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### Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic Conceptions of the Kingdom of God as they Relate to the Role of the Church in the World

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KINGDOM CONCEPTS, LUTHERAN, AND CALVINISTIC CONCEPTIONS  
OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS THEY RELATE TO THE  
SHORT TITLE  
KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS IS THE WORLD

KINGDOM CONCEPTS: CATH., LUTH., & CALV.

Bruss, MST, 1964

This Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Practical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

BY  
GEO. F. BRUSS  
1964

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Concordia Seminary  
St. Louis, Mo.



ROMAN CATHOLIC, LUTHERAN, AND CALVINISTIC CONCEPTIONS  
OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS THEY RELATE TO THE  
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## CHAPTER I

### ROMAN CATHOLIC, LUTHERAN, AND CALVINISTIC CONCEPTS OF THE BASILEIA

This is a comparative study of Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic conceptions of the Kingdom of God as they relate to the role of the Church in the world.

The concept of the Kingdom is common to all periods of our Lord's teaching, but the concept of the Church appears only at two special points of His ministry: Matt. 16:18 and Matt. 18:17. New Testament scholars have explored this relationship of Kingdom and Church and have given various interpretations. In our opinion the Church of Jesus Christ is the product of the Kingdom of Christ, of His gracious rule. The Kingdom of God is God's gracious rule, the Savior's redemptive work.<sup>1</sup>

Both concepts, the kingdom concept and the church concept, obviously appear in Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic theology. The purpose of this study was to find out how both of these concepts were understood in these three theologies and how they related the kingdom and the church concept. The theme indicates that an examination of the ecclesiology of each group was necessary in order

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<sup>1</sup>Exegetical matters will be treated in the beginning of subsequent chapters.



to determine the nature and the function of the Church as each group understood it.

The concept of the Kingdom of God poses a number of central theological problems with which Christian theology still wrestles today, for example, the question of authority in the Church. We were encouraged to continue this study by the thought that the kingdom concept is one of the most fruitful and dynamic concepts in the whole realm of Christian theology. At the same time there was need for caution and care and the Spirit's guidance, for this same concept is one of the most controversial. The Concordia Cyclopedia judges rightly, when it says:

Nearly all the aberrations of the modern churches from Scriptural practise and teaching are to be traced to this fundamental error regarding that which constitutes the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven.<sup>2</sup>

A vast literature has proceeded from studies and discussions on the Kingdom of God, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There is no practical value to be gained from a review of this literature as far as this study is concerned or a review of the stages through which the interpretation of the kingdom concept has gone.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>L. Fuerbringer, Th. Engelder, P. E. Kretzmann, editors, Concordia Cyclopedia (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), p. 388.

<sup>3</sup>For a quick review see L. Berkhof, The Kingdom of God (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951); George E. Ladd,



A comparative study of Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic conceptions of the Kingdom of God is timely for a number of reasons. H. Richard Niebuhr has pointed out that the idea of the Kingdom of God was a dominant idea in American Christianity.

Recent European writers, such as Adolf Keller and Heinrich Frick and many of those who participated in the discussions at Stockholm, had seen in this idea the distinctive note in American Christianity and from their vantage point had been able to discern a unity in our religion which was hidden to the internal view. Furthermore, this idea seemed closely related to that "American dream" which James Truslow Adams had used so effectively in interpreting American history.<sup>4</sup>

Today theological interest is in ecclesiology. This works hand-in-glove with the greater sensitivity of the churches to the burden of their separation and their striving for a united Church. We refer first to the Ecumenical Faith and Order Conference in Lund, Sweden, in 1952 and the discussion on the nature of the Church:

It was recognized at Lund that there is no way to a deeper meeting across the traditions which divide the churches apart from a re-examination of the ultimate criteria which apply to all judgments concerning doctrine, polity, and worship. Specifically,

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Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952); John Bright, The Kingdom of God: The Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953); Rudolf Schnackenburg, Gottes Herrschaft und Reich: eine biblisch-theologische Studie (Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany: Verlag Herder KG, 1959)

<sup>4</sup>H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), pp. x-xi.



the churches must consider again the revelation in Christ as the foundation of all that the Church is. How does each communion grasp and interpret Christ's lordship over the Church? Unless we can discuss that fundamental issue, we cannot really get at the Christian basis for church life.<sup>5</sup>

The Second Vatican Council convened by Pope John XXIII and reconvened by his successor, Pope Paul VI, has increased the discussions on what divides the Church and provided additional impetus to the ecumenical movement.

It is pertinent to say that the Reformation did not proclaim a new, a second beginning, but the rediscovery of the old, the only, origin of the Church. Protestantism did not protest against but for the Church.

Reformation leaders were very much concerned about the true nature and function of the Church.<sup>6</sup> The stage, the scenery, the props are different today and so is the climate, but some of the same Reformation issues are on the agenda today. Karl Barth, one of those in dialog with the Roman Church, has stated:

The division in Western Christianity, which appears nowhere so glaringly as in its disagreement on the concept of the Church, is so serious because neither side can possibly deny that it is really the same object on the right concept of which they cannot

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<sup>5</sup>Daniel Day Williams, What Present-Day Theologians Are Thinking (Revised edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952), p. 171.

<sup>6</sup>Jaroslav Pelikan, "Church and Church History in the Confessions," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXII (May 1951), 305.



agree. Nor can they ignore all the serious results which follow from this fact.<sup>7</sup>

Luther placed the basileia in the forefront of his ecclesiology and there it belongs as well as its correlatives: the Gospel of Christ and Christian faith.

When the Kingdom of God penetrates this earthly sphere, it produces a tension between two sovereignties. Since the State is an exposed sector of that mysterious struggle between the civitas Dei and the civitas diaboli, inevitably the discussion turns to Church and State relationships. The fact that modern times have witnessed the development of a state, which aims at being also a church, makes this discussion more serious.

The student of the literature pertaining to this subject is struck by the interrelationship and interdependence of the different concepts mentioned above. Our comparative study of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic conceptions of the Kingdom was conceived and carried out in such a way, so we like to believe, that the reader will have occasion to think about these relationships.

#### Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study are those which are

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<sup>7</sup>Karl Barth, Theology and Church: Shorter Writings, 1920-1928. Translated by Louise P. Smith (New York: Harper & Row, 1862), p. 273.



brought about by the nature of the study, the nature of the material, and the convictions and weaknesses of the author. The study was not intended to be an exegetical paper, but a study in the area of comparative symbolics. The historical material involved necessarily takes the reader back to Reformation times; in the case of the New England Puritans to the seventeenth century. We have tried to make this study current and relevant also in this way by bringing in current issues when this was feasible. In the Calvinistic part of this study we limited ourselves to strict Calvinism as it appeared in Geneva and New England. The temptation was great to include such modifications of the Reformed faith as Religious Liberalism, Fundamentalism and Neo-orthodoxy, but we finally concluded that this would be material for another thesis.

The three conceptions, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic, are being presented in the order of their historical appearance. All three arrived with the first colonists in America. If the Roman Catholic Church was first as the history books say,<sup>8</sup> it started out weak. Today it is a potent force on the American scene. The Calvinists dominated the early American scene. Today, it has been said, the Calvinistic theology has gone into eclipse, though at present it is experiencing a revival. The Luth-

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<sup>8</sup>H. Shelton Smith, Robert T. Handy, and Lefferts A. Loetscher, American Christianity (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), I, II.



erans have increased in numbers and influence and their theology has much to offer. Being of Lutheran faith, the author of this study has endeavored to keep in mind throughout the proper distinction between Law and Gospel, which is so important for this study and which ever serves as a brilliant light through the avenues of Christian doctrine.

#### Method and Plan of Study

The method and plan of this study is indicated by a quick perusal of the Table of Contents. Briefly we have arranged our material into four chapters:

Chapter Two treats the various conceptions of the Kingdom of God as rule.

Chapter Three treats the various conceptions of the Kingdom of God as realm. In this chapter we examine the various conceptions of the nature of the Church.

Chapter Four examines the different views as to how the Kingdom of God is related to the kingdoms of this world, especially the relationship of Church and State.

Chapter Five looks at the different views of the role and function of the Church in today's world.

Chapter Six provides a comparison and summary.



## CHAPTER II

### BASILEIA AS RULE

#### Exegetical Notes

The New Testament view of the Kingdom of Christ is rigorously transcendent. Man always stands under a supernatural dominion--either under the rule of death, of sin, of Satan, or under the rule of Christ. The transition from the dominion of Satan to the Kingdom of Christ is therefore a soteria, a mysterium, a miracle, analogous with death and with birth. The kingdom concept is soteriological.

Hence, there is a close connection between the Gospel and the Kingdom. The Gospel is not merely the glad tidings of God's grace, it is the power of God to salvation. Whoever proclaims the Gospel proclaims the Kingdom, because the Kingdom comprises everything that God's power, grace, and love does for our eternal salvation. Hence, the New Testament uses phrases such as "to preach the kingdom,"<sup>1</sup> "to proclaim the glad tidings of the kingdom,"<sup>2</sup> or "to reveal the mysteries of the kingdom."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Luke 4:43; 9:2.

<sup>2</sup>Luke 8:1.

<sup>3</sup>Matt. 13:11.



The word "kingdom" or basileia presents to us in bold outline the two-fold activity of God, consisting, on the one hand, in liberating us from the tyranny of Satan, and, on the other, in translating us into God's gracious Kingdom. "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the Kingdom of God, and the power of His Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."<sup>4</sup>

The word "kingdom" occurs about one hundred twenty times in the New Testament, primarily in the Gospels.<sup>5</sup> Modern scholarship is agreed that the concept of the kingdom signifies the kingly rule, the sovereignty, the rule or kingship of God. It is agreed with Luther that this term basileia places the emphasis on the ruler and his activity.<sup>6</sup>

There is no essential difference in the expressions "Kingdom of God," "Kingdom of Christ," and "Kingdom of heaven."<sup>7</sup> The expressions do not refer to the kingdom of power, in which God rules the universe, but to a new manifestation of God's rule. That for which Israel had hoped

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<sup>4</sup>Rev. 12:10.

<sup>5</sup>William Arndt, "The New Testament Teaching on the Kingdom of God," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXI (January 1950), 8-9.

<sup>6</sup>Compare Luke 1:32b,33; 1 Cor. 15:24-27; Rev. 12:10; Acts 1:6.

<sup>7</sup>William Arndt, loc. cit.



and prayed had come to pass in Jesus the Christ. God ushered in this Kingdom through Christ, His Son, our Lord and Redeemer. Fondly the Christian speaks of Christ's Kingdom.

Although the term has been subjected to many interpretations, the transcendent character of this rule is well established.<sup>8</sup> The Kingdom is inaugurated by God. It is not a product of human wisdom or natural development. Basileia signifies God's gracious rule, the Savior's redemptive work, the Spirit's reign in the hearts of men.<sup>9</sup> The Savior Himself said: "The Law and the Prophets were until John; since that time the Kingdom of God is preached."<sup>10</sup> Instead of the laws and regulations by which Israel had been ruled throughout the Old Testament, God would now bring to Israel His grace in Christ Jesus.

#### The Roman Catholic Conception of Basileia as Rule

How is the concept of the divine rulership of God used in Roman Catholicism? The old view was that the basileia came in the person and work of Christ and found a continuous inner and outer development in the history of the Church towards the future consummation. The newer view

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 16ff.

<sup>10</sup>Luke 16:16.



would not identify it with the Church, but conceives of the basileia as operating in the Church and with the Church into the realm of the earthly and historical.<sup>11</sup>

Theologically the divine rulership is not presented as an immediate and direct ruling through the Word, but rather as an articulated and hierarchical structure. God is thought of as the eternal perfection of goodness, beauty, and truth, to the vision of which the church leads its children. As touching God the distinction between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant views may be summarized in the contrast between the visio dei and the regnum dei.

In their doctrine of God Roman theologians place an undue emphasis on divine sovereignty and justice.<sup>12</sup>

Pius XI in his encyclical letter Quas primas "On the Kingship of Christ" says: "This kingdom is primarily spiritual and concerned with spiritual things."<sup>13</sup> Hence, not altogether spiritual! He goes on to explain the nature and meaning of this lordship of Christ, that a threefold

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<sup>11</sup>Rudolf Schnackenburg, Gottes Herrschaft und Reich: Eine biblisch-theologische Studie (Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder, 1959), p. 78. This is a very thorough work on basileia from Roman Catholic viewpoint.

<sup>12</sup>Fred E. Mayer, Religious Bodies of America (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), p. 46.

<sup>13</sup>Terence P. McLaughlin, editor. The Church and the Reconstruction of the Modern World: The Social Encyclicals of Pius XI (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1957), p. 60. Quas primas (15).



power is essential to His lordship:

moreover it is a dogma of faith that Jesus Christ was given to man, not only as our Redeemer, in whom we are to place our trust, but also as a lawgiver, to whom obedience is due. Not only do the Gospels tell us that He made laws, but they present Him to us in the act of making them. Those who keep them show their love for their Divine Master, and He promises that they shall remain in His love. He claimed judicial power as received from His Father, when the Jews accused Him of breaking the Sabbath by the miraculous cure of a sick man. "For neither doth the Father judge any man: but hath given all judgment to the Son." In this power is included the right of rewarding and punishing all men living, for this right is inseparable from that of judging. Executive power, too, belongs to Christ, for all must obey His commands: none may escape them nor the sanctions He has imposed.<sup>14</sup>

The chief stress is on the Law and on Christ as Lawgiver, Judge, and supreme Sovereign. If Christ is regarded as the Judge rather than the Redeemer, the invention of other mediators to plead with Him for mercy can be understood.

The Father sent the Son into the world. It is man's duty to believe absolutely in His revelation and to obey the commandments of God.<sup>15</sup> Between Jesus Christ and the Christian is placed the authority of the Church and what it calls its magisterium.<sup>16</sup> The magisterium is the official teaching body of the Church whose spokesman is the Pope. "He has willed that one should be the head of all, and the chief and unerring teacher of truth, to whom He has given

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid. Quas primas (14).

<sup>15</sup>Encyclical Mortalium Animos.

<sup>16</sup>Encyclical Immortale Dei.



the keys of the kingdom of heaven."<sup>17</sup> The Roman position is based on the premise that Jesus Christ transferred His authority to the apostle Peter and his ecclesiastically certified successors.<sup>18</sup> Christ gave special power to Peter as His Vicar on earth by making him the head of the apostles and the chief teacher and ruler of the entire Church and later bestowed this power on Peter's successor, the Pope. The Pope has accordingly become the chief cornerstone of the Roman Catholic Church, the Head and Ruler of the Church.<sup>19</sup>

The divine rulership of the Pope extends over the Word and Oral Tradition. "Holy Scripture and Oral Tradition are the two sources of our faith. With the help of the Holy Ghost the Church preserves both of them without error, and draws upon them for what she teaches us."<sup>20</sup> In reality the Bible does not speak with authority at all except through the mouth of the Church, the Pope, who poses as the official teacher and interpreter of Revelation.

Anthony C. Cotter states that the ultimate explanation of the obscurity of the Bible is God Himself, whereby God purposed to make the magisterium the

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<sup>17</sup> Encyclical Letter Immortale Dei (9).

<sup>18</sup> Misinterpreting Matt. 16:17-19; Luke 22:31,32; John 21:15-17. See Chapter five of this study for notes on Matt. 16.

<sup>19</sup> The lordship of Christ has been broadened to mean also "church-governed society." See Chapter four of this study.

<sup>20</sup> A Catholic Catechism, Herder and Herder, p. 118.



primary recipient of all revelation, the Bible included, so that the magisterium may properly be called the primary and even the only source of revelation. This is, as Luther called it, "sheer enthusiasm," fanaticism, Schwaermerei. And in the final analysis, enthusiasm and rationalism always go hand in hand.<sup>21</sup>

In the light of this Pope Pius IX could in effect declare: "I am Tradition." Hence, the formal principle of Roman theology is really sola ecclesia, solus papa.

The theology of the Roman Church bristles currently with differences of opinion on the relationship between Scripture and tradition.<sup>22</sup> Roman writers even apply the term "sufficiency" to the Bible. But eventually the discussion moves over to the locus of ecclesiology; to the infallible teaching authority of the Church to interpret and teach the infallible Word. The Word of God remains bound.

Modern Catholic theology speaks of the Word of God as supernatural. The goal set before men is not to hear the Word of God in faith and obedience, but to become partakers in the supernatural, in the divine nature.<sup>23</sup> How may natural

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<sup>21</sup>Fred E. Mayer, "The Principium Cognoscendi of Roman Catholic Theology," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXII (May 1951), 323.

<sup>22</sup>Leslie R. Keylock, "The Bible Controversy in American Catholicism," Christianity Today, VII (March 1, 1963), 20-22.

<sup>23</sup>Karl Adam, The Spirit of Catholicism (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1954), pp. 177f.; 55, 58.



beings attain a supernatural end? The only means whereby man in his sinful state could be redeemed was through the Church instituted by Christ. Thomas sees the Church as the servant of the eternal Kingdom dispensing eternal life through the sacraments, which are the means whereby men are raised in this life to a glimpse of the divine vision and to a foretaste of beatitude.<sup>24</sup>

He has no communion with God and he cannot live the Christian life unless he becomes identified with the life of Christ in a mystical way by means of the sacramental-hierarchical institution in which the divine operates as a living, active reality. The characteristic feature of Roman Catholic religiousness is, then, that it is grounded in the objective performance of the priestly-sacramental cult.<sup>25</sup>

Whether you look at the sacramental, the teaching, or the governmental side of this institution, at the bottom of the structure is law.<sup>26</sup> Christ is presented not as Law Remover but as Law Giver. A person is saved by obeying the commandments of the Church.

The Roman conception of the Kingdom of Christ finds its expression in the magisterium. Christ established a living, authentic magisterium which is assisted by the Holy

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<sup>24</sup>Thomas Aquinas, Summa, Ia IIae Q.91 a.4., Reply obj. 1 and concl.; also a.5.

<sup>25</sup>Wilhelm Pauck, The Heritage of the Reformation (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1961), p. 216.

<sup>26</sup>In spite of Karl Barth's amazement at Hans Küng's representation of the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification: the Roman Catholic sola fide.



Spirit in order that it may perform its mission without falling into error. This magisterium has been placed in the hands of the leaders of the Church, the successors of Peter. The duty of the faithful is to hear and obey the Church.

It remains to be seen how the ecclesiastical doctrinal authority in the Roman Church will judge the new theology appearing in its midst. This new theology seems to be influenced by the new Roman Biblical theology. In the papal Encyclical Humani Generis of August 12, 1950, the Pope takes note of such inner trends as conciliationism, existentialism, and dogmatic relativism, and warns against them. The Pope apparently wants to retain a Christian philosophy in the spirit of Thomas. No one can predict, however, what the Word of God might accomplish. In the ecumenical efforts of the Roman Church Cardinal Bea has made the basic position of Catholics clear: "complete adherence to the true of our faith." He does it in this manner:

And it serves to underline a point of fundamental and essential importance, which no contact with our separated brethren must let us forget: our adherence to the truth of our faith, as contained in Holy Scripture and Catholic tradition and presented to us by the teaching authority of the Church must be complete and unconditional.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Augustin Cardinal Bea, The Unity of Christians (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), pp. 54-55.



