equal rights for women.
10. We encourage our Moral Majority state organizations to be autonomous and indigenous.

The same brochure also states "What Moral Majority Inc. is Not":

1. We are not a political party.
2. We do not endorse political candidates.
3. We are not attempting to elect "born again" candidates.
4. Moral Majority Inc. is not a religious organization attempting to control the government.
5. We are not a censorship organization.
6. Moral Majority Inc. is not an organization committed to depriving homosexuals of their civil rights as Americans.
7. We do not believe that individuals or organizations which disagree with Moral Majority Inc. belong to an immoral minority.

"Here is How Moral Majority Inc. is Contributing to Bringing America Back to Moral Sanity":

1. By educating millions of Americans concerning the vital moral issues of our day.
2. By mobilizing millions of previously "inactive" Americans.
3. By lobbying intensively in Congress to defeat any legislation that would further erode our constitutionally guaranteed freedoms and by introducing and/or supporting legislation that promotes traditional family and moral values.
4. By informing all Americans about the voting records of their representatives so that every American, with full information available, can vote intelligently.
5. By organizing and training millions of Americans who can become moral activists.
6. By encouraging and promoting non-public schools in their attempt to excel in academics while simultaneously teaching traditional family and moral values.

The Moral Majority is a prominent element of what is being called "The Religious New Right," which includes also such groups as Pat Robertson of the "700 Club," Jim Bakker of the "PTL Club," the "American Christian Cause" of Robert Grant, and "The Christian Voice," headed by Gary Jermin, former youth director of the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon. This last group is best known for its morality report card on members of Congress. The Religious Right is allied with the Political Right, such as "The Conservative Digest," edited by Richard Viguerie; the "Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress," headed by Paul Weyrich; and the "National Conservative Political Action Committee," headed by John T. Dolan.

The Moral Majority is thus aligned with other fundamentalist religious groups and with the conservative political right. It is natural that the lobbying and educational efforts of the Moral Majority dovetail with the political aims of the conservative right. Their lobbying aims coincide; the power of the electronic pulpit is united with the fund raising expertise of the political right.

The result is a potent political force on the American political scene. All of this is consistent with Reformed theology and tradition by which the power of the state is used to implement the aims of the church to create the "Christian" state or the "city of God" here on earth. Calvin's Geneva is the prototype, but the persecution and execution of Servetus followed in the wake. We've had the Salem witch trials in our own country. In the Ayatollah and in Israel and in Pakistan we are witnessing what religious zeal, dedication to a holy book, combined with religious nationalism can and does bring about — the suppression and persecution of religious/political minorities. We are a minuscule religious minority in a pluralistic state. If either the fundamentalist/conservative right or the religious and political left ever gained control of our government and society, we could expect persecution.

We consider second the position of the Lutheran Council in the USA (LC/USA). LC/USA represents The American Lutheran Church, The Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and Lutheran Church in America. For the information of our readers we quote in part "A Statement on Religion and Politics," which has been endorsed by LC/USA General Secretary John R. Houck, ALC President David W. Preus, AELC President William H. Kohn, and LCA President James R. Crumley, Jr. The readers will immediately see that the backdrop for "A Statement" is the position of the Moral Majority.

Lutherans in the U.S. affirm the principle of functional interaction between the government and religious bodies in areas of mutual endeavor, so that such interaction assists the maintenance of good order, the protection and extension of civil rights, the establishment of social justice and equality of opportunity, the promotion of the general welfare and the advancement of the dignity of all persons. This principle underscores the Lutheran view that God rules both the civil and spiritual dimensions of life, making it appropriate for the government and the churches to relate creatively and responsibly to each other.

Lutherans hold that their churches have the re-

sponsibility to describe and clarify to their members and to society the mission of the Lutheran churches and to determine, establish, maintain and alter the various forms through which that mission is expressed and structured. The distinctive mission of the churches includes the proclamation of God's Word in worship, in public preaching, in teaching, in administration of the sacraments, in evangelism, in educational ministries, in social service ministries and in being advocates of justice for participants in the social order. According to Lutheran theology, the civil government's distinctive calling by God is to maintain peace, to establish justice, to protect and advance human rights and to promote the general welfare of all persons.

It is a misuse of terms to describe government and politics as godless or profane, because God rules both the civil and the spiritual dimensions of life. Thus it is unnecessary and unbiblical for any church group or individual to seek to "Christianize" the government or to label political views of members of Congress as "Christian" or "religious." It is arrogant to assert that one's position on a political issue is "Christian" and that all others are "un-Christian," "immoral" or "sinful." There is no "Christian" position; there are Christians who hold positions. Government under God employs reason and power for social justice, peace and freedom.