## The Lutheran Conception of Basileia as Rule

When Lutherans speak of God's Kingdom, they tend to specify whether they are speaking of the Kingdom of Power, the Kingdom of Grace, the Kingdom of Glory.<sup>28</sup> The Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Christ, the concept treated in this study, is understood on the basis of grace. God establishes His Kingdom by His redemptive activity. It is God's rule over His people, who in penitence and faith and by grace alone live in communion with God through Jesus Christ.

In this view of the Kingdom they follow Luther. Luther regarded basileia as a verbal noun denoting a royal activity rather than a royal realm.<sup>29</sup> When a person is translated from the realm of sin into the company of saints, this is wholly due to God's gracious action, who calls, converts, justifies, and sanctifies. This gracious activity Luther found expressed in the New Testament reign of God, the

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<sup>28</sup>Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), II, 385-394.

<sup>29</sup>Thus also modern scholarship. Cf. Gerhard Kittel, Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, Stuttgart, 1933. s.v. basileus. We add: The Lutheran concept of the Kingdom of God is soteriological. The proclamation of the Kingdom is the Gospel, Christ. "When Christ taught penitence and the remission of sins," says Martin Chemnitz, "the evangelists say that He preached the Kingdom of God." Loci II, 247b. See Werner Elert, The Structure of Lutheranism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), pp. 491-507, for an excellent presentation on "The Kingdom of Christ" according to Luther and Melancthon.



basileia tou theou.

Luther, however, maintained over and over, e.g., in a Christmas sermon on Isaiah 7, that basileia is not a visible realm, is not constituted of men at all, but denotes God's gracious rulership, the Savior's redemptive work, and the Spirit's reign in the hearts of men. Luther's basileia is vertical rather than horizontal, a God-toward-man activity. This is the dominant thought of his entire theology as is brought out in the explanation of the Second Article of the Creed in his Small Catechism.<sup>30</sup>

In a sermon for the fifteenth Sunday after Trinity Luther says that Christ established the charter of God's Kingdom by His death upon the cross. The basileia in his opinion is that gracious activity of the Lord which makes this charter a living reality in the hearts of the believers. This concept of the Kingdom of God he sought to teach to young and old. In the Large Catechism we have his question and answer:

What is the Kingdom of God? Nothing else than what we learned in the Creed, that God sent His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, into the world to redeem and deliver us from the power of the devil, and to bring us to Himself, and to govern us as a King of righteousness, life, and salvation against sin, death, and an evil conscience, for which end He has also bestowed His Holy Ghost, who is to bring these things home to us by His Holy Word, and to illumine and strengthen us in the faith by His power.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Fred E. Mayer, "The Una Sancta in Luther's Theology," Concordia Theological Monthly, XVIII (November 1947), 805.

<sup>31</sup>Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921). See Large Catechism, Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer, p. 711.



Unquestionably Luther placed the Gospel in the center of his theology and the Lutheran Confessions do the same. The transcendent God reveals Himself only as He enters into a personal relationship with man, i.e., God confronts man either as the Lawgiver or as the Law Remover. Thus the doctrine of God is presented soteriologically. Christ is the King of grace and His Kingdom is His gracious rule. Did not Christ preach both Law and Gospel? When He proclaimed God's wrath and terrified the sinner, Lutheran theology describes this as a "foreign work," by which Christ arrives at "His proper office," which is the preaching of the Gospel of grace.<sup>32</sup> Christ preached the Law only propter evangelium. Any attempt to make Christ into only a Legislator, or a new Lawgiver, is decried; his real office as Savior, Propitiator, Justifier, and Mediator is thereby pushed into the background and thereby disappears. Moreover grace, forgiveness, is the whole content of this Gospel, not the principal content as the Reformed teach.

Instead of a human magisterium, the ecclesiastical magisterium that dominated the church, the Reformer emphasized that the gracious rule of the King is by the dynamic power of the Gospel. The Christocentric approach to Scripture is revealed in the statement that the main thought of entire Scripture is that we should believe that in Christ

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 803 (Formula of Concord, p. 8), p. 955 (Formula of Concord. Thorough Declaration, p. 12).



Jesus through faith we have a gracious God. The Apology summarizes the entire Scriptures in terms such as "the Gospel message," "absolution," "the forgiveness of sin," "justification," etc. The whole content of the Gospel is grace, forgiveness.

What is the relationship of the Church to the Scriptures? The Word of God is to rule in the Church. The Church is not to govern Scripture, but be obedient to it. The formal principle of Lutheran theology is sola Scriptura. The material principle is justification by faith. This article is the strand on which all the pearls of Christian revelation are strung.

The Kingdom of God is not eschatological (something beyond history altogether), nor is the Kingdom sociological, a Ritschlian "moral union of men," but it is the bestowal of such blessings as establish a right relation between man and God even here and now. By His redemptive activity Christ becomes our King, so that we "might live under Him in His Kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness." This is the compend of Lutheran theology and as we shall see, of Lutheran ecclesiology.

Although the Lutheran Church in America has passed through different stages of development, there has been a revival of confessionalism in Lutheran churches in America since the latter half of the nineteenth century. In their constitutions Lutheran bodies tend to spell out the confessional principle, the principle of authority, by stating



in words something like this:

We confess the canonical books of the Old and the New Testament to be the inspired Word of God and therefore the only rule of faith and life, and the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church to be a correct presentation of the doctrines of this Word.

The struggle of the Reformation was one regarding true authority in the Church. If today there are new viewpoints within the Roman Church, influenced by the new Biblical theology within its midst, viewpoints approximating Reformation principles and positions, then Lutheran churches should feel justified more than ever in emphasizing the gracious Kingship of Christ and the power of His Gospel.

#### The Calvinistic Conception of Basileia as Rule

In Calvinistic theology "the Kingdom of God" and similar expressions are interpreted to mean the divine rulership of God: the basileia as rule. When Calvin treats Christ's Kingly office in the Second Book of the Institutes he describes it as a spiritual kingdom. In the Third Book we have such an excellent statement as:

By announcing the kingdom of God, he called for faith, since by the kingdom of God which he declared to be at hand, he meant forgiveness of sins, salvation, life, and every other blessing which we obtain in Christ.<sup>33</sup>

In the explanation of the second petition of the Lord's

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<sup>33</sup>Calvin, Institutes, Book III. 3, 19. Quotations are by book, chapter, and section.



Prayer Calvin says:

God reigns when men, in denial of themselves, and contempt of the world and this earthly life, devote themselves to righteousness and aspire to heaven (see Calvin, *Harm. Matth. VI.*). Thus this kingdom consists of two parts: the first, when God by the agency of His Spirit corrects all the depraved lusts of the flesh, which in bands war against Him; and the second, when He brings all our thoughts into obedience to His authority.<sup>34</sup>

The Calvinistic concept of the kingdom can best be understood in the light of the Calvinistic theology. It is correct to say that the Reformation meant the restoration of the authority of God in antithesis to the authority of the Church. The Bible has so much to say about God, that it is easy to overemphasize one divine attribute and to ignore other attributes. In Calvin's concept of God all the essential elements are there, but the lawyer in him no doubt prompted him to place such emphasis on God's majesty and sovereignty that he had little room for God's love and grace.<sup>35</sup> Most Reformed Churches reject his extreme position that actually makes God the Author of evil. Nevertheless, the idea of God's sovereignty still influences Calvinistic Churches today.

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., Book III. 20, 42. See also Prefatory Address, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup>The sovereignty of God is generally regarded to be the material principle of Calvinistic theology, a theocentric theology. Cf. Fred E. Mayer, The Religious Bodies of America (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), pp. 198f., 202-203.



The sovereign Lord reigns. Christ is King. It is significant that in Calvin's Christology Christ appears as Lawgiver and Savior. Calvin says: "It is part of Christ's nature as Lord of the Church, that He should be Lawgiver."<sup>36</sup> Part of Christ's real office is to interpret the Law. True, God loved us by an act of His "sovereign grace" and could therefore as the sovereign Lord of the universe forgive man his sins even though Christ had not died. Calvin taught a limited atonement.

Inevitably the Law was to receive undue emphasis in his theology. Mayer says:

It is no doubt correct that Calvin sees a distinction between the two Testaments, inasmuch as the New Testament presents in full colors the same Christ whom the Old only foreshadowed. But it is also true that Calvin's legalistic principle prompted him virtually to erase the distinction between the two Testaments. This is evident particularly from his concept of the Law as the basis for, and the ground of, the divine-human covenant relation. This covenant relation obligates man to fulfill the requirements of God's Law. Though Christ has come to free us from the coercion of the Law, He has not abolished it, for "the doctrine of the Law, which remains inviolate after Christ, prepares us for every good work with its doctrine, admonition, rebuke, and reprimand."<sup>37</sup>

As is well known from the Institutes, Calvin makes the third use of the Law its principal use.<sup>38</sup> This logically leads

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<sup>36</sup> Calvin, Institutes, IV. 10, 30.

<sup>37</sup> Mayer, op. cit., pp. 202-203.

<sup>38</sup> Calvin, Institutes, II. 7, 12. John Warwick Montgomery, "The Law's Third Use: Sanctification," Christianity Today (April 26, 1963), pp. 6ff.



to the secularization of the Gospel. Forgiveness is no longer the sole content of the Gospel, it is only the principal content.

In a system with these premises, the emphasis was bound to be on man's moral obligations. The elect are to progress to perfection. Though it has been argued in recent years that justification is also Calvin's chief article, a closer look reveals that the "Christus in nobis is emphasized more than the Christus pro nobis."<sup>39</sup> The covenant relation obliges man to carry out the Ten Commandments as Calvin interpreted and applied them. Faith and obedience are correlative. Georgia Harkness says:

God chooses whom he will for salvation, and man is as powerless to resist as to initiate this action of divine grace. And being once chosen, the elect are predetermined to persevere in the path of holiness.<sup>40</sup>

If God has a kingdom to establish, then, Calvin was sure, no human organization such as the Church of Rome could be identified with this universal Kingdom. The positive counterpart to this negative side of Protestantism was "the confession of the sole rulership of God and the declaration of loyalty to his Kingdom."<sup>41</sup> Calvin expressed the impelling motive thus:

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<sup>39</sup>Mayer, op. cit., p. 207.

<sup>40</sup>Georgia Harkness, John Calvin (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1931), p. 72.

<sup>41</sup>H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 24.



We are not our own; therefore neither our reason nor our will should predominate in our deliberations and actions. We are not our own; therefore let us not presuppose it as our end to seek what may be expedient for us according to the flesh. We are not our own; therefore let us, as far as possible, forget ourselves and all things that are ours. On the contrary, we are God's; to him, therefore, let us live and die. We are god's; therefore let his wisdom and will preside in all our actions. We are God's; towards him, therefore, as our only legitimate end, let every part of our lives be directed.<sup>42</sup>

Add to this the eschatological note so strong in Reformation times that "The Kingdom of God is at hand" and in this kingdom concept you discover a key to the power and the sweep of the Protestant movement.

It is also correct to say that the Reformation put the Bible in the seat of authority in place of the Pope and the Church. Blind submission to the voice of the Church was the rule in the Papacy, but in Calvinism blind submission to the Bible. Calvin believed in the infallible Bible and implicitly and intensely in his interpretation of that infallible Book. Many of his keenest attacks are upon the misinterpretations of the Papacy. But somebody in the Church must interpret the Book. Georgia Harkness sums it up:

In the last analysis, the Bible is not to be interpreted according to the authority of church or minister or any other human agent, but of God alone. It is his Holy Spirit which gives the power to read the Scriptures aright.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Calvin, op. cit., III. 7, 1.

<sup>43</sup>Harkness, op. cit., p. 67.



She says that Calvin seems here to be "on the verge of substituting the authority of inner experience for that of external pronouncement."<sup>44</sup> Theoretically Calvin subscribed to the sola Scriptura principle. Keep in mind, however, his emphasis on the Divine Will, the Law. Also his statement on "sanctified" reason: "Hence we maintain that we must not admit anything, even in religious matters, which is contrary to right reason."<sup>45</sup> Add to this his doctrine of the testimony of the Spirit. Logically you will then have good reasons for characterizing his theology as legalistic, rationalistic, and enthusiastic, in addition, a good explanation for later developments and modifications of Calvinism.

Calvin's concept of the sovereignty of God and his consequent legalistic approach colored his interpretation of the Bible:

This difference in emphasis largely explains the difference between Lutheran and Calvinistic theology. Lutherans like to think of their relation to God as that of a dear child to his dear father. In Calvinistic theology God is primarily the Master, man His servant. For Lutherans the Bible is chiefly the letter of a loving Father to His dear children; for Calvinists it is chiefly a code of rules and regulations for good behavior to the glory of the Master.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Calvin, op. cit., I. 8, 2.

<sup>46</sup>Lewis W. Spitz, Our Church and Others (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), p. 71.



Though Calvin's theology has suffered setbacks in the forward rush of American history, it is far from obsolete. Adherents of Calvinistic churches number in the thousands. Not only have a large number of churches accepted Calvin's theology, many churches have experienced the force and vigor of the Calvinistic theological movement. The lack of a unifying confessional principle as among the Lutherans makes it difficult to survey the field.<sup>47</sup> Many modifications of Calvin's theology have appeared and hence the kingdom concept has also been modified.<sup>48</sup>

Our study will limit itself to the original transplant of Calvin's theology to American shores via England, New England Puritanism. Without Calvin, there would have been no Puritanism.

In Massachusetts the Leyden Pilgrims, who had landed at Plymouth in late December 1620, soon made the acquaintance of the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay, who in a few years overwhelmingly outnumbered them. The Puritans who came to America were non-separatist Congregationalists. They had remained attached to the Church of England, hoping to reform it from within by substituting Congregationalism for Episcopacy, and having been blocked in their effort in the home land they now poured into eastern Massachusetts to set up a Congregational Church of England. In this they found themselves at one with the Leyden group who had come to these shores and who had separated only from what they regarded as a perverted Church of England.

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<sup>47</sup> Representative bodies are: The Reformed Church in America, The Christian Reformed Church; Presbyterian Bodies and most Baptists are Calvinistic.

<sup>48</sup> Liberalism (Social Gospel), Fundamentalism (dispensational millenium), Neo-orthodoxy. See Appendix.



So all the churches of early Massachusetts and Connecticut were organised on the same basis which had been adopted by the Plymouth Pilgrims: a covenant, not a creed, as a basis of membership, and a pastor ordained by the congregation. The Salem church's original covenant reads: "We covenant with the Lord and with one another and so bind ourselves in the plans of God to work together in all His blessed word of truth" (Fagley, The Congregational Churches, p. 12; Pilgrim Press, Revised edition, 1938). While the Congregational churches of Colonial New England were mainly recruited from Puritan settlements, and resembled the Church of England in that they were the established church of "standing order," the influence of the covenant idea upon them has been determinative. To this day, the basis of the American Congregational churches is a covenant freely entered into "with the Lord and with one another," and solemnly renewed from time to time at the Communion Table. In this covenant, the rights of each individual conscience are recognised; but an ordained ministry of the Word is maintained for the direction of consciences.<sup>49</sup>

Concerning the Puritans Perry Miller states that in most secondary accounts Puritans are called Calvinists, and "then and there discussion of their intellectual life ceases." He agrees that they were Calvinists, but has this reservation:

But the theology of New England was not simply Calvinism, it was not a mere reduplication of the dogmas of the Institutes. What New Englanders believed was an outgrowth, as we have seen, of their background, which was humanistic and English, and it was conditioned by their particular controversy with the Church of England. . . . The source of the New England ideology is not Calvin, but England, or more accurately, the Bible as it was read in England, not in Geneva.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>R. Newton Flew, The Nature of the Church (London: Student Christian Movement Press, Limited, 1951), pp. 273-274.

<sup>50</sup>George M. Waller, editor, Puritanism in Early America (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1950), pp. 17-18.



As Calvin, the Puritan extended Scripture to cover the whole of existence and "then set himself to prove the content of all scripture essentially reasonable."<sup>51</sup> In Miller's opinion the Puritan theorists worked out a substantial addition to Calvinism in the "Covenant Theology," or otherwise designated as the "Federal Theology."

But this is not really an addition, rather an elaboration, for Calvin treats the Covenant in chapters ten and eleven of the Second Book of the Institutes, which deals with our knowledge of God as Redeemer. Dillistone believes that "in the covenant-concept Calvin rediscovered a principle of inestimable value for the life of the Church."<sup>52</sup> Later "federalism" or "covenant theology" was fully elaborated only after the Westminster Assembly, it is essentially a seventeenth century product.<sup>53</sup> At the same time it began to be interpreted in formal, legal, contractual terms and gradually began to lose its vitality, the same danger which Calvin faced.

Dillistone has this comment:

It is the whole purpose of the fourth section of Perry Miller's great book on The New England Mind to show that the Covenant-idea was the most potent factor in shaping the beliefs, the laws, and the social

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>F. W. Dillistone, The Structure of the Divine Society (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951), p. 127.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 139.



politics of the early settlers. He shows that Puritan theology was already finding it hard but necessary to steer carefully between the extremes of Arminianism and Antinomianism, each of which would have undermined the primary Puritan emphasis upon the majestic moral sovereignty of God.<sup>54</sup>

H. Richard Niebuhr concurs that the New England Puritans believed in the Kingdom of God, that the Kingdom was "the living reality of God's present rule." He quotes a statement from the Savoy Declaration, which as an affirmation of God's sovereignty "sounds like a grand Te Deum," and then says:

If we want to know what the Puritan meant by the kingdom of God we must study that considered statement of his faith or, turning to his English cousin, let a Baxter tell us that "the World is a Kingdom whereof God is the King . . . an absolute Monarchy . . . by the title of Creation. . . . God is the end as well as the beginning of the divine monarchy of the world" and "all men as men are the subjects of God's kingdom, as to Obligations and Duty, and God will not ask the consent of any man to be so obliged."<sup>55</sup>

From this it is apparent that New England theology was cast in the mold of Calvinism. At the same time there was the same interest in education in New England as in Geneva, the same thirst for higher learning. No wonder that later the clash between Fundamentalism and Liberalism was severest in this branch of Protestantism.

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 139. See also Geddes MacGregor, Corpus Christi (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), p. 92.

<sup>55</sup>Niebuhr, op. cit., pp. 52-53.



## Comparison and Summary

Modern scholarship has demonstrated that the term basileia places the emphasis on the ruler and his activity, on the rule.

In Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic theology the Kingdom of God is a transcendent concept. The emphasis is on its supernatural character, the rule of God, the rule of Christ.

The Kingdom of God in all three theologies can be said to be the Kingdom of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for all three are Trinitarian. All three subscribe to the deity of Christ and recognize the fact that the Kingdom of God in New Testament usage is associated and connected with the advent of Christ, that Christ is the Kingdom, the Kingdom is specifically Messianic, and that the expressions "the Kingdom of God" and "the Kingdom of Christ" are used interchangeably.

The Gospel of the Kingdom is to be published until the end of the world. The reign of Christ in the Kingdom of Grace is hidden until the coming of the Kingdom of Glory. The eschatological character of the Kingdom is recognized by all three theologies.

Meanwhile, the Gospel of the Kingdom must be published. Although the Word of God occupies a different place in Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic theology, all three are persuaded that the Word is the Word of God, the



revelation of God, an infallible Book given by inspiration.

The kingdom concept is to be identified with the lordship, the rule of Christ. In the preceding material we have shown that the lordship of Christ in Roman Catholic theology is to be equated with the living magisterium of the Roman Church. Since the foundation of this rule is to be found in Divine Law, we are justified in saying that it has a legalistic character.

The lordship of Christ in Lutheran theology is the living magisterium of the gracious Christ, or better stated: the gracious rule or sway of the redeeming Christ, the rule of the sola gratia, the rule of the Gospel, the living magisterium of the pure Gospel. Since the foundation of this rule is to be found in Divine Grace, we have every right to describe the reign of our King in purely evangelical terms, we are compelled to do so by the Word of our King.

The lordship of Christ in Calvinistic theology is to be equated with the living magisterium of the Word, the "full" Word. The Word is viewed as the embodiment of the Divine Will. Since the foundation of this rule is to be found in the Divine Will also and is said to be both Gospel and Law, we are justified in saying that it has a legalistic character.

Roman Catholic and Calvinistic theology tends to have



more of a theocentric approach to the doctrine of God. Their respective theologians seem to place undue emphasis on divine sovereignty and justice. By way of contrast the Lutheran approach is Christo-centric, soteriological in character.

The same emphasis is to be detected in their Christologies. Christ appears as the Lawgiver in Roman Catholic and Calvinistic theology, the Gospel as a new Law or source of Law. Lutheran theology stresses that the real office of Christ is redemption, the Gospel is the message of that redemption. His Kingdom is a Kingdom of Grace alone.

In Roman Catholic theology the lordship of Christ is the lordship of the Pope, the magisterium of the Papacy which extends over the Word of God and Tradition. In Lutheranism the Word is the Word of God but its true purpose is emphasized and in keeping with the soteriological character of that Word, the lordship of Christ is preserved as the lordship of grace, the rule of the Gospel, the soteriological character of the New Testament concept of the Kingdom is maintained. The Biblicism of Calvinism leads to a bibliocracy in which the real purpose of the Word is distorted and the lordship of Christ is described in terms of grace and law. Consequently the kingdom concept embraces legal and evangelical elements.

In both Roman Catholic and Calvinistic theology the distinctive stress on the lordship of Christ, whether it be through the Roman Church or through the "full" Word,



leads to a corresponding stress on obedience. The way into the Kingdom is obedience. Lutheran theology stresses faith, because it stresses the rule of the Gospel.



### CHAPTER III

#### BASILEIA AS REALM

##### Exegetical Notes

Kingdom in the New Testament is best translated as "kingly rule or reign," and not realm.

In some instances the word for kingdom refers also to the domain, the realm, the people, the territory which is ruled by the king. It would be difficult to think of the rule and authority of a king without his citizens, his subjects. Even in these cases the basic idea is rule.<sup>1</sup>

An instance in which we think of kingdom as realm is the story of Jesus' temptation. When the devil offered to our Lord the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them,<sup>2</sup> he no doubt conjured up before Christ the splendor and the wealth of the Oriental kings of his day. This glory, this splendor, this wealth and power had been accumulated, however, through the despotic rule of these despots, through the exercise of kingly power.

But what is the relationship of the Kingdom to the Church? The term kingdom is used throughout the Gospels.

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<sup>1</sup>Other instances: Matt. 5:20; 7:21; 18:3; 19:23; Luke 13:28f.; 22:30; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Tim. 4:18.

<sup>2</sup>Matt. 4:8; Luke 4:5.



The word "church" occurs only twice in the Gospels,<sup>3</sup> whereas the word "kingdom" occurs over a hundred times. The situation is almost reversed in the epistles. Why?

The reason is quite evident. Prior to Pentecost the writers of the New Testament direct our attention especially to the preaching of the Gospel, to the activity of God. But when the Church was founded at Pentecost and the Apostles began their tremendous mission activity and gathered congregations, it was only natural that the Christians thought primarily of the believers. Thus in the Apostolic times the emphasis is directed to the Church. In other words, while the two terms, kingdom and church, have much in common, the word kingdom focuses our attention upon God's gracious activity, and the word church directs our thought to the people whom God's activity has brought into the kingdom. The relation between the two terms is similar to the relation between cause and effect. It is for this reason that we would not speak of the Christians at Rome as the kingdom of Rome, but as the Church of Rome.<sup>4</sup>

The interpretation of Matthew sixteen is important in a treatment on ecclesiology for various reasons. The petra of Matthew sixteen has been explained in various ways. Convincing is the exegesis of Oscar Cullmann who believes that what is said of Peter as the Rock refers only to him, the historical apostle; any attempt to find in this text a reference to "successors" is completely arbitrary. However, we feel, that the context of Matt. 16:18 and the wording itself (note that petra is a feminine and petros,

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<sup>3</sup>Matt. 16:18 and 18:17.

<sup>4</sup>Fred E. Mayer, "The Kingdom of God According to the New Testament," Proceedings of Twenty-fifth Convention of Texas District (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1942), Vol. 1942 (No. 7), 18.



applied to Peter, is a masculine) argue for the position that Peter's confession is the Rock upon which Christ will build His Church.<sup>5</sup>

There is a considerable body of exegetical material on basileia and also on ekklesia. Naturally there has also developed a body of literature on the relation between the basileia and the ekklesia. Our purpose in this chapter is to look at Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic conceptions of the Church and its relationship to the Kingdom.

But first a note on Luther's use of the German word Kirche, which he thought was of Greek origin, like the word ecclesia.<sup>6</sup> Since he thought Kirche vague, Luther translated ekklesia with Gemeine. The derivation of the word Kirche or "church" has been much debated. It is now agreed that it is derived from the Greek word kyriakon (derived from kyrios) and designates something that belongs to kyrios, or Christ the Lord, the body which as a kyriakon belongs to the Lord.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Oscar Cullmann, Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1958), pp. 206ff. Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), III, 413-414.

<sup>6</sup>Martin Luther, Large Catechism, II, 3: "In that language the word is kyria, and in Latin curia. In our mother tongue therefore it ought to be called 'a Christian congregation or assembly,' or best and most clearly of all, 'a holy Christian people.'"

<sup>7</sup>Thus Grimm, Deutsches Woerterbuch. See also The Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: The Gilmary Society, 1907), III, 744.



In the New Testament ekklesia, from ekkalein, signifies the assembly that has been summoned forth by an authoritative call of the leader.<sup>8</sup> The Lutheran Cyclopedia says:

The word, derived from a root which means to call, would thus designate those who have been called together by Christ, or the whole company of God's elect. The term church is commonly applied to the whole number of true believers, the communion of saints, the invisible Church of Christ, etc.<sup>9</sup>

#### Roman Conception of Basileia as Realm

Melanchthon in the Apology defines the Roman Church thus:

It is the supreme outward monarchy of the whole world in which the Roman Pontiff necessarily has undisputed power . . . to frame articles of faith, to abolish to his pleasure the Scriptures, to appoint rites of worship and sacrifices, likewise to frame such laws as he may desire, divine, canonical, or civil, and that from him the emperor and all kings receive according to Christ's command the power and the right to hold their kingdom . . . therefore the Pope must necessarily be the lord of the whole world, of all the kingdoms of the world, of all things, private and public, and must have the absolute power in temporal and spiritual

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<sup>8</sup>Matt. 16:18; 18:17; 1 Cor. 10:32; Eph. 1:22; 5:25-27.

<sup>9</sup>Erwin Lueker, editor, Lutheran Cyclopedia (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), p. 223. Ekklesia occurs 115 times in the New Testament, but in four instances there is no reference to the Christian Church. The term ekklesia is applied first of all to the Christian community at Jerusalem, then to the little communities in Judea, then to Antioch, then to the "churches" in Asia, etc. St. Paul stresses the Universal ekklesia.



things and hold both swords, the spiritual and the temporal.<sup>10</sup>

Roman Catholic theology also states that the Roman Church is the Kingdom of God. The Roman Church is God's basileia, God's Kingdom on earth, the product of God's sovereign rule. Bellarmin defines the Church as "a body of men united together by the profession of the same Christian faith and by participation in the same Sacraments, under the governance of lawful pastors, more especially of the Roman pontiff, the sole Vicar of Christ on earth."<sup>11</sup>

The Catholic Encyclopedia says of the "Kingdom of God":

it means the benign sway of grace; it means the Church as that Divine institution whereby we may make sure of attaining the spirit of Christ and so win that ultimate kingdom of God where He reigns without end.<sup>12</sup>

The Council of Trent is the impressive foundation on which the edifice of post-Reformation Catholicism was built. Later, the intention of the Vatican Council had been to deal with the doctrine of the Church at full length, but only the dogmatic definition of papal infallibility was accomplished. Pius XII on June 29, 1943, issued the Encyclical Mystici corporis. This encyclical together with

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<sup>10</sup> Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), s.v. Apology VII, 23.

<sup>11</sup> The Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v. "Church." Some definitions stress "the church of the baptized."

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., s.v. "Kingdom."



the Encyclical Mediator Dei (1947) on holy liturgy constituted the most comprehensive Roman statement of an official character on the doctrine of the Church. In analyzing the Church's understanding of herself in the Mystici corporis Walther von Loewenich dwells on the following points:

(1) The Church is a divine institution founded by the Jesus of history; (2) The idea of corpus Christi mysticum is in itself biblical, but it is here identified with an historical organization; (3) The Church as corpus Christi mysticum is regarded as the extension of the incarnation; (4) There follows from this the further consequence of the Church's infallibility; (5) The Church regards itself as the Kingdom of God on earth. "This equation of the Lordship of Christ and the supremacy of the Church is the source of its claim to absolute sovereignty and of its essential intolerance." (6) The Roman concept of the Church reaches its monarchical peak in the doctrine of the papal supremacy, not just a position of honor, but one which is de jure.<sup>13</sup>

In describing the Church in Mystici corporis Christi the concepts soul and body are introduced. The soul of the Church is described as the invisible activity of the Holy Spirit (rather than those, who, because of invincible ignorance, found it impossible to unite with the Roman

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<sup>13</sup>Walther von Loewenich, Modern Catholicism (New York: St. Martin's Press Inc., 1959), pp. 143ff. Quotation in (5) from page 159.



Church) and the visible Church, the body, primarily as the priesthood in its threefold office of teaching (prophetic), of administering the sacraments (priestly), and of ruling the congregation (pastoral). The hierarchy is the Church. Without this priestly order the Roman Church would be unthinkable. In other words the Roman Church is a priestly, sacramental institution for salvation.

The structure of the Church may be described as organic (soma). Aquinas believed in a hierarchical system which included the entire universe, within which every individual part could find its proper place. Divine Law was, of course, embodied in the revelation of the Scripture and the dogma of the Church. Characteristic of the organic conception of the Church is the twofold emphasis upon Law and Life. This harmonizes with the Roman concept of the Kingdom of God. The mammoth Roman Catholic empire is God's Kingdom united by a common faith and ruled by the divinely appointed authority.

Augustine's visible Church has had a tremendous influence in the shaping of Roman ecclesiology. To the Catholic the Church has been down through the centuries:

The Kingdom of God on earth--in via--the supernatural society through which and in which alone humanity could realize its true end. It was a visible society with its own law and constitution which possessed divine and indefectible authority. It remained through the ages one and the same, like a city set on a hill, plain for all men to see, handing on from generation to generation the same deposit of faith and the same mandate of authority which it had received



from its Divine Founder and which it would retain whole and intact until the end of time.<sup>14</sup>

In interpreting Matt. 16:18 Roman theology states that Peter alone received the task of being the Church's foundation. On him was conferred the doctrinal and disciplinary authority in the formula "to bind and to loose." True, Christ is the Head, the King, but He is hidden in God and invisible to us.

Hence the Lord's lordship over the Body must be represented and shown in order that it may be really exercised over the whole Church. Only thus will the members of the Body receive life from the Head. This is the precise function of authority in the Church. It is intended to signify and make present the sovereignty of Christ as Leader, Doctor, Sanctifier.<sup>15</sup>

The way into the Kingdom is by baptism, by accepting the Church's teaching and obeying her government. Man's duty is simply to believe absolutely in the divine revelation and to obey the commandments of God. In order to make this possible Christ has founded His Church as a perfect society external of its own nature and visible. Of this visible Church it is said: Extra ecclesiam salus non est. Submission to the Pope is necessary to salvation.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Christopher Dawson, "Kingdom of God and History," Oxford Conference Report, pp. 210-214. Dawson is a Roman Catholic philosopher and advocate of Neo-Thomism.

<sup>15</sup>André de Bovis, What is the Church? (New York: Hawthorn Books., Inc., 1961), p. 111.

<sup>16</sup>Pius IX in Encyclical Sancta Cura and the Syllabus of Errors. See also Augustin Cardinal Bea, The Unity of Christians (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), pp. 139-140 as to submission to the authority of the Church. Current



The individual's salvation does not depend on the Word, on Christ, but on the Church.

Roman theology says that the Roman Church, God's Kingdom, has four visible characteristics or marks and it alone possesses them.

The Church is one. This implies that its form of government is monarchical, for the papacy is the principle of unity.

The Church is holy, because it is the continuation of the life of Christ, because it is God's Kingdom on earth, because its teaching, priestly and pastoral ministry mediates the truth, grace, and love of Christ, and because the members of the Church are members of the Body of Christ.

The Church is Catholic or Universal not merely in principle, but also in actuality.

The Church is also apostolic. All ecclesiastical authority is derived from the apostles, who have transmitted their office to their lawful successors, and were themselves appointed by Jesus Christ. The primacy of Peter is emphasized as well as the Apostolic Succession. Thus the true Church is distinguished from the false churches by the authenticity of its priesthood.

The Roman Church insists that it is the Body of Christ and must be recognized as the Body of Christ. The most

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teaching emphasizes charity towards the "separated brethren." See pp. 66ff. and 82ff.



recent and the most important pronouncement of the Church's magisterium is the Encyclical Mystici Corporis of Pius XII in 1943. While the war was still in progress, the Sovereign Pontiff declared that all generations of men were called to unity and peace in the Body of Christ which is the one, holy, Catholic, apostolic, and Roman Church.<sup>17</sup>

More recently Pope John XXIII convened the Twenty-first Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church,<sup>18</sup> which his successor Pope Paul VI reconvened on September 29, 1963, as the second session of Vatican II in Rome. Protestant Christians, once regarded as "heretics," are now spoken of as "separated brethren." The Church of Rome is posing as the source, the center and rallying point for world Christendom.

#### Lutheran Conception of Basileia as Realm

If the Kingdom of God is viewed as a realm, Lutheran dogmaticians customarily identify the Kingdom of God as the Kingdom of Grace, the Una Sancta, of which every true believer is a member.<sup>19</sup> The rule of Christ is a gracious

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<sup>17</sup>Pius XII was not the first to declare that the Roman Church is the Body of Christ. Others before him had expressed themselves more succinctly, Pius XI in the Encyclical Mortalium animos (1928), Leo XIII in Divinum illud (1897), and centuries earlier Boniface VIII in the Bull Unam sanctam (1302), to quote only the better known texts.

<sup>18</sup>The first session met from October 11 to December 8, 1962.

<sup>19</sup>The Apology makes no distinction between the Kingdom



rule, the Gospel rule which produces a kingdom of believers. This Kingdom is Christ's. It was founded by Christ and its foundation is Christ. He who by grace is a member of the Church of Christ is also a citizen in the Kingdom. The Augsburg Confession states: "The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered."<sup>20</sup>

The continuity of the Church is stated in the same article thus: "Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever." Edmund Schlink points out that "the continuity of the Church consists in the identity of the Gospel preached ever anew," for the Gospel is the constitutive element of the Church.

The true apostolic succession of office is neither based upon laying on of hands, nor guaranteed by it. The Church through all time and change preaches the Gospel; doing this it is apostolic and will persist "always" until the end of the world (Article VII).<sup>21</sup>

Over against the enthusiasts who found the uniting, constituting element in subjective religious experience; over against Rome who found it in the hierarchy headed by the Pope, Luther held the Gospel to be the constitutive

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of Christ and the Church, IV, 16, 52. Melancthon devotes a special chapter in his Loci to the Kingdom of Christ in addition to the chapter he devotes to the Church.

<sup>20</sup>Triglott Concordia, p. 47. See Augsburg Confession, Article VII.

<sup>21</sup>Edmund Schlink as quoted by R. Newton Flew, The Nature of the Church (London: Student Christian Movement Press, Limited, 1951), p. 61.



element, which creates the Church. The existence of the Church in the world is not the confirmation of an existing moral law, the fulfillment of which becomes possible through the infusion of new energy, but a new and marvelous creation of divine love through the Gospel of the great Atonement. Luther strenuously objected to anything that would rob the Gospel of its central place in theology and also in ecclesiology, for the Gospel creates the Kingdom of Christ, the Church.

The claim has been made that Luther's view of the Church grew in part out of resentment against the official Church which had refused to sanction his new doctrine and in part out of a desire to justify his defection from the Roman Church. Luther, of course, took his position within the Church.

The fact is that Luther's spiritual concept of the Una Sancta was a fait accompli long before the indulgence controversy of 1517. Karl Holl has shown from Luther's Commentary on the Psalms (1513-1515) that as early as 1513 the material principle of Luther's theology, justification by faith--sola fide--was quite clearly fixed in his mind. As soon as sola fide--the just shall live by faith--had become a living reality for Luther, his approach to theology as a whole and to the various doctrines in particular changed completely. He now viewed ecclesiology from the standpoint of sola fide and could not conceive of the Church otherwise than a congregation of believers, communio fidelium. (Karl Holl, Gesammelte Aufsätze, Tübingen, 1932, I, pp. 288-301). We shall therefore be compelled to reverse Grisar's verdict to read: Luther's controversy with Rome grew out of his new concept of the Church.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Fred E. Mayer, "The Una Sancta in Luther's Theology,"



If the Kingdom is defined as the congregation of those whom Christ has rescued from the power of Satan's tyranny and in whose hearts He has established His gracious rule, then the way into the Kingdom is by regeneration, by faith.<sup>23</sup> Membership in the Kingdom depends on one's relationship to Christ and not on one's relationship to the Church. Membership is only possible by the Spirit's call through the means of grace. Sola gratia. Believers only constitute the Christian Church, the Kingdom of Grace. Faith is the only condition of membership. Sola fide.