To describe one group's political position as "The Christian Voice" and one movement's political agenda as a movement "for Jesus" is wrongly judgmental. It is also an affront to Jewish and other religious advocates whose religions hold social justice as a social form of love of neighbor. Devout Christians and Jews agree and disagree between and among themselves regarding political decisions and can agree and disagree with nonbelievers. Advocacy for social justice is part of the mission of the churches according to Lutheran theology. Such advocacy may often bring disagreement on issues and votes as to how to strive for justice.

The LC/USA functions under divine compulsion to carry on, as a church, a ministry of advocacy over against

the government in the interest of social justice. LC/USA operates with a latitude of theological opinion. Their ministry of advocacy likewise reveals a latitude of moral opinion, as is evident from the statement: "There is no 'Christian' position; there are Christians who hold positions." An example of this would be the recent debate and vote on the school prayer amendment, which was championed by Republican Senator Baker of Tennessee, who is an Episcopalian, while the opposition was led by Republican Senator Weicher of Connecticut, who is also an Episcopalian. The position of "liberal" Senator Weicher, supported by the mainline churches, prevailed — to the joy of us in the CLC. But our position that prayer in public school is both unconstitutional and unscriptural differs from both the "pro" and "anti" prayer protagonists. This would be seen as confirmation of the contention that "there is no 'Christian' position; there are Christians who hold positions." That would also make abortion and homosexuality subject to moral relativism, silencing the judgment of Scripture.

The church's ministry of advocacy in the social and political arenas is being challenged by other mainline churches. *U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT* (May 21, 1984) reports that "in their 200th-anniversary year, American Methodists are cutting back on politics and returning to the grassroots evangelism that founder John Wesley brought to the U.S." The bishops set the tone for the convention by declaring: "We have spent much time dealing with social structures, debating the merits and demerits of various political and economic systems ... and far too little time evangelizing people." The ministry of advocacy has become divisive in the Methodist Church and other mainline churches. The large losses in members have caused, at least the Methodists, to reconsider their position.

The CLC does not engage in a ministry of advocacy to lobby the government regarding matters of justice or morality, such as abortion, homosexuality, prayer in the schools, housing, hunger, nuclear freeze, civil rights, etc. This does not mean that these issues are of no concern to the clergy and laity of our church body and are not treated in one way or another from the pulpit or in various instructional forums. The second table of the law

and, above all, conforming our lives to the gospel asks that each Christian be concerned with issues of justice and morality. The question is not whether such issues are the proper concern of Christians, but rather whether they be the concern of Christians united in a corporate body such as a synod.

We find that our Lord assigned to His disciples, and so to His Church, the task of evangelizing the world (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:46-48). Accordingly we unite to train future pastors and teachers, send out missionaries, support mission congregations, and prepare printed materials in the interest of spreading the gospel. We do this work as a synod, a corporate body.

Historically we are also accustomed to doing eleemosynary work as a corporate body — maintaining homes for the aging, orphanages, and hospitals. We find precedent for such synodic efforts in the first Christian congregation at Jerusalem where seven men were chosen to relieve the apostles of the burden of "serving tables" (Acts 6: 1-7). There are those among us who feel that even such activity is beyond the scope of the church body and would be better left to the individual Christian or associations of Christians. This, however, can easily become an excuse for doing little or nothing. Larger projects, such as the building and maintaining of an orphanage in a foreign land, demand a united, consistent effort such as can be given only on the synodic level.

We, however, find neither precept nor precedent for the church as a corporate body to carry on a ministry of advocacy in the form of lobbying the government. There was no lack of injustice and inequality, denial of civil rights, poverty and hunger, homosexuality, abortion and infanticide in the Roman world. But none of the apostles addressed the Roman government on these issues. They restricted their prophetic ministry to their congregations. Yet, on the other hand, each individual Christian and Christian congregation brought his or her way of life to bear upon the surrounding society. The reborn child of God and the Christian congregation have always served as a leaven in society. So it remains to our day. We have pastors and laypeople who are active in the political

process, others who are inactive. We encourage our members to write to their representatives on issues of justice and morality, and above all to exercise their right to vote. We bear witness to the truth, but we refrain from advocating or lobbying as a church body.

Lobbying is successful in direct ratio to the numerical and financial strength of the lobbyists. That calls for uniting with others. History has shown repeatedly that when church groups who differ confessionally unite in lobbying efforts, the truth of the Lord tends to become compromised. Confessional forthrightness is sacrificed to political strength.

Paul F. Nolting



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