Of the Una Sancta Lutherans say that it is the one, holy, catholic Church. "One" refers to the unity of faith. Holiness is predicated on the doctrines of justification and sanctification. Catholicity is to be found in the universal sharing in Christ. Membership in this Una Sancta, this Kingdom of Grace, is necessary to salvation.

The marks of the Church are Word and Sacraments. The basileia does not come with observation.<sup>24</sup> The Church is invisible because its constitutive element, or its organizing principle (the gracious activity of Christ through the Gospel) is invisible, and faith, the essential condition

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Concordia Theological Monthly, XVIII (November 1947), 804-305. Jaroslav Pelikan in his book, The Riddle of Roman Catholicism, p. 52, shows how Rome later condemned part of her own tradition when she condemned this doctrine at Trent.

<sup>23</sup>John 3:3. See Pieper, op. cit., pp. 389-399.

<sup>24</sup>Luke 17:20.



of membership, is invisible. The Word which creates the Church is spiritual and therefore "invisible." Christ's Kingdom, as Luther puts it, is "ein Hoer-reich, nicht ein Seh-reich." The Kingdom is not invisible in the Platonic sense; it is "hidden" in the evangelical sense. Wherever God is active as our gracious King through His appointed means, Word and Sacraments, there the ecclesia is to be found.

The real mark of the Church is the preaching of the Gospel. To be sure, the Church must also preach the Law, even as Jesus Christ also preached it. But just as the proclamation of grace was His opus proprium, His real work as Savior, so it is the preaching of the Gospel which marks the Church a Church.<sup>25</sup>

Lutheran Confessions speak of the Church in a proper and improper sense.<sup>26</sup> In an improper sense (in a figurative sense we may speak of the visible Church or Churches) Scripture applies the term "churches" also to all visible communions which indeed do not consist only of believers and persons sanctified by faith, but to whom hypocrites and wicked people are admixed, among whom, however, the

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<sup>25</sup>Hermann Sasse, Here We Stand (New York: Harper, c.1938), p. 129. Objective notae ecclesiae. Subjective notae ecclesiae might be baptism, faith, and the profession of faith, not faith and obedience as in the Reformed.

<sup>26</sup>Antithesis between visible and invisible Church traceable to the Lutheran dogmaticians of the seventeenth century. Cf. Fred Mayer, Concordia Theological Monthly XXV (March 1954), 197. Philip Schaff says that Zwingle first introduced both terms, that Calvin defined the distinction more clearly and fully than any of the Reformers. Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church. (Third Revision; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), VII, 457ff.



Gospel is preached in its purity and the Sacraments are administered according to the Gospel (not ecclesia mixta, but corpus mixtum).

Lutheran theology devotes much space to the local church or congregation as the sovereign unit in the visible Church. As it points out that the New Testament knows of no special priest caste, so it stresses that Christ is the Head of His Church and witnesses to the universal priesthood of all believers.<sup>27</sup>

Lutheran ecclesiology warns against the danger of externalization and holds that the Church is invisible in opposition to all errors which make the Church a visible kingdom.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand it also warns against the other extreme of spiritualizing the concept of the Church to such a degree as to lose sight of the Church in "its improper sense," its visibility. The Savior does pray for the inner unity of Christians in His high-priestly prayer,

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<sup>27</sup> Both European and American Lutheran theology has exhibited great variety in ecclesiological thought. For example, the Wisconsin Synod holds that there is no essential difference between the local congregation and the synod. For a summary of the controversy between the Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Synod see The Abiding Word (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), III, 333ff.

<sup>28</sup> Anglicanism, the Papal system, also Romanizing tendencies within the Lutheran Church. The old Buffalo Synod in America and the Breslau Synod in Germany were charged with Romanizing tendencies. See The Abiding Word, III, 316.



not for an organizational unity, but it is a unity which the world is to behold.

The Una Sancta is a reality upon earth and the Augsburg Confession's conception of the Church supplies the strongest impulses towards unifying believers. As Edmund Schlink states:

Divisions between believers are distortions of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, dishonouring to Christ, gravely blameworthy, and permitting no congregation to rest at ease.<sup>29</sup>

Also to the point is his statement as to church order:

Moreover, a particular form of order is not a characteristic mark of the Church, whether it be the order of divine service, or of the ministry, or of the relations between Church and State. The significance of order is not belittled. But no particular form of order is constitutive of the Church.<sup>30</sup>

The teachings and writings of Dr. Carl F. W. Walther, first president of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, were a most important contribution in ecclesiology on the American scene, by means of which the ideals of Luther were actualized on American soil.

Did democratic American principles influence Walther's structure of the Church? The basic factors in his conception of the Church seem to have been formulated before he had time to become well acquainted with the American structure of society. According to his own assertion the article

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<sup>29</sup>Edmund Schlink as quoted by R. Newton Flew, op. cit., p. 65.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 65.



on justification guided him in the formulation of the teaching on the Church. His primary concern was to make sure that a visible organization of the Church would not become an intermediate savior (Nebenheiland).<sup>31</sup>

Finally Lutheran theology, as Luther, shares the Church's eschatological outlook and hope. This insight prevents the Lutheran Church from equating the Church, Christ's Kingdom, with any merely earthly realizations or political entities.

#### Calvinistic Conception of Basileia as Realm

John Calvin, as Luther, identified the Kingdom of God with the Church of Christ. Berkhof says of the Reformers: "They agreed in identifying it with the invisible Church, the community of the elect, or of the saints of God."<sup>32</sup> The Church is not a static, but a dynamic, growing thing. Since the emphasis is on God's sovereign rule of the universe, the Church is part and parcel of it. The Church, too, is subject to God's gracious government. In fact, the Church is the divinely instituted bearer and herald of the kingly rule of God.

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<sup>31</sup>Erwin Lueker, "Justification in the Theology of Walther," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXII (October 1961), 605. The antitheses to Walther's position in the Altenburg Theses and later writings are to be found in the Romanizing tendencies of Stephen and Grabau.

<sup>32</sup>L. Berkhof, The Kingdom of God (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Erdmans, 1951), p. 24.



Calvin, in line with the Augustinian concept of the Kingdom, was more apt to stress the visible Church, his Church over against the visible Church of Rome. The Fourth Book, a lengthy book in the Institutes, is devoted to his doctrine "Of the Holy Catholic Church." He says: "Therefore, our first entrance into the Church and the kingdom of God is by forgiveness of sins, without which we have no covenant nor union with God."<sup>33</sup> A considerable amount of space is devoted to attacking the institution of Rome and its government. Calvin says: "We regard the Roman Pontiff as the leader and standard-bearer of that wicked and abominable kingdom."<sup>34</sup>

Chapter One of the Fourth Book is devoted to an exposition "Of the True Church. Duty of Cultivating Unity with her, as the Mother of all the Godly."<sup>35</sup> Calvin speaks of the necessity of the Church conceiving us in her womb and giving us birth and then drops this metaphor and moves

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<sup>33</sup>John Calvin, Institutes, IV. 1, 20. Quotations are by book, chapter, and section.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., IV. 2, 12.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., IV. 1, 1. The concept of mater fidelium is common to Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic theology. Luther uses it in Large Catechism: The Creed, Art. III. In Roman theology the visible Church is first, then comes the invisible: the former gives birth to the latter. This means that the Church is a mater fidelium before she is a communio fidelium. See Jaroslav Pelikan, The Riddle of Roman Catholicism (New York: Abingdon Press, 1959), pp. 92-93. Also Geddes MacGregor, Corpus Christi (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), pp. 47ff.



on to another, for to him the real function of the Church is to be an educator, a school-teacher, a disciplinarian, a guardian, a guide.

The Church is the Kingdom of God, the product of His sovereign rule. Peculiar to Calvinistic theology is the distinction between the visible and the invisible Church. Calvin's position was that God glorifies Himself in the invisible Church by electing the unknown company He will bring to faith by the irresistible power of the illuminating Spirit. Hence election, not faith, is the ground for membership in the Una Sancta. An enhanced sense of moral obligation can be connected with this, if the supreme virtue is holiness, as Calvin says. He labored zealously to "make his calling and election sure." Due to the emphasis on righteousness and moral activity as the evidence of salvation there was also a natural desire to reveal one's election to one's neighbors.

The true invisible Church of the elect cannot be discerned by men, even by believing men. Only God can discern it. We can never discern anything but the visible Church, which is always indissolubly related to the invisible Church, and yet must always be strictly distinguished from it.<sup>36</sup> Since better than two hundred pages of the Fourth Book of the Institutes is devoted to the visible

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., IV. 1, 4. and IV. 1, 7. Corpus Reformatorum, XXX, 753.



Church, it is clear that Calvin's real interest is centered in the visible Church.

Christ is the Head of this Church, not primarily through His redemptive work, but chiefly because of His divine sovereignty. Christ does not become Lord, He is the Lord. Hence the stress is on faith and obedience, the church is therefore a congregation of believers and obeyers, a communio sanctorum, a holy community, those who have submitted to the Master's rule, the King's rule.

Bear in mind that Calvin views God's sovereignty in such a way that it is impossible for men to approach God. Finitum non est capax infiniti. Therefore man can never come near to God unless God selects an earthen vessel. The visible Church with its organization is the place where God encounters man and learns to become the obedient servant of his sovereign Master. The visible Church is our mother, no other entry into life except through her. In the Institutes of 1559 Calvin goes so far as to say that outside this Church, the visible Church, there is no salvation, and that separation from this visible Church is desertio religionis.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Compare The Westminster Confession of Faith (A. D. 1647), Article XXV. Of the Church. Part II. "The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation as before under the law) consists of all those, throughout the world, that profess the true religion, and of their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."



The sacraments are viewed as signs, the confirmation of faith. The stress is on the profession of the faith, not on the sacraments as means of grace as in Lutheranism. A person may spell out the difference between "invisible" and "visible" Church by saying that the former is the Church of the elect, the latter is the Church of the baptized. But this distinction does violence to baptism and robs it of its sacramental character.

Not every empirical church group is identical with, or a part of, this genuine ecclesia visibilis, instituted by Christ. The determination of the true, visible Church, a "legitimate Church," is of the utmost importance. The marks of the true visible Church are: Word, Sacraments, and Church Discipline. For Calvin and for some of the Churches that have embraced Calvin's theology the correct organization of the Church, the presbyterian type of church government, is decisive. Calvin devotes much space to the interpretation of Matthew sixteen. For instance Calvin maintains:

Peter had confessed in his own name, and that of his brethren, that Christ was the Son of God (Matthew XVI. 16). On this rock Christ builds his Church, because it is the only foundation; as Paul says, "Other foundation than this can no man lay" (1 Cor. III. 11).<sup>38</sup>

On the basis of this passage and other passages he rejects the primacy of Peter, maintains that Christ is the

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<sup>38</sup>Calvin, Institutes, IV. 6, 6.



only Head of the Church, and brings proof that the "axiom of the unity of an earthly kind in the hierarchy, which the Romanists assume as confessed and indubitable, was altogether unknown to the ancient Church."<sup>39</sup>

Over against the Christocentric approach to Scripture of Lutheranism the Calvinists would maintain that the establishment of the visible Church is God's ordinance for the purpose of preaching the whole Word.<sup>40</sup> The Office of the Keys belongs to the true Church and its chief function is to interpret the Bible (the divinely given code of doctrine and ethics) and to compel all men to live according to its teachings.

In his concept of the Church and church organization Calvin was influenced by the Strassburg reformer, Martin Butzer, who is regarded by some as the real father of Calvinism. Butzer, in turn, was influenced by Luther, but note how their concept of the Kingdom differs.

In his thought on the Kingdom of God, Butzer emphasized its moral character. He understood the gospel primarily as a moral phenomenon. It was to become a moral power. When, by the fulfillment of the Scripture, the communion of love is established among men, the Kingdom of God is realized; Christ rules. He does not stress, like Luther, the religious content of the gospel as being of first importance. That accounts for the different conception of the relation between gospel and law. Luther sharply distinguished them from each other.

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., Book IV. 6, 17.

<sup>40</sup>For the Roman imperialism Calvin substituted the imperialism of the whole Word.



But Butzer appreciates the gospel also as a law. The Old and New Testament belong closely together. The Scripture as an entity is obligatory.<sup>41</sup>

Hence Butzer's concept of the Kingdom may be described as two interwoven circles of thought.

The Kingdom of God has come when the commandments and the truth of the Bible have permeated all human conditions; but, on the other hand, it is present only in the church of the elect, the invisible communion of the predestinated saints.<sup>42</sup>

But how can this communion of the elect become real? Butzer considers the election realized by incorporation of the Christian in the Corpus Christi.

The idea of predestination is combined with a peculiar idea of the church: Christ, who grants election by his spirit, has by his word constituted the church, an organization with offices and polity, so that his followers, the elect, can form a communion. In this church, which is ordered by Christ himself and which is directed by him through his instruments, the ministri, the flock of saints represents a communion of sanctification and of love. Membership in the Kingdom of God, which is possible only through conformity with the visible organized church, reveals itself in love, in ethical obedience to the commandments of God and Christ. In such thinking, Butzer's strong emphasis on church discipline originates.<sup>43</sup>

In such thinking also the system of church government which Calvin took over from Butzer originated and developed.<sup>44</sup> As Pauck says, "But one still senses the atmosphere of the

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<sup>41</sup> Wilhelm Pauck, The Heritage of the Reformation (The Free Press of Glencoe, Ill., 1961), p. 75.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. See chapter six on "Calvin and Butzer."



Dominican Order, in which Butzer received his education."<sup>45</sup>  
 How different this idea of the Church is than Luther's Church concept in which salvation, justification, faith, stand in the center, not predestination!

Calvin's views have determined the ecclesiology of the Reformed denominations in varying degree. The externalization of the Una Sancta, the reduction of the Kingdom to a moral-ethical concept, or to a material kingdom can also be seen in the theological movements which have swept through the Reformed world.<sup>46</sup>

But what about the ecclesiological views of the first Calvinists who came to America, the views of the New England Puritans? Back home in England the Puritan movement had arisen out of the urge and drive to complete the Reformation of the Church of England, for they believed that the Church was filled with corruption and ruled by an unscriptural authority. It was not a question of subscribing to the doctrinal articles of the Church of England. This they were ready to do. Also they were careful to insist that the Anglican Church was a "true" church, not Antichrist as was the Church of Rome, but they simply wanted to rid the Church of the elements of Popery that

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>46</sup>The Wesleyan-Arminian theology, Religious Liberalism, and Dispensationalism. See Appendix.



had remained, they wanted to remove the bishops.

The Plymouth Pilgrim Fathers were strict Separatists. The Puritan settlers at neary-by Salem in 1629 and at New Haven, Connecticut, were Presbyterians. Both groups subscribed to Westminster theology. Later in 1648 both the Separatists and Presbyterians joined in adopting the Cambridge Platform, the charter of American Congregationalism. It stresses the two principles of independency and fellowship which American Congregationalists have always cherished.

When the New England Puritans arrived in America, they brought along with them their ideas on church and society. In fact, these very ideas constituted the background for the militant urge that drove them to these shores in an effort toward self-determination in matters of church polity and to build the Church from within as they thought it should be built. The local congregation was for them a group of experiential believers who were obligated to cooperate by a social covenant (the Mayflower Compact is an example). The covenant theology nourished solidarity, also the idea of a holy community, or a church within a church, ideas inherent in Calvinism.

Ola Winslow says in Meetinghouse Hill:

Looked back upon after many generations, the break with traditional procedures which these gatherings represent is nothing short of startling. When a group of selfchosen, self-approved laymen laid the foundations of a church society by subscribing in public to a covenant of their own making, they were



challenging the old ecclesiastical order at its very foundations. They were also breaking the organic unity of the church militant, as it had been cherished from apostolic days down. No longer would a man assume the lifelong privilege of church membership by virtue of having been born into the church of his fathers before him. He would be admitted by vote of his fellowmembers. Instead of being parted from the company of saints on earth by death only, he would now remain a member by the continuing approval of his fellowmembers. His "Carriage" among them would be under ceaseless scrutiny, and in their hands alone would lie the power of excommunication, should his conduct be not acceptable.<sup>47</sup>

The core of their church theory was the church covenant. On the virgin soil of New England they sought to develop it both ecclesiastically and politically. They attempted to apply Calvin's theocratic principle to Church and State in New England.

At the heart of each new township there was to be the church, consisting of all those who had committed themselves to the sacred covenant. They had the right to elect their own minister and to administer all godly discipline and to vote on all the chief issues affecting the welfare of the community. Outside the covenanted community there were the remainder of the inhabitants who were expected to support the church by attending services and paying taxes, though in the actual conduct of its affairs they had no voice.<sup>48</sup>

Unlike the sectarians who were inclined to withdraw from the world, the New England Puritans desired to establish their societies as the living center of the unregenerate world.

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<sup>47</sup>Ola Winslow, Meetinghouse Hill: 1630-1783 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1952), p. 34.

<sup>48</sup>F. W. Dillistone, The Structure of Divine Society (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1951), pp. 143-144.



Dillistone sees three main types of church theory within Reformed Christendom in America in this period: on the one hand the Presbyterian doctrine of the one Divinely-created community of the Covenant, on the other hand the sectarian theory of multifarious groups of Spirit-inspired devotees who looked for the establishment of the Divine society in the world to come, and in between the new Puritan theory of the "autonomous local church whose members, though deriving their status from the one Covenant of Grace, had in addition freely and voluntarily bound themselves to one another and to God in a solemn covenant whose terms were openly known and declared."<sup>49</sup>

The first concern of the New England Puritans was the building of the Church under the sovereignty of God. As Niebuhr points out: "The converse of dependence on God is independence of everything less than God."<sup>50</sup> Perry Miller insists that they were committed to the Congregational rather than the Presbyterian order even before they reached these shores.<sup>51</sup> They were certainly fearful of any usurpation of this sovereignty by episcopal institutions.

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>50</sup>H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), pp. 69ff. Hence also their interest in constitutionalism.

<sup>51</sup>Perry Miller, The American Puritans, Their Prose and Poetry (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1956), p. 21.



## Comparison and Summary

Although modern scholarship agrees with Luther that basileia places the emphasis on the ruler Christ and His ruling activity, yet the term basileia may also be used in the sense of realm, domain. When used in this sense, the question arises: What is the relationship of the Kingdom of God to the Church? This question confronts us in the interpretation of Matthew sixteen.

The Kingdom concept is one of many terms used in connection with the Church. Common to Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic theology are the designations: "ground and pillar of truth," "the mystical body of Christ," "communio sanctorum," "mater fidelium," and in terms of this study the "Kingdom of God" concept, though these terms have received different interpretations. Roman Catholic theology has conceived the Church as the corpus Christi mysticum, the mater fidelium. Lutheran theology has emphasized the communio fidelium, while the Reformed have stressed the corpus Christi and employed the concept of the covenant community.

Our objective was to determine how the kingdom concept was used in relation to the Church in the three theologies. In a most general way a common meeting ground can be found for the three theologies in such statements as the following:



The Church is the Kingdom of God, the product of God's rule, the place where the Messiah rules.

The ultimate source of authority in the Church is Christ, who is the King over His Kingdom.

The Church is necessary to salvation, because the way into the Church, the way into the Kingdom, is the way of salvation.

In a most general way the three theologies tend to use the same terms to describe the marks of the Kingdom of God or the Church.

The function of the Church is to extend God's rule.

The destiny of this Kingdom is a glorious one, because the "gates of hell shall not be able to prevail against it."

Decided differences begin to appear when the nature of the Church is explored, when a person seeks to determine the constitutive element in the Church, that by which it comes to be the Church. Rome found the constitutive element in the hierarchy, heading up in the pope. The enthusiasts of Luther's day found the uniting, constituting element in subjective religious experience. Luther's fundamental objection to both enthusiasts and papism was that they robbed the gospel of the central place which it rightly occupies. The Gospel was for Luther the constitutive element in the Church. "The gospel, which is the wisdom



and power of God, constitutes the Church."<sup>52</sup> By way of contrast Calvinism finds the constitutive element in the full Word (theocentric rather than the Lutheran soteriological approach to Scriptures). Obviously these different approaches are involved in the distinctive sacramental views which Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic Churches have.

In defining the Church the Roman Church states that the Roman Church is the Kingdom of God. In Calvinistic theology the Church is the company of the elect, while at the same time the visible Church is identified as the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Lutheranism identifies the Una Sancta as the Kingdom. Lutheran ecclesiology warns against two extremes: externalizing and spiritualizing the concept of the Church.

The kingdom concept raises the question of authority in the Church. Ultimately the source of authority is Christ, but in the Roman Catholic Church this authority is equated with the papacy, to whom Christ is said to have given the keys of the Kingdom. The Protestant Reformers substituted the rule of the Word: Luther, the gracious rule of the Gospel, and Calvin, the rule of the "full" Word.

Is the Church necessary to salvation? The Roman

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<sup>52</sup>Martin Luther, Weimar Edition 56:165; cf. 4:189.



Catholic Church flatly says that outside of the Roman Church there is no salvation. Luther, as Lutherans, teaches that outside of the Una Sancta there is no salvation. Calvin maintained that outside of the visible Church there is no salvation, and that separation from this church was tantamount to desertio religionis. The way into the Church, into this Kingdom, is the way of salvation, the way of faith. For the Roman Catholic this is essentially the way of obedience, the way of work-righteousness. For the Lutheran the way into the Kingdom is the way of faith (faith as the correlate of the Gospel). For the Calvinist the way is the way of faith and obedience (faith and obedience as the correlates of Gospel and Law).

In describing the marks of the Church, the Kingdom, the Roman Church naturally dwells on the marks of its ecclesiastical structure, for the true church is distinguished from the false churches by the authenticity of its priesthood. The Lutheran Confessions dwell on the Gospel and the Sacraments, while the Calvinistic Churches dwell on the Word, the Sacraments, and Discipline.

The different views on the function of the Church will be treated in Chapter Five.

The Kingdom is inaugurated by God and viewed as present, yet it is also something that lies in the future. The proclamation of the Kingdom must also be eschatological. In the three theologies the true destiny of the Church is considered to lie in eternity.



## CHAPTER IV

### BASILEIA CHRISTOU IN RELATION TO THE

### BASILEIAS OF THIS WORLD

#### Exegetical Notes

The very fact that we use such terms "rule," "reign," "kingship" suggests the existence of other rules and rulers, kingships and kingdoms. Satan speaks of the "kingdoms of this world."<sup>1</sup> At once we think of secular kingdoms. If we look at the word "world,"<sup>2</sup> we may understand the "world" in the sense of God's creation, His handiwork. The "world" in the sense of the fallen, sinful, human world is the object of God's redemptive plan. In a third sense the "world" stands as a symbol of that which is opposed to God, rejects Christ, and despises His Gospel.

It is not always easy to separate the passages in which the word occurs in a neutral sense from those in which kosmos implies the sense of alienation from God. In 2 Peter 2:5 kosmos is applied to the physical world, and in Rom. 11:12-15 it denotes the Gentile world as

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<sup>1</sup>Matt. 4:8.

<sup>2</sup>The word kosmos appears 177 times in the Greek New Testament (102 times in the Johannine writings, where a moral sense is often attached to it. Kosmos is sometimes applied to worldly affairs, goods, pleasures, which lead men astray from God, 1 John 2:17).



opposed to the basileia, the sphere of God's rule, His gracious rule in the hearts of men. When Christ declares in John 18:36 that His Kingdom is not of this world, He shows that the present order of things (kosmos) does not set forth the glory of God. The apostle expresses the antagonism between the kosmos and this world, when he says in 1 Cor. 15:50, "that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." The head and heart of the basileia theou is Jesus, and with Jesus Christ the believers are united in the Una Sancta. The Una Sancta is the sphere wherein the marks of the Kingdom of God are demonstrated. The Church does not become the form or embodiment of the Kingdom, for "the kingdom of God is within you." The Kingdom is related to the Church, the ecclesia, as redemption is related to the Church of the believers.

We need to keep in mind that Satan seeks to invade the Church as he does the State, and that either the State or the visible Church may become an exposed sector of that mysterious struggle between the civitas Dei and the civitas diaboli, which is the central issue in world history. We may look at the world from two different angles. On the one hand it is God's creation. On the other hand it has rejected His Son, our Savior. As Visser 't Hooft says on the Kingship of Christ in the world:

The crisis has come in Jesus Christ. He has come to claim the world; "he came to what was his own" (John 1:11). But the world did not recognize him. The crisis becomes, therefore, a judgment. "Now is this



world to be judged; now shall the Prince of this world be expelled" (John 12:31). But this "now" is only true in Christ, who represents the Kingdom of God on earth. It is not yet true in a visible manner. The full manifestation of the judgment is yet to come. What we see is the continuation of the old world. God's answer to the rebellion of that world is to make Christ King over the world and to begin the creation of a new world. The Church is the realm where the King is acknowledged and where the new creation is already taking place. It is the realm where the two ages overlap: "this age," which is in reality the passing age, and the "coming age," which is invisible but actively present through the Holy Spirit in the Church.<sup>3</sup>

We are reminded that the Church's King is also the Head of the universe, the King of Kings, that "all power has been given" to Him in heaven and earth.<sup>4</sup> There is no territory in the universe which is exempted from the dominion of Christ. The officium Christi regium extends over the whole universe. Regium Christi officium triplex est: regnum potentia, gratiae, gloriae. As Pieper points out, "these realms form a unit inasmuch as they are under one and the same Lord."<sup>5</sup>

But the Scriptures make it clear that the Messianic or mediatorial Kingdom of Christ is to be distinguished from the temporal or secular kingdoms.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the

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<sup>3</sup>W. A. Visser 't Hooft, The Kingship of Christ (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), p. 121.

<sup>4</sup>Matt. 28:18.

<sup>5</sup>Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), II, 385-394.

<sup>6</sup>John 18:36-38 and other passages.



Church has not been given a mandate to direct the activities of the nations by her Lord nor can she claim such a mandate from the fact that Christ is the Lord over the nations.

"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."<sup>7</sup> There are two authorities, two domains, two kingdoms. But note that it is not God or Caesar but rather God and Caesar without blurring the distinction between the two kingdoms. Because the aim or ends of His Kingdom were so different from those of secular kingdoms, Jesus drew a sharp line between the Church and the State.

#### Roman Catholic View of Church and State

Has the Roman Church changed its approach? In a look at Roman Catholicism on the eve of the Second Vatican Council it was stated:

good is the extensive withdrawal of the Roman Church from that direct involvement with the state which has been one of the greatest sources of its corruption. There is a growing conviction, echoes of which are even heard in Spain, that it is not only inexpedient but unchristian for the church to utilize temporal power in order forcibly to maintain its position in society. This position is represented by the great majority of post-war Roman Catholic writers on this subject and was even reflected in Pius XII's speech on toleration in 1953, which contained what has been widely interpreted as an indirect rebuke to the rigid

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<sup>7</sup>Matt. 22:21.



traditionalism of Cardinal Ottaviani (who is still, however, one of the leading figures in the Curia).<sup>8</sup>

Public opinion changed to such an extent in America that the United States elected its first Catholic president. Has the Roman Church modified its theological thinking in relationship to the state and society? Probably it has not changed its basic principles, but the Roman Church has over the last hundred and fifty years acquired much experience in conducting herself as an ecclesiastical society within national societies and has under pressure to meet various threats, often changed her tactics.

The Roman Catholic attitude to society consists largely in its loyalty to the guiding ideas of its classical epoch: the Corpus Christianum under the leadership of the Pope. Medieval Christian society was one. Not only was there a belief in the Corpus Christi; there was also a passionate devotion to the Corpus Christianum. "This was the actualization on earth, in terms of Christian ideals and governmentally fostered practices, of the one Christian life."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Kristen E. Skydsgaard, editor, The Papal Council and the Gospel (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p. 70. A newspaper report quotes Pope Paul VI on the eve of the second session of Vatican II as saying that the curia was suffering from "venerable old age" and stood in need of reforms. The Pope seems willing to share some responsibilities of the government of the Church with the bishops, which, if carried out, would be a retreat from the doctrine of infallibility.

<sup>9</sup>Ray C. Petry, Christian Eschatology and Social Thought (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 281. See also Fred E. Mayer, "The Proper Distinction Between Law and



Catholicism stood then as now for the planned society of which Plato's Republic was the great example. It stood for the supremacy of the spiritual over the temporal and the material: the Christian faith as taught by the Church. The essence of this position is ecclesiocracy and the Church, therefore, intervened in social life officially and directly by means of canon law. This was the way it sought to make a working reality of the Kingdom of God upon earth and to force the laws of the Kingdom upon the still half-heathen kingdoms of the world.

With the collapse of the unified society of the Middle Ages, the disturbing influences of the Reformation, the emergence of the national states, and the increasing secularization of society, the Roman Church found itself in a new **situation.**

There is no indication that the basic Roman philosophy of the State has undergone decisive changes. The State is based upon the social nature of man and thus upon the Divine Creative Will itself. The Roman Church, a sovereign state itself with a sovereign head, denies every authority of the State over the Church. It has never ceased to be an aggressive state within a state in both Catholic and non-Catholic countries. It works resolutely to realize its claim to the right of being recognized as the State Church

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Gospel and the Terminology Visible and Invisible Church," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXV (March, 1954), 180-181.



and thus, among other things, entitled to support from public funds, because the State has been established divinely to protect and promote religion, the true religion.

When needed, the state is to use its machinery to help the Church. This principle is no different in America than in Spain. American Catholics are instructed to accept the privileges of American democracy and work to bring the lives of all people, Catholic and non-Catholic into the pattern laid down in Rome.<sup>10</sup>

What about the papal claim to supreme power in both Church and state? This claim was clearly and emphatically stated in 1303 by Pope Boniface VIII in his bull Unam Sanctam, which is still church law today. In fact,

The pope today renews the papal sanction of this bull every time he sends his papal ambassadors to a secular court or receives an official ambassador from a secular state.<sup>11</sup>

Since the Council of Trent famous encyclicals on social questions have given very rigorous denunciation of our present social and economic order and have contained far-reaching proposals for its improvement. Many of these ideas were implied in the medieval order, but that does not mean that they were always necessarily conservative or

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<sup>10</sup> Paul Blanshard, American Freedom and Catholic Power, (Second edition, Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 68.

<sup>11</sup> Lewis W. Spitz, Our Church and Others: Beliefs and Practices of American Churches (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), p. 49.



reactionary. In some cases the application of the medieval principles led to a progressive position in social questions.

Pius IX indicated ways in which secularist Liberalism was incompatible with Christianity. Leo XIII in the Encyclicals Immortale Dei of 1885 and Rerum Novarum of 1891 devoted major attention to the alternative ideal of a Christian social order which would meet the challenge of modern problems. Pius XI examined the two great anti-christian modern economic systems (Capitalism and Socialism) in the Encyclical Quadragesimo anno and thus continued the social "middle way" enunciated by his predecessor, Leo XIII.

What about the American principle of the separation of Church and State? American Catholics, some of them prominent, have said some fine things about this principle. Nevertheless, "the laudable expressions of outstanding American Catholics on the separation of Church and State do not necessarily reflect the official position of Rome on that question."<sup>12</sup>

Jacques Maritain, the Roman Catholic Thomist philosopher, in his book, The Things that are not Caesar's, has made it clear, that "The sovereignty of the Church, universal through the whole range of salvation, is clearly more

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<sup>12</sup>Lewis W. Spitz, "Roma Semper Eadem," Concordia Theological Monthly, XIX (November 1948), 820. See discussion there.



extensive and elevated than that of the State."<sup>13</sup> In other words, the Church is supreme.

However, the claim of direct power seems to have been abandoned today and replaced by the theory of indirect power and the theory of directive power. By the former the Church claims the right to intervene in temporal matters, when they affect the spiritual. By "directive power" is meant the right to enlighten the conscience of rulers and people upon the extent and limits of their obligations in temporal affairs.

The Roman Church opposes Church and State separation, such as exists in the United States and France. Pope Leo XIII in the Encyclical Immortale Dei states: "The State should officially recognize the Catholic religion as the religion of the Commonwealth." The Roman Catholic plan is a close union of the State with the Church.

Ecclesiocracy found its strongest expression in the claims of the medieval popes and it was one of the things against which the Reformers violently reacted. In recent times Pius XI in his Encyclical Quas Primas of 1925 emphasizes strongly the universal character of Christ's reign. This encyclical declares that the Church, the Roman Church, is precisely this Kingdom of Christ which is destined to cover the whole earth. In the words of Visser 't Hooft:

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<sup>13</sup>Jacques Maritain, The Things that are not Caesar's (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), p. 6.



"Christocracy becomes in fact ecclesiocracy."<sup>14</sup>

Because of its legalistic ethics Roman Catholic piety tends to be a piety of compulsion, oriented in the Law, built around the Law, and through the Law striving to reach the beatific vision.

#### Lutheran View of Church and State

Since the modern state tends to extend its functions, to divorce itself from God, or to deify itself and to become a church for its people, this is also an area of great concern to the Lutheran Church, to all Christian people who would live under Christ's gracious rule.

Undoubtedly the Reformer's view of society was influenced by the concept of the Corpus Christianum, but in reaction to Roman Catholic ecclesiocracy Luther emphasized the separateness of the two realms, church and state.<sup>15</sup> It is evidently God's plan that the two realms, Church and State, should exist side by side in this world (in eternity this distinction will disappear). It is possible for Satan to invade both realms, the State and the visible Church, in an effort to bring them under the sway of his kingdom, but only as long as the world stands.

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<sup>14</sup>Visser 't Hooft, op. cit., p. 132.

<sup>15</sup>Martin Luther, Temporal Authority: To What Extent it Should be Obeyed (1513).



Against the Roman view that there is only one seat of power and that secular power is subject to the spiritual power, Luther maintained the sovereignty of each in its sphere, each directly accountable to God. Luther's purpose was to overcome the confusion between the two realms which had been created by Roman clericalism and which had appeared in a different form in the enthusiastic sects of the Reformation era.

Modern critics accuse him of differentiating too sharply. Yet it is to be remembered:

that Luther was no political theorist. He did not write a treatise de regimine principum, but wrote against "the foolish princes." His writing Von weltlicher Obrigkeit of 1523 was perhaps his closest approximation to a formal dissertation, but from his exegesis of the Psalms, 1513-1515, to the exposition of Genesis concluded in November of 1545, he made a countless number of references to church and state. Actually Luther did not understand the concept of the "state" as a legal, political and social entity in the modern sense.<sup>16</sup>

Luther emphatically taught that the Christ who rules the faithful in His Church also governs the whole universe.<sup>17</sup> He recalled the rulers of his time in the strongest terms to their divine vocation.<sup>18</sup> "Bishop Berggrav is surely

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<sup>16</sup>Lewis W. Spitz, "Luther's Ecclesiology and his Concept of the Prince as Notbischof," Church History, XXII (June 1953), 115. See the discussion on his critics by William A. Mueller, Church and State in Luther and Calvin (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1954), pp. 34, 36ff.

<sup>17</sup>Luther, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup>Martin Luther, Admonition to Peace: A Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants in Swabia. Holman, IV, 220ff.



right that it is a crude distortion of Luther to affirm that Christians owe allegiance to two different Lords."<sup>19</sup>

The Augsburg Confession reminds us that the realms of the Church and of the government should not be confused just as the Scriptures forbid us to confuse the Law and the Gospel. Luther and Melancthon forever stress that it is "a spiritual Kingdom," not a worldly kingdom (against the secular jurisdiction of bishops, against the Anabaptists, later Andreae against the disciples of Calvin).<sup>20</sup>

The distinction between the two kingdoms was embodied in the Augsburg Confession, Article XXVIII, "The two rules, the spiritual and the secular should not be mixed and thrown together." This played an important role in the Protestant polemic against the whole hierarchical structure. In 1534 Luther spelled out this distinction thus:

I must always drum in and rub in, drive in and hammer home such a distinction between these two kingdoms, even though it is written and spoken so often that it is annoying. For Satan himself does not cease to cook and brew these two kingdoms into each other. The secular lords wish in the devil's name always to teach and instruct Christ how he should lead his church and the spiritual government; so also the false popes and enthusiasts, not in God's name, wish always to teach and instruct how man should order the secular government. That is throwing the secular and spiritual government together and mixing them, when the high spirits or wiseacres wish in an imperious and lordly manner to change and instruct God's word, declare themselves what one should teach and preach, which is

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<sup>19</sup>Visser 't Hooft, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>20</sup>Werner Elert, The Structure of Lutheranism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), I, 496.



forbidden them as well as the most humble beggar.<sup>21</sup>

Hence, in Lutheran theology the functions of the State differ from the functions of the Church. These functions are determined by the special authority vested in each realm. The authority of the Church is the authority of the Word and not of the sword.<sup>22</sup> The authority of the State is that of the sword, of the Law. It cannot be ruled by the Gospel.

Accordingly the two realms have different objectives. The State has one set of means for obtaining its ends and the Church quite another: the one physical, laws, force, carnal; the other spiritual, the means of grace, the persuasion of the Spirit. The government is concerned with the laws contained in the Second Table of the Decalog.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Lewis W. Spitz, op. cit., p. 117. See Luther, Weimar Ausgabe, LI, 239f.

<sup>22</sup>Matt. 26:52.

<sup>23</sup>The State Church is an inheritance from the Middle Ages. The underlying assumption of the Reformation Period is that State and Church do not constitute "Christendom" until they work together. "The classical expression for the inseparable knitting-together of the civil and the church community has always been found in Melanchthon's statement that the sovereign is 'custodian of both tables' and that thus must look after 'external discipline' as well as 'true worship of God,' that is, pure doctrine." Elert, op. cit., p. 379. Situational reasons (much discussed today) prompted the reformers to appeal to the government, which led to the government of the church by the sovereigns (territorialism, the church became a department of the state). The study of the Notbischoefe problem is indeed central for an understanding of Luther's ecclesiology and the much debated church-state question. "Clearly Melanchthon's externalizing of the church gave the princes



It does not prescribe the worship of the Trine God, nor can it pronounce the forgiveness of sins. The State fosters the righteousness which elevates man in the sight of men, whereas the Church alone brings the righteousness which "prevails" in the sight of God.

Lutheran theology maintains that the State is a servant of God and that it often needs to be reminded of its accountability to God. The State, too, stands under the Lordship of Christ.

In respect to their relationship to one another Church and State are equals. The Church is not to be the department of State, nor is the State to be a department of the Church. The ideal relationship is one of mutual, friendly recognition and a readiness on the part of each (within the limitations of its own scope and sphere) to aid and serve the other, a relationship indispensable to the peace and prosperity of both. The two realms are to be differentiated, but a complete separation between the Christian life in the sphere of the Church and the Christian life in the sphere of the State is not envisaged. In contrast to the attitude of the Anabaptists the Christian is to be a useful citizen in both realms, the State and the Church.

The Church's relation and witness to the State and to

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the sanction of a good conscience in their dominance over the church which Luther never granted them." See Lewis W. Spitz, "Luther's Ecclesiology and his Concept of the Prince as Notbischof," Church History, XXII (June 1953), 134-135.



society in general, determined as it is by the Head Himself, must naturally be Christ-centered, Gospel-centered, grace-centered. The Bible should not be used legalistically as a guide and rule for our times, because the political and ceremonial laws of the Old Testament ceased to be valid with the passing of the old covenant. Christ has superseded Moses and Christ has provided us with no social blueprint for an earthly kingdom.

In speaking of the obligation of the Church to the State and to society the Church is bound to witness to the Law and to stimulate thinking in the area of Christian ethics as applied to every-day life. The Church is thus a leaven in society. Since only the Gospel can produce truly Christian people who would apply their Christian principles to the State, the Church's real, essential contribution to society lies in the Gospel.

The feeling has gained ground in modern times that the Church has no business with the life of the State or society. This reaction is based on a false alternative. The choice is not between ecclesiocracy, church domination, ecclesiastical power politics on the one hand and the withdrawal of the Church from the world on the other. Tertium datur. The Church is compelled in faith, love, and obedience to witness, to fulfill its mission.

The charge that the Lutheran Church has been quietistic



has often been made.<sup>24</sup> Yet there is also much evidence that Lutherans have attempted to fulfill their obligations to society. The heirs of Luther insist that Christian piety must always be founded in divine grace.

In considering the relation of the church to society we are led to the position that neither a passive quietism nor an activism, which fails sufficiently to emphasize man's relationship to God, is a satisfactory solution of the problem. The chief concern of the church is religion, and "let the church be church."<sup>25</sup>

#### Calvinistic View of Church and State

The objective of Calvin's political theory was the creation of a holy community, a worthy Christian civilization, a model society with uniformity of faith, a Bible commonwealth.<sup>26</sup> In the background of Calvin's thinking is also the Corpus Christi and the Corpus Christianum. Church

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<sup>24</sup>E. C. Fendt, editor, What Lutherans are Thinking (Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1947), pp. 456-457. Elert in The Structure of Lutheranism, p. 499, points out that the Lutheran understanding of the "regal authority of Christ" is far from all more or less theocratic conceptions and aspirations. On the other hand it is a serious error when modern interpreters conclude from this that Lutheranism is decidedly quietistic. Of Luther he says: "The clearer his doctrine of justification becomes, the more activist his ethos becomes."

<sup>25</sup>ibid., p. 468.

<sup>26</sup>This parallels the Reformed ecclesiology in which church discipline is added as a mark of the Church, thus introducing the question of the character of members. The real Church must be the "pyre" Church, confessing Christians who live their lives accordingly.



and State are thought of as being together. The secular and the spiritual authorities, the two sovereignties, are viewed by Calvin as the two arms working jointly to establish Christ's undisputed lordship in every area.

The third and last general head of the Fourth Book of the Institutes, in which he treats the doctrine of the Church, is devoted to Civil Government. Calvin's era was that of the rising absolute state. Calvin fought for an independent church. Precisely because of his belief in the absolute sovereignty of God, he did not fear those in power and became a stern prophet of judgment.

Calvinism stands for something more than just the spiritual autonomy of the Church over against the State. Calvin warned against the danger of identifying the State with the Kingdom of God. He also warned against supposing that the two have nothing to do with each other. He says:

But as we have just suggested that this kind of government is distinct from that spiritual and internal reign of Christ, so it ought to be known that they are in no respect at variance with each other.<sup>27</sup>

Church and State are viewed by Calvin as a co-partnership, but the Church possesses the revelation of the sovereign will of God and in this sense she is supreme. The Church is God's instrument to promote God's glory. She must concern herself with the question of government and

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<sup>27</sup>John Calvin, Institutes, IV. 20, 2. Quotations are by book, chapter, and section.



persistently seek that kind of government which will wholeheartedly support her aims.

Also the State is God's instrument and hence the secular authority in Geneva was charged with regulating the conduct of men according to the Ten Commandments. The Church interpreted the Decalog (Calvin was active in this) and the State was the will of God in action, according to the counsel and direction of the consistory (there was both an ecclesiastical and a secular council). In describing Geneva the phrase "ecclesiastical police-state" has been used, since the political power was employed to carry out the regulations of the Church with respect to doctrine, morals, and conduct.<sup>28</sup>

Calvin held that civil government was responsible not only for enforcing the second table but also the first table of the Decalog.

But as we lately taught that kind of government is distinct from the spiritual and internal kingdom of Christ, so we ought to know that they are not adverse to each other. The former, in some measure, begins the heavenly kingdom in us, even now upon earth, and in this mortal and evanescent life commences immortal and incorruptible blessedness, while to the latter is assigned, so long as we live among men, to foster and maintain the external worship of God, to defend sound doctrine and the condition of the Church, to adapt our conduct to human society, to form our manners to

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<sup>28</sup>The burning of Servetus, the Anti-trinitarian, is an example. Many Old Testament Hebraic regulations were applied. There are fewer adiaphora in Calvinism than in Lutheranism.



civil justice, to conciliate us to each other, to cherish common peace and tranquility.<sup>29</sup>

When Calvin returned to Geneva from exile, he applied himself to the task of transforming Geneva into a "City of God," the Kingdom of God on earth. This was to be his life's work and the record of it is interesting to read. For this purpose he introduced the Ordonnances, a new ecclesiastical constitution, a stringent system of church discipline adopted by the city council and made the civil law for Geneva. In it the presbyterial church order is outlined. The Church was to be represented by the Consistory, the State by the Council.

Georgia Harkness states:

The Genevan theocracy may more properly be called a bibliocracy, for it was upon the Scriptures (and by implication upon Calvin's interpretation of the Scriptures) that the whole structure rested.<sup>30</sup>

Harkness refers to Roget's opinion that "it is incorrect to apply the term theocracy to the Genevan state because, in spite of Calvin's personal domination, the final jurisdiction always rested nominally in the Council." However, the term "theocracy" does express Calvin's stress on God's sovereignty. At any rate the Genevan state was not an ecclesiocracy or hierocracy.<sup>31</sup> Historically wherever the

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<sup>29</sup>Calvin, op. cit., II, 4, 521.

<sup>30</sup>Georgia Harkness, John Calvin: The Man and His Ethics (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1931), pp. 22, 223.

<sup>31</sup>Though John Milton, English poet, said: "New presbyter is but old priest writ large."



Calvinistic churches had the control in the state, they were the State-churches; wherever the churches, on the contrary, were in disfavor with the government, there the synod and Presbyterian constitution was adopted.

Though the Genevan state tended to suppress individual initiative, yet Calvin's system contained the seeds of democratic action. There are those who point out that it was far from Calvin's intention to promote either civil liberty or democracy, yet there is evidence to show that Calvinism gave rise to the spirit of independence and fomented revolution.<sup>32</sup> Calvin stresses obedience to civil government. Yet in the Institutes he leaves a loophole by saying: "By lifting up his horns against God, he had virtually abrogated his power."<sup>33</sup> In other words, if a ruler rules wickedly he forfeits his right to govern. This goes much further than mere passive resistance. Statements gleaned from his sermons and commentaries seem to indicate that he sanctioned also active resistance.

Such writers as Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch and others have found especially in the lives and writings of the Puritans proof for their thesis that Calvinism had a tremen-

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<sup>32</sup>Harkness refers to the establishment of the Dutch Republic, the revolt of the Scotch against Mary Stuart, the Puritan Revolution in England, and in part the American and the French Revolutions.

<sup>33</sup>Calvin, op. cit., IV. 20, 32.



dous influence on the shaping of the economic order, the rise of capitalism. Troeltsch is led to say of Calvinism: "It is the only form of Christian social doctrine which accepts the basis of the modern economic situation without reserve."<sup>34</sup>

But to come back to the relationship of the Church to the State. The Calvinistic attitude to the State flows from its conception of the Church.

The Church "is subject to no civil authority," and it has the right and the duty to give direction to its members through its discipline in all matters of morality, private and public, and to demand that the State should obey the law of God. Since the law of God is given, not only to bring men to repentance, but also to restrain the wicked, and (tertius usus legis) to reveal the Will of God to believers, the Reformed Church seeks in the Bible the principles according to which the social and political order should be organized. Thus the Reformed faith has always had a strong sense of its mission in public life, and has in many countries become a force of social and political renewal and transformation.<sup>35</sup>

Calvinism, it has been said, always concerns itself

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<sup>34</sup>Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), II, 647.

<sup>35</sup>W. A. Visser 't Hooft and J. H. Oldham, The Church and its Function in Society (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1937), pp. 49-50. Compare also "The Smith Report" titled "Relations between Church and State," which was given in 1962 to the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. It has provoked much discussion because of its general thrust to secularize the government and its institutions, though it encourages the Church to use the coercive power of the State to establish the Christian ethic. Discussed by J. Marcellus Kik, "Church and State," Christianity Today, VII (April 26, 1963), 18ff.



with the State, makes demands on the State in the name of God and religion, and is ever ready to offer advice to the State. Note here that the general theological justification for the intrusion into secular spheres on the part of the Church is the sovereignty and the Lordship of Christ. The last fifty years have seen such an intrusion and intervention in political and economic affairs by the now defunct Federal Council of Churches and now by the National Council of Churches, its successor.<sup>36</sup> In this respect the social thrust of Calvinism is similar to that of Roman Catholicism.

The Reformed piety has been characterized as activistic. It is a piety of compulsion, man must fear and glorify the sovereign Lord in every aspect of life. Its ethical system is built around nomos, law. Not the happiness of the individual, nor the good of society, but the doing of the will of God for His glory is basically the center of Calvin's ethical system.

The influence of the United States in the world today makes its origins a matter of great interest. While it is easy to point to examples of Calvinistic influence on Church and State in modern America, there are those who maintain that the very origins reveal one of the most

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<sup>36</sup>J. Marcellus Kik, Church and State in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1962), pp. 10ff.



spectacular triumphs of Calvinism. By the time of the War of Independence two million of the three million inhabitants of the thirteen states were of Calvinistic stock.<sup>37</sup>

There were five main emigrating streams that brought Calvinism to this continent. The Pilgrim and Puritan was the first in order of time and importance. The second emigrating stream was the Dutch Reformed (Reformed Church of America), responsible for the settlement of New York. The third was the French Huguenot, which deposited its representatives in the Middle and Southern Colonies. The fourth, the German Reformed, settled for the most part in the Middle Colonies. The fifth stream carried the Scotch-Irish into the Middle and Southern Colonies. In view of the fact that two-thirds of the total population of our country in 1776 was at least nominally Calvinistic, it is logical to say that the American theological scene was dominated by Calvinism.<sup>38</sup>

Our interest is in the first emigrating stream that brought the Puritans here to establish a Bible State, their Kingdom of God, a Zion which their leaders hoped would endure for all times. They had come to America in obedience

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<sup>37</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica. Edition XIV. Vol. XVIII, p. 447.

<sup>38</sup>John H. Bratt, The Rise and Development of Calvinism (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959), pp. 113-133.



to the Lord's direct commands and here the Bible Commonwealth of their dreams found its truest expression.

As Wertenbaker says:

it is to New England we must turn if we are to study the true Puritan State with all its distinctive features--congregations whose autonomy was derived from a covenant with God, a civil government in which only Church members participated, an educational system designed to buttress the orthodox religion, a rigid code of morals, the suppression of heresy. In fact, New England may be considered a laboratory of Puritan civilization.<sup>39</sup>

The Puritans came to America to carry out their own religious ideals unhampered both in Church and State, both Church and State working together to create "a little model of the glorious kingdom of Christ on earth." Suffrage was granted only to members of the Church. Congregationalism was in reality the state religion in the New England colonies and covenanting was all-important.

What did social covenanting imply? The courthouse and the church was erected together in the public square as the symbol of the close integration of Church and State, the Church and the civil life. The New Haven Puritans expressed it thus in 1639:

That the Scriptures do hold forth a perfect rule for the direction and government of all men in all duties which they are to perform to God and man as well in the government of the family and commonwealth as in

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<sup>39</sup>Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, The Puritan Oligarchy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 339.



the matters of the Church.<sup>40</sup>

The preceding statement certainly embodies the ideals of Calvin's theocracy. Before the end of the seventeenth century, however, the Puritan experiment failed, the Puritan Kingdom fell. Wertenbaker feels that it fell, because the temple was built on the sands of human nature. It was not so much the pillars as the sand that caused the trouble.

It was from beneath that came the succession of shocks which threatened the whole structure--the Roger William heresy, the Anne Hutchinson heresy, the Child petition, the Halfway Covenant, the demand for a wider franchise, the liberalizing of Harvard, the defeat of the clergy and magistrates in the witchcraft prosecutions, the growing laxness of morals.<sup>41</sup>

Though the New England Puritans were much more directly influenced by such English Calvinists as William Ames, John Preston, and Richard Baxter than by Calvin himself, yet, even at third hand, they did not deviate widely from Calvin's fundamental positions.

One must, of course, distinguish between the Pilgrims and the Builders of the Bay Colony. Davies says of the Pilgrims, who appear in a more favorable light:

The most distinctive single contribution of Puritan thought to the commonwealth concept was the idea of the compact, or contract, between ruler and ruled, between God and his children. This idea developed

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<sup>40</sup>F. L. Fagley, Congregational Churches (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1925), p. 13. W. W. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), I, 81-115.

<sup>41</sup>Wertenbaker, op. cit., p. 342.



out of the constant effort of the Puritan theologians to substitute a rule of freedom for the old rule of compulsion. In place of an order of inexorable law the theologians of the new faith, true to their role of heralds of a new day of freedom for Western man, strove to establish an order founded upon voluntary choice--that is to say, upon the deliberate assumption of obligation, upon compacts freely entered into. In other words, they strove to bring their conception of civil government into harmony with their view of the Christian religion and to make both hinge upon the sovereign determination of free wills.<sup>42</sup>

This is what Niebuhr means when he says in general that they strove "to erect the sovereignty of men alongside the sovereignty of God."<sup>43</sup>

But what about the Bay colonists? Here was the rule of the oligarchy, here was no tolerance. No one can deny their tyrannical proceedings. Davies says: "John Cotton and his fellow ministers may be said to have out-Calvined even Calvin in the thoroughness with which they applied his theocratic principle."<sup>44</sup> Yet he feels that there is something to be said for their opposition to the pretensions of privilege, democracy's worst enemy. He concludes:

So the answer to "Massachusetts: Commonwealth or Tyranny?" is, while unquestionably for a space of time its government bore the likeness of a tyranny, equally unquestionably the foundations of a free commonwealth were, even during that time, being laid

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<sup>42</sup>A. Mervyn Davies, Foundations of American Freedom (New York: Abingdon Press, 1955), pp. 185-186.

<sup>43</sup>H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937), p. 60.

<sup>44</sup>Davies, op. cit., p. 200.



by the founding fathers. The tyranny ran its course. The commonwealth remained.<sup>45</sup>

### Comparison and Summary

The world and the church. The Messianic or mediatorial Kingdom of Christ is to be distinguished from the temporal or secular kingdoms. There is often a tension between the two. Satan invades the kosmos, so that it does not set forth the glory of God. On the other hand we know that no territory in the universe is exempt from the dominion of Christ, which extends over all. Though we speak of the Kingdom of Power, the Kingdom of Grace, and the Kingdom of Glory, yet these realms form a unit inasmuch as they are under one and the same Lord. As the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Christ, enters into the hearts of men, the citizens of the Kingdom of heaven have the charge to witness to and to extend the Kingdom.

Historical background. The Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic branches of Christendom warn against the danger of identifying the State with the Kingdom of God. In Reformation times people thought in terms of the Corpus Christianum, the modern idea of the State as an autonomous entity was foreign to them. Rome, of course, conceived of the Corpus Christianum as being under the leadership of the Pope, but the Protestant reformers rejected this.

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 203.



Another threat was in the rising of the absolute state, which forced the Churches to take a position.

Secular kingdoms. Roman Catholic, and Calvinistic Churches viewed civil government as finding its source in the sovereign will of God, a creation order, whether the government was a monarchy, oligarchy, or democracy. Civil rule applies to all citizens. Though the shades of political opinion might be manifold, the good of society was considered to be the end of government and the means to achieve it was to strive for law and order. The Churches themselves were influenced by the actions, the rise and wane of the secular kingdoms. On the other hand, the Churches made contributions to the society in which they existed. The Puritans, for example, sought to create "a little model of the glorious kingdom of Christ on earth." The covenant idea was significant for the development of America.

Relationship of Church and State. There are two authorities, two domains, two kingdoms. Matthew twenty-two reminds us that it is not God or Caesar, but rather God and Caesar without blurring the distinction between the two kingdoms. In principle the Roman Church opposes Church and State separation, since the Catholic plan is a close union of the State with the Church, while the Protestant reformers maintained the sovereignty of each in its sphere. The three branches of Christendom treated in this thesis



stand for a free Church and would deny the authority of the State over the Church. The Roman Church stands for the supremacy of the spiritual over the secular, for ecclesiocracy. Calvinism also stands for church independence, in addition for a bibliocracy which substitutes the Bible as a law-book for the Pope and which historically sought to realize its ideals in the Bible Commonwealth of Geneva and New England. Lutheranism theoretically stands for the sovereignty of Church and State in their several spheres, but succumbed to a sort of Erastianism in Germany.

Obligations of Church and State. What service can the State render to God's Kingdom? The Roman Church works resolutely to realize its claim of being recognized as the State church, the true religion. Calvin differs from Luther, since Calvin (as Melanchthon) holds that civil government is responsible not only for enforcing the second table but also the first table of the Law. What service can the Church render to the State? Christ's Kingdom is not of this world. Hence, the Church has no divine social blueprint for a social order. The Anabaptist position of withdrawal from the world was rejected by all. The Roman and the Calvinistic Churches have gone to the other extreme: invasion of the secular order with social programs. Lutheran theology recognizes the duty of the Church to witness to the Moral Law, but holds that the Church's essential contribution to society lies in the Gospel of the Atonement.



Piety. The Roman Catholic and Reformed piety tend to be a piety of compulsion, oriented in the Law. Lutheran piety is oriented in the Gospel, its mainspring is grateful service. In Lutheranism good works are the joyful evidence of the regnum dei, in Reformed and Roman Catholic piety the evidence of God's sovereignty. Politically Roman Catholics and the Reformed have been characterized as activistic, the Lutherans as quietistic.

The concept of the Kingdom of God, as it has been understood, is common to all periods of our Lord's teaching. The concept of the Church emerges only at two special points of His ministry as recorded in Matt. 16:18 and 18:17. In Matthew sixteen the concept of the Church is most closely related to the Kingdom and therefore the passage is of prime importance for our purpose.

Jesus clearly states in this passage that He considers Himself to be the builder of His Church: "I will build My Church." His Lord stresses that the Church is neither merely nor in part the work of man, but wholly God's work and product. The history of the Kingdom of God and the history of the Church is the history of Christ's redemptive work.

What does Jesus build? He says: "I will build My Church." He explicitly places the Church over against

<sup>1</sup>Psalm 104:3; 1 Peter 2:12-13.



## CHAPTER V

### BASILEIA CHRISTOU AND THE TASK OF THE CHURCH

#### Exegetical Notes

The Kingdom of God is primarily a soteriological concept: the gracious rule of God, which is manifested in the person and work of Christ and which creates a people over whom He reigns. The concept of the Kingdom, it has been mentioned, is common to all periods of our Lord's teaching. The concept of the Church emerges only at two special points of His ministry as recorded in Matt. 16:18 and 18:17. In Matthew sixteen the concept of the Church is most closely related to the Kingdom and therefore the passage is of prime importance for our purpose.

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What does Jesus build? He says: "I will build My Church." He evidently places this Church over against

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<sup>1</sup>Psalm 100:3; 1 Peter 2:9-10.



another, to which this designation does not apply: the Qahal and 'Edah of Israel, the present Jewish church which does not recognize Him. The Jewish Messianic expectation includes the conception of a Messianic community, but the people of God are no longer identical with the Jewish nation. The Savior has the new covenant in mind, the new building. Christ will lay the foundation now and on this foundation He will build His Church. As Oscar Cullmann says, ecclesiology is here solidly anchored in Christology.<sup>2</sup>

How is this Church to be built? This is exemplified in the case of the apostles. By His gracious call He builds His Church. Jesus says: "My sheep hear My voice."<sup>3</sup> He calls by Word and Sacrament. By them the gracious rule begins in the hearts of men. By them they become citizens of the Kingdom and confess Christ's holy name. The means or instrument which God employs to gather and preserve the Church is the Gospel in all its forms (Word and Sacrament), because only the Gospel creates and sustains saving faith.<sup>4</sup>

That His Church may serve Him effectively and faithfully, the Lord entrusts her with the means of grace. Christ says: "I will build My Church." He also says to Peter: "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of

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<sup>2</sup>Oscar Cullmann, Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1953), p. 189.

<sup>3</sup>John 10:27.

<sup>4</sup>Rom. 10:17; 1 Peter 1:23-25.



heaven." Christ not only chooses His disciples but He also gives them a mission. Christ is the master of the house, who has the keys to the Kingdom of heaven, with which to open to those who come in. For Jesus entrance into the Kingdom is closely connected with the forgiveness of sins. Gospel and Sacrament are the very means by which the Lord conveys the forgiveness of sins, the means of grace. Peter becomes a steward of them. In fact, all the apostles do.<sup>5</sup> In fact, the Church is made the custodian, the function of the Church is to administer this trust. Accordingly the Church is His special creation. For her building, for her edification, the Lord has made all the necessary arrangements, supplied the means, and outlined the task.

As a Master-builder Jesus lays a proper foundation. Whom or what does Jesus mean when He says that upon the rock the new people of God, the Church, will be built? Cullmann says:

We shall see that in the entire New Testament the illustration of the foundation, which indeed is identical in meaning with that of the rock, always designates the unique apostolic function, which is chronologically possible only at the beginning of the building; see Ephesians 2:20; Romans 15:20; 1 Corinthians 3:10; Galatians 2:9; Revelation 21:14,19. In Matthew 16:18 Peter is addressed in his unrepeatable apostolic capacity.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Matt. 18:18.

<sup>6</sup>Cullmann, op. cit., p. 209.



The apostolic office is a unique office not to be repeated. Peter may have been the first to be invested with it, but the entire New Testament testifies that Peter shares this fundamental function with the other apostles.<sup>7</sup> The first Christians considered the apostles to be the foundation of the Church, truly a unique foundation, which continues to support the structure of the Church. Without the apostles we would have no New Testament, no knowledge of Christ.

Christ Himself laid this foundation and it was a foundation upon Himself, for He is the cornerstone of the structure. The unique relation of the apostles to the Church is brought out in John 17:20: "those who believe through their word." Hence, the only kind of real apostolic succession is the entire Church of the believers following the apostles, continuing in the apostolic doctrine. As Cullmann says: "Every Christian Church should be 'ecclesia catholica et apostolica,' a catholic and apostolic Church. A Church that is not apostolic is no longer a Christian Church."<sup>8</sup>

Christ provides this assurance and this comfort when He also says of His Church: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The foundation which Jesus lays is a foundation which will bear the superstructure and which will mean victory over death, over all His enemies.

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<sup>7</sup>Eph. 2:20.

<sup>8</sup>Cullmann, op. cit., p. 222.



## Roman Catholic Views on the Role of the Church

The Roman Church is very much concerned with its mission in the contemporary world. Among the most significant events affecting the Catholicity of the Roman Church are the Encyclical Fidei Donum and the Ecumenical Council summoned by John XXIII and now by Paul VI.

Pius XII's encyclical Fidei Donum, while calling attention to the evangelization of Africa, reminded the bishops of the reality of the apostolic succession and of their collegiate responsibility in communion with the Vicar of Christ for the Christianization of the world. "Although each bishop is the pastor properly speaking only of that portion of the flock entrusted to his care, yet in his capacity as a legitimate successor of the apostles by divine institution, he is responsible for the apostolic mission of the Church."<sup>9</sup>

Father Cassilly comments on Matthew 16, which is basic to Rome's view of the function of the Church:

Thus He [Christ] compares His Church to a building built on a rock foundation, intending thereby to show that what a foundation is to a building Peter is to His Church. Now what does a foundation do for a building? It holds it up, supports it, keeps it together, preserves it. And what is it that supports, holds together, and preserves a society? It is the principle of authority which resides in the head. Christ, then, in these solemn words promised to invest Peter with the principle of authority in the Church, that is, to make him its head and governing power.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Louis and André Rétif, The Church's Mission in the World. Vol. 102 of the Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1962), p. 16.

<sup>10</sup>Lewis W. Spitz, "Roma Semper Eadem," Concordia Theological Monthly, XIX (November 1948), 802-803.



He then states that the Pope is Peter's successor. The Catholic Church is the clergy. Textbooks on Roman Catholic dogma state in effect that Christ bestowed upon the apostles and their successors the threefold authority: to teach (prophetic office), to administer the sacraments (priestly office), and to rule (the pastoral, or shepherd, office).

The terms magisterium and ministerium are also frequently employed, the former embracing the teaching and ruling functions of the clergy, and the second the administration of the sacraments, in other terms, the power of order and jurisdiction. This twofold classification seems to have been employed at the time of the Reformation.<sup>11</sup>

In respect to the magisterium there are two ways in which the infallible teaching of the Church is given: the extraordinary (when the Pope speaks ex cathedra) and the ordinary magisterium.<sup>12</sup>

That which constitutes the Church, the hierarchy, also indicates its function: the hierarchy is to rule, to exercise the magisterium and the ministerium, even as the Church came into being by divine authority. The basileia of Christ is the basileia of the hierarchy. The rule of

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<sup>11</sup>Fred E. Mayer, The Religious Bodies of America (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), p. 96.

<sup>12</sup>Extended treatment is to be found in André de Bovis, What is the Church (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1961), pp. 93-126.



the Pope is absolute.<sup>13</sup> To rule is the prerogative of the hierarchy, to obey the role of the laity, the lay apostolate. Since Christ is viewed basically as the Law-giver and the Gospel as the law, the foundation of the whole ecclesiastical structure is the rule of the Law rather than the Gospel.

What is the goal of the Kingdom? Here we must keep in mind again the Roman Catholic incarnational concept of the Church, according to which the Church fulfils its mission of giving permanence to the work of redemption and of incorporating men into the body of Christ, by handing on what it has received from Christ.

By the Catholic "incarnational" concept of the Church we mean that Christ, who in his manhood is "the one Mediator between God and man" (1 Tim. 2:5), in every age continues that mediation and extends the saving work of his Incarnation through his Church, his Mystical Body in which he dwells and which he invests with his own powers. When his visible presence was withdrawn at the Ascension his sovereign sway to bring men surely to God did not cease on earth. In and through his Church, which is animated by the Holy Spirit, which is founded upon its apostolic hierarchy, and which has its centre of unity and strength in the see of Peter, Christ continues for all time to exercise his threefold office of teaching, ruling and sanctifying mankind. By his office of teaching he declares God's truth infallibly to men through his Church. By

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<sup>13</sup>Jesuits played an important part in the struggle for papal absolutism. The bureaucracy of the Vatican is, thus far, overwhelmingly and safely Italian and imbued with the traditions of conservative Italian clericalism. The second session of Vatican II is scheduled to discuss the nature of the Church and there are some indications that there may be some retreat from the position of papal infallibility and greater pressure for "home rule."



his office of ruling the Good Shepherd governs and guides his flock through his Church in their all-important duty of putting God's will into practice in their lives. By his office of sanctification he transmits to men through his Church and her sacraments that grace which is to energize their free ascent to God and which, transforming them by a share of the divine life, is to prepare them for their eternal union with God. This belief implies as a necessary corollary that Christ's Church, as the organ of his authority, must speak with one authoritative voice, must have one rule and obedience, must have one communion. It must be surely recognizable. He founded his new Kingdom of God on earth as a city set on a hill, to be always visible, always one and undivided, always holy, although carrying its divine treasure in earthen vessels which are often soiled and sometimes crack and break.<sup>14</sup>

The objective of the Papacy is to rule in the Church and in the world. Of the sacramental action of the Church, Karl Adam says: "The purpose of the Church is the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the world, and therefore, it is the sanctification of men."<sup>15</sup> He dwells on the educative action of the Church and says:

According to the Catholic conception of justification the redemptive function of the Church does not consist only in bringing the Kingdom of God to man, but also in bringing man to the Kingdom of God, i.e., in educating his moral will, by preaching and discipline, for Christ and His grace, and in establishing him ever more and more firmly in this grace.<sup>16</sup>

The Church is the instrument to bring the elect to the

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<sup>14</sup>Francis Clark, "Trends in Ecumenical Ecclesiology," The Heythrop Journal, IV (January 1963), 26-27.

<sup>15</sup>Karl Adam, The Spirit of Catholicism (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1954), p. 187.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 205.



ultimate union with God through progressive sanctification. The function of the Church is to enable individual souls to reach perfection, eternal life, or, stated in collective terms, to bring all mankind back to God by the truth of the same faith, the holiness of the same law, and the power of the same means of grace.

Since Roman theology has identified its Church as the Kingdom of God, there is intense preoccupation with its own institution. The Church is not only means but an end in itself. The task of the Roman Church is to build the Kingdom, i.e., to maintain and extend the Roman Church universally, to maintain and strengthen its position in the modern world.<sup>17</sup> This is the frank purpose of its propaganda for the faith, of its vast mission enterprises, its organizational efforts and diplomacy.

The other function of the Church is to build a Christian world order under the aegis of the hierarchy. The Church must carry forward the work of the Redeemer. Spokesmen for Rome say, that they do not aim to foist any particular social order on mankind. Yet the Christian world order Rome envisions is in many respects a reflection of the Corpus Christianum under the leadership of the Pope. Pius XI states it this way:

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<sup>17</sup>Encyclical Quas Primas. See (12) "the Catholic Church, which is the kingdom of Christ on earth, destined to be spread among all men and all nations."



above all, when the Church itself is raised to that degree of dignity in which it was constituted by its Creator, a perfect society, teacher and leader of all other societies, in such a way, of course, as not to diminish their power--for all in their own order are legitimate--but opportunely to perfect them as grace perfects nature, so that in very truth those societies may be of great help to man for the attainment of his supreme end, eternal happiness, and may bring happiness too and prosperity in this mortal life. From this it is seen that there is no peace of Christ save in the reign of Christ, and that there is no surer way of seeking to establish peace than by installing the reign of Christ.<sup>18</sup>

As the Church was the seat of culture in the Middle Ages, so today it still regards itself as the custodian of Christian civilization and culture. Its objective is to express Divine Law, the laws of the Kingdom, in an all-embracing code for modern civilization.

What are the means to bring in the Kingdom? A person is impressed by the deep seriousness and devotion with which the Roman Church views her Mission in an age when the Church is subjected to many attacks. A technical definition of the Church's Mission states:

it is that spiritual activity which, originating in the Trinitarian processes, consists in preaching the Gospel to non-Christians and in establishing among them in an indigenous and stable fashion the entire Christian economy for the sake of their own salvation, the full development of the Mystical Body and the glory of the Father through the Son in the Spirit.<sup>19</sup>

The divinely ordained means for establishing the Kingdom of Christ in the hearts of men is the Gospel of the Kingdom,

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<sup>18</sup>Encyclical Ubi Arcano (34).

<sup>19</sup>Louis and André Retif, op. cit., pp. 89-90.



but this Gospel has been converted into a new law. In substance the Law stands at the center of Roman Catholic theology and this is basically the means employed to bring in the Kingdom, for establishing God's rule in every department of life.

This is true of the Church's rule of herself. She impresses on her children the duty of obedience.

This is true of the Church's effort to maintain her position in Christendom, in the various national States, and in the modern world. Rome's fundamental principles make it impossible for her to enter upon ecumenical relations except on her own terms: she regards no other church as her equal. She alone has divine authority. Logically Pius XI could protest.

We refer to the plague of secularism. . . . The empire of Christ over all nations was rejected. The right which the Church has from Christ Himself to teach mankind, to make laws, to govern peoples in all that pertains to their eternal salvation, that right was denied. Then gradually the religion of Christ came to be likened to false religions and to be placed ignominiously on the same level with them. It was then put under the power of the State and tolerated more or less at the whim of princes and rulers.<sup>20</sup>

Since the Roman Church as the vehicle of the divine will is in essence a legal institution, it does not hesitate to use diplomacy, coercion, temporal power, and political

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<sup>20</sup>Encyclical Quas Primas (23).



pressure as a means of grace to bring in the Kingdom.<sup>21</sup>

The Law is prominent in Rome's efforts to Christianize the social order. Since Rome regards herself as the only depository of truth, she concludes that all men must submit themselves to the teachings and to the commandments of the Church. If a person reads the Laws established by the councils and the Roman Pontiff and the encyclicals of the Popes,<sup>22</sup> it becomes clear that the Pontiffs assume without qualification that it is in their province to speak with divine authority on social problems and ethics. Pius XI says:

Lastly, the Lord Jesus reigns in civil society when the highest honor is given in it to God . . . ; above all, when the Church itself is raised to that degree of dignity in which it was constituted by its Creator, a perfect society, teacher and leader of all other societies.<sup>23</sup>

Professor Fred E. Mayer says:

The Papacy claims to control every area of human behavior, not only of its own members, but of non-Catholics as well. This is very evident from recent encyclicals on various social problems. The presumptuous claims of the Roman Catholic Church are becoming evident particularly in two recent movements: Catholic Action and Neo-Thomism. Catholic Action is a lay organization under the control of the priesthood.

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<sup>21</sup>Both history and a description of the Papal Court would testify to this, or the activities of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, headquarters in Washington, D. C. Seasoned lobbyists in priestly garb remind the legislator how the Roman Church feels.

<sup>22</sup>Especially the encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI.

<sup>23</sup>Pius XI in Ubi Arcano (34).



Its purpose is not only to retain its members, but primarily to influence all men to adopt the Roman Catholic pattern for social behavior. The Roman Catholic ideals on education, marriage, business, recreation, politics, are to be made the standard of morals for all men. Burton Confrey says: "If Catholics will but follow the teaching of the Church, practicing their religion publicly as well as privately, then instead of two Americas, the one small and Catholic, the other large and pagan, . . . we shall have the unchanging morality of the Catholic Church accepted more widely as the standard of our country." We shall readily admit that Rome's social program has many fine points from a purely moral viewpoint. But Rome claims that as the bearer of "both swords" the responsibility for the spiritual, moral, and temporal welfare of all men rests with the Pope. Neo-Thomism is a Roman Catholic philosophy. The advocates of this philosophy --which incidentally is creeping into some of our American universities--hold that all human activity, industry, politics, education, business, art, leisure, philosophy, must be placed into the service of the church, that is, the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>24</sup>

How Rome looks at herself and how she delineates the function of the Church has a direct influence on her cultus, her educational policies, her relationship to society and her organization. To achieve her objectives the Church is highly organized along hierarchical lines and from an administrative viewpoint has received high praise in management studies.

Such organization is both necessary to control her membership and to make advances in the modern world. Dr. Lewis W. Spitz comments on the sacramental and sacerdotal

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<sup>24</sup>Fred E. Mayer, "The Kingdom of God According to the New Testament," Proceedings of the Twenty-fifth Convention of Texas District (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1942), Vol. 1942 (No. 7), 30-31.



system of Rome and the tremendous hold on the laity which it gives to the priest.

This fact has far-reaching political implications. For Rome the Church is a kingdom of this world with a complete system of rulers--all under the all-powerful and infallible pope as the supreme potentate. The sacramental system--not to overlook the confessional box--gives her an internal solidarity for which any other totalitarian state might envy her. This solidarity gives her a measure of political power even in Protestant countries quite in excess of her numerical strength.<sup>25</sup>

The bureaucracy of Rome at its capital, the Vatican, is huge, centralized, and tightly controlled. The Roman Curia consists of the Pope, the Sacred College of Cardinals,<sup>26</sup> twelve Congregations, three Tribunals, and five Offices. It is, as one Catholic writer has said, "the most conservative of all governments," and it rules its subjects with the pomp and pageantry of the Middle Ages. In its mission to Romanize America three things deserve special watching: the activities of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, Catholic Action or the Lay apostolate, and Neo-Thomism.

#### Lutheran Views on the Role of the Church

Christ is the Sovereign over all, but Head of the Christian Church by virtue of His redemptive work. The Church is the product of His gracious rule, lives under His

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<sup>25</sup>Spitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 819-820.

<sup>26</sup>Number of Cardinals fluctuates. Maximum number was seventy. In recent years number rose to eighty-seven, then fell to eighty-two.



gracious rule, and as His Body is charged to extend that gracious rule in the hearts of men. Hence, the function of the Church is centered in His gracious rule and in this respect the Church is both receptive (lives, is nourished by His gracious rule) and active (shares that gracious rule with others). No matter how it may be expressed, the function of the Church essentially is to extend Christ's gracious rule.<sup>27</sup>

Hence, Luther earnestly maintained that the Church is a communio, a kingdom "which is not maintained and built up by human words and traditions, but by the Gospel."<sup>28</sup>

According to Luther:

The gospel and its proclamation constitute the true church, not popes or bishops, or the pomp of a system that is the very denial of the truths of God's redemption. The gospel, not papal ban or interdict or the dicta of canon law, is the sole scepter of Christ's reign in his Church. It is by the Word of the gospel: the living Word as spoken by its heralds, the written Word as contained in Holy Writ, the attested Word mediated through the Holy Spirit that men are called to repentance, and through it they come to saving faith and are made members of Christ's church.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Scripture uses expressions like these: Extend the borders of God's Kingdom, Matt. 4:23. Edify the Body of Christ, Eph. 4:12; 1 Cor. 14:12. Nourish the fellowship, 1 John 1:3. Prepare the Bride of Christ, 2 Cor. 11:2; John 3:28, 29; Eph. 5:25f. Administer the treasures won by Christ, Eph. 1:3; 2:6, 7, and entrusted to her, Matt. 16:19; 1 Peter 2:9.

<sup>28</sup>Luther, Weimar Ausgabe, XIV, 415.

<sup>29</sup>William A. Mueller, Church and State in Luther and Calvin (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1954), p. 8.



Lutheran theology insists that an understanding of the true nature and function of the Church is necessary to establish and extend Christ's Kingdom and to keep the Church from becoming engrossed in secularistic programs and setting up elaborate organizations which actually do not advance Christ's gracious rule in the hearts of men. The gracious rule of Christ is revealed in "the keys of the Kingdom" given to the Church.

Over against the hierarchal claims of Rome Luther stressed the doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers (there are no ranks in the Church).<sup>30</sup> Over against the enthusiasts he stressed the public ministry, instituted by God for the public and official exercise of this office. Luther said on Matt. 18:15-20:

Oh, that this passage (Matt. 18:15-20) were not in the Gospel. That would be a good thing for the pope! For here Christ gives the keys to the entire communion and not to Saint Peter. And here belongs also that same passage, Matt. 16:18,19, where He gave Saint Peter the keys as representing the entire communion. For in this 18th chapter the Lord Himself explains what He meant when in chapter 16 He gave the keys to the person of Saint Peter. They are given to all Christians, not to the person of Saint Peter.<sup>31</sup>

If the gracious rule of Jesus vitalizes, prepares, and equips the citizens of the Kingdom for a life of service,

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<sup>30</sup>The priesthood of believers has too often been given an individualistic interpretation, neglecting the aspect of community. See Anders Nygren, editor, This is the Church (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1952), pp. 62ff.

<sup>31</sup>Martin Luther, Saemtliche Schriften (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1885), XIX, 858 (100).



the Church is duty-bound to function as a guide to its members in sanctification. The Gospel of Christ is not a Social Gospel, but this Gospel has social implications.

The goal of the Kingdom of Christ is none other than the establishment and extension of the gracious rule of Christ in the hearts of men everywhere. With that goal constantly before it the Church must evangelize the world. In Lutheran theology the Kingdom of God as a realm is identified as the Una Sancta. This Una Sancta is the creation of the gracious rule of Christ and it is also correct to say that the goal of all Kingdom work should be the building of the Una Sancta.

The principal task, the essential task of the Church, is to establish Christ's spiritual Kingdom by Gospel-preaching and the sacraments. In contrast to the institutionalism of Rome and the subjectivism of much of Protestantism (the Church as a Verein for the cultivation of piety) this is a much needed accent in the ecumenical movement. Confessional Lutheranism has a vital contribution to make for the Christian reunion of Christendom.<sup>32</sup>

What should the relation of the Church to society be? No blueprint for a New Testament State or social order has been supplied by the King. The King has stated, that His Kingdom is not of this world. By removing earthly ambition

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<sup>32</sup>Th. Engelder, "The Reunion of Christendom," Concordia Theological Monthly, XIV (December 1943), 840-852.



in the form of an earthly kingdom, the King has deepened and widened the thrust of the Church. The citizens of Christ's Kingdom are like a colony (the picture in Philippians) of the heavenly empire planted here to make new conquests for their Lord with the spiritual weapons of warfare He has supplied. From battle to battle the Church militant will move on until the Church becomes the Church Triumphant.<sup>33</sup>

The Gospel is the constitutive element in the Church and the Gospel is determinative as well for the proper functioning of the Church in the world. The essential function of the Church in the world is to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, for it is by these means alone that the Kingdom is established. The Gospel alone can destroy the tyranny of Satan. By the Gospel alone we are brought into God's Kingdom and by grace live under Christ. Freely we have received and freely we are to give. The King has given "the keys of the Kingdom" to us as His co-regents. He has deigned to make us His ambassadors. To establish and extend the Kingdom through the Gospel is more glorious than the work of any diplomat, statesman, or earthly king.

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<sup>33</sup>As Luther did, so the Lutheran Church today also speaks in the realm of social ethics. This is a preaching of the Law, not a preaching of the Gospel. See The Abiding Word (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), I, 505-506.



If the Lutheran Church is to be true to the King, then the Gospel must remain central in its mission, its preaching, and its theology. Hence, the proper distinction between Law and Gospel must be observed. As the Church dare not preach the Gospel alone, so it must not preach the Law alone. For if the Church were to preach the Law as an end in itself, it would be operating in the area of natural theology. It would have no new message for the world. Its proclamation of the Law would either degenerate into shallow moralism, the sores of human society would receive ineffective treatment, or the patient would be driven by the comfortless judgments of the Law into hopeless despair. The same results are achieved when the Gospel is turned into a new Law and Christ into a new Lawgiver.

If the Law is central, the Church logically becomes engrossed in a secularistic program in which the redeeming Christ and His gracious rule has little or no part. The Church dare never confine itself to preaching the Law alone. A proper use of the Law must be made. Accordingly the Church will also refrain from using the State with its laws and means of coercion as a subsidiary means of grace.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, preaching the Gospel only leads to quietism. Luther's slogan is apropos: "We are saved by faith alone but faith is never alone."

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<sup>34</sup>Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), III, 178ff., 416.



In Lutheranism Law and Gospel are always opposed to each other; the Law always condemns, its chief purpose is to be a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.<sup>35</sup> Law and Gospel are viewed Christologically and soteriologically, so that the Gospel may remain central in the Church's mission.

The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper play a very important part, by divine institution, in the building of the Kingdom. Consequently much space is devoted in Lutheran theology to the means of grace, which, too, are Gospel-centered.<sup>36</sup>

The Lutheran view of the nature and the function of the Church has also shaped its church polity, its cultus, and its organization. In Lutheran theology and practice the office of the ministry is an office of service, not a special estate. It recognizes that the work of the Church can be hindered by a harmful ecclesiasticizing of the Church, so that the real business of the Church becomes primarily an affair of interest of the clergy, the pastors and theologians, rather than the concern of the whole church joyfully serving the Redeemer.

The principle governing church polity is simply that

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<sup>35</sup>Fred E. Mayer, "The Function of the Law in Christian Preaching," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXI (February 1950), 123-129. This is a major issue between Reformed and Lutheran theology.

<sup>36</sup>Pieper, op. cit.



the highest authority rests with the Christians. The manner in which this authority is executed is considered of secondary importance, since the only concern in determining church polity is whether the congregation is properly served with Word and Sacrament. Whether the episcopal, representative, or congregational form of church government is adopted is of human right.<sup>37</sup> The Church in the strict sense is not an earthly monarchy under a visible head, but a communion of saints under Christ, the King, whose highest law for faith and life is the Holy Scriptures.

Lutheran cultus is both sacramental and sacrificial. The governing principle likewise here is that cultus must serve the proclamation of the Gospel, the extension of "the Kingdom of heaven."

The Kingdom of Glory extends the Kingdom of Grace into eternity. Whether we speak of the Kingdom of Power, the Kingdom of Grace, or the Kingdom of Glory, Pieper reminds us that these realms form a unit, inasmuch as they are under one and the same Lord. In describing them for our catechumens and hearers he would have us "pull out all stops"--not our own stops--but "the rich diapason of Scripture." Everything in heaven and earth must serve the one purpose of gathering and preserving the Church. The kingdoms of this

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<sup>37</sup>Luther recognized the dangers both of state-churchism and false congregationalism, a misuse of the supremacy of the local congregation.



world are "the scaffolding used in the building of the Church."<sup>38</sup>

### Calvinistic Views on the Role of the Church

When Calvin transferred as a student to the University of Orleans in 1528, law replaced theology as his major field of interest and it appeared as though he was headed for a civil career rather than a church career. Schaff is of the opinion that

the study of jurisprudence sharpened his judgment, enlarged his knowledge of human nature, and was of great political benefit to him in the organization and administration of the church at Geneva.<sup>39</sup>

As Schaff suggests "it may also have increased his legalism and over-estimation of logical demonstration."<sup>40</sup> As a scholar Calvin valued reason and learning.

The Calvinistic view of the Kingdom and of the function of the Church are closely related. The royal rule of Christ is not primarily a gracious rule, but His sovereign rule. Christ is Lord of the Church because of His divine sovereignty, not primarily through His redemptive work. Hence, the Church is God's agency for implementing His sovereign rule.

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<sup>38</sup>Pieper, op. cit., II, 386-387.

<sup>39</sup>Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), VII, 306.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.



Calvin employs the maternal metaphor in the part of the Institutes which treats the Church.

Calvin believes that in her nurturing office as the mother the visible Church builds the body of Christ and makes it possible for Christians to be in fellowship with one another and with Christ. But in Calvin's view Christ is the Head of the Church, not primarily through His redemptive work, but chiefly because of His divine sovereignty. Christ does not, as Luther says, become my Lord. He is the Lord of all by His absolute power and majesty. He is the Lord of the Church, and we are all unprofitable servants. To maintain His sole sovereignty within the Church, Christ does not delegate ecclesiastical authority to a single person, but to many, each with a special gift, to exclude any ecclesiastical and hierarchal domination and to preserve unquestioned God's sovereignty.<sup>41</sup>

We have seen how Calvin interprets Matthew sixteen to exclude divine rule by the hierarchy (Christ is the foundation, the rock; Christ is the Head). Calvin, too, stressed the priesthood of all believers. He advances reasons, however, why God, in governing the Church, uses the ministry of men. God uses the ministers to declare His condescension, to train us to humility and obedience, to bind us to each other in mutual charity.

How is the Church to use the keys of the Kingdom?

Calvin finds Scriptural sanction for what is known as the presbyterian form of church government with its teaching and ruling elders established for the glory of God.

The function of the Church is to see to it that the

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<sup>41</sup>Fred E. Mayer, "The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel and the Terminology Visible and Invisible Church," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXV (March 1954), 183.



will of God is done, not only in its midst, but also in the world. The visible Church is the means through which God speaks to the world, God's mouthpiece, for if the majestic God would speak directly to the world, all men would be compelled to flee before Him. If the true Church possesses the keys of the Kingdom, if its main function is to interpret the Bible, then it must declare the will of God and compel all men to live according to the precepts of the Bible.

To the visible Church Christ has given the ministry, the oracles, and the ordinances of God for the perfecting of the saints. In the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) the visible Church is defined as the "kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation." This Confession furthermore states:

Unto this catholic visible Church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and doth by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto.<sup>42</sup>

A primary goal of Kingdom work is the extension of the visible Church. The visible Church is our mother. She is God's institution to develop us into spiritual manhood and the custodian to guard us from acts contrary to the glory of God. As a foster mother she builds the body of Christ

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<sup>42</sup>Westminster Confession of Faith, XXV, 3.



and makes it possible for Christians to be in fellowship with one another and with Christ. The appeal must necessarily be to join the visible institution and to join in its activities.

The emphasis is also on sanctification, on the Church as a disciplinary instrument for its own membership, but also as an instrument for the improving of society. Since God's rule is to be implemented in all areas of life, the Church must involve herself in social programs. Kingdom work is equated with the building of a Christian State or world order for the greater glory of God. The Church must be a conscience to society and must take an active part in the legislative program of the state. In Calvinistic theology the Church is expected to speak to the world by holding up to it in the name of Christ the Law of God as the only rule of life, for the Law stands at the center of Calvinistic theology. The remark has been made: "While Lutheranism tolerates the world Calvin sent out his followers to master it."<sup>43</sup>

Means for establishing the Kingdom are the Bible, the means of grace and as a sort of subsidiary means of grace,

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<sup>43</sup>A. Dakin, Calvinism (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946), p. 199. Calvinistic Churches in their historical development present a bewildering babel of voices as to what really constitutes the Kingdom of God: the Bible Commonwealth of the Puritans, the ethical kingdom of Religious Liberalism, and the Millenium of the Fundamentalists. See the appendices of this thesis.



the laws and coercion of the State. The sacraments are regarded as signs, as the confirmation of faith, and thus receive an entirely different treatment than in Romanism and Lutheranism. The Biblicism so basic in all of Calvin's thought (the belief in both the authority and the sufficiency of Scripture which did away with Tradition) logically led to bibliocracy and moralism.

The essential function of the Church is not only preaching the Gospel, but also the Law. The Reformed stress the "full" Word. The Law is not to be neglected, in fact, the Gospel is viewed as the source of law in society and state. The Church should see to it that the world obeys Christ's laws, which are contained in the Gospel, even now. Calvin made the third use of the Law its principal use. Reformed theologians have not hesitated to declare a theocracy or "Christocracy," to use the expression of the Reformed theologian, August Lang, and have placed before the church tasks with which the Church, as Lutheranism sees it, has nothing to do whatsoever.

Meeter, a Calvin student, holds that the Bible is the standard of human behavior not only for Christians, but for heathen as well. Following in the steps of Calvin, he holds that our democratic ideals are actually premised upon the Old Testament; that international law must be established on the foundation of the Bible and must recognize God as the sovereign in all domains of life. The Reformed Presbyterian Church goes so far as to refuse to vote under our Federal Constitution because the Trinne God is not mentioned in our Constitution. This, then, is nothing less



than an attempt to establish the kingdom of Christ through legislation.<sup>44</sup>

The State can only preach the Law, but the Law will never establish the Kingdom of God. Luther held that the State cannot and should not be ruled with the Word of God, the Gospel, but should be organized and ruled according to natural reason (common sense). The Augsburg Confession says: "For civil governments deal with other things than does the Gospel."<sup>45</sup>

Calvin's influence in the subsequent history of Reformed Church bodies is to be seen not only in their social ethics, their approach to social problems, but also in the shaping of Reformed theology, the organization of its ecclesiastical system, in education and in other ways. It is strange that none of the catechisms or confessions of faith Calvin helped to write are in use today, which may be a consequence of his Biblicism. One of the triumphs of his life was the founding of the Academy of Geneva in 1559. This seminary of Calvinism and the entire city as a model Christian Commonwealth was termed by John Knox "the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in earth since the

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<sup>44</sup>Fred E. Mayer, "The Kingdom of God According to the New Testament," Proceedings of the Twenty-fifth Convention of Texas District (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1942), Vol. 1942 (No. 7), 40.

<sup>45</sup>Augsburg Confession, XXVIII, 13, 11.



days of the Apostles."<sup>46</sup> The influence of this school was tremendous. The New England Puritans also displayed Calvin's love for learning. They laid more stress on schools than the rest of the colonists. Well known is also the fact that Thomas Jefferson, who was responsible for the establishment of the first real university in America, looked to Geneva for his model. All of this was a significant contribution to the development of America. Of Geneva it is said that Andreae was "astonished to find in that city a state of religion which came nearer to his ideal of a Christocracy than any community he had seen in his extensive travels, and even in his German fatherland."<sup>47</sup>

The Calvinistic system of church polity exerted great influence in the development of Protestantism. Schaff characterizes this system as follows:

1. The autonomy of the Church or its right of self-government under the sole headship of Christ.
2. The parity of the clergy as distinct from a jure divino hierarchy whether papal or prelatial. Book Four of the Institutes devotes much space to church government. Calvin's biblicism led to a presbyterian form of church government. The Ordonnances, the ecclesiastical constitution of Geneva, spell out the details.
3. The participation of the Christian laity in church government and discipline. In Roman Church the laity is passive.

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<sup>46</sup> Schaff, op. cit., VII, 518.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 518-519.



4. Strict discipline to be exercised jointly by ministers and lay-elders, with the consent of the whole congregation.
5. Union of Church and State on a theocratic basis, if possible, or separation, if necessary, to secure the purity and self-government of the Church.<sup>48</sup>

Calvinistic church polity was very much in evidence in New England. One of the major motives of the colonists was to discover a place in which "discipline out of the Word" could be practiced more freely than was possible in Old England. When they came to America, they brought with them a clear blueprint of the kind of church they intended to establish. This was not the episcopal form of Anglicanism, nor identical with either Brownism or Presbyterianism, but a middle-way version of Puritan ecclesiology or Congregationalism.

In explanation we must refer to the Burrage-Miller thesis,<sup>49</sup> a surprising turn in contemporary historical research into the origins of American Congregationalism, which maintains according to the research of Champlin Burrage:

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 467-471.

<sup>49</sup>H. Shelton Smith, Robert Handy, and Lefferts A. Loetscher, American Christianity: An Historical Interpretation with Representative Documents (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), I, 82. Perry Miller in his trail-blazing book Orthodoxy in Massachusetts (1933) "did not go all the way with Burrage in entirely disentangling the Congregational Puritans from the Separatists, but he did assign the former the larger role in establishing the New England tradition."



that the early Congregationalists or Independents "were merely a certain type of Puritans, and not separatists from the Church of England," and that they "did not directly obtain their opinions from either Brownists or Barrowists." According to him, these "Congregational Puritans seem to have originated with Henry Jacob (1563-1624).<sup>50</sup>

Henry Jacob was a non-Separatist.<sup>51</sup> His Catechism follows the Calvinist tradition until it comes to the subject of ecclesiology, when a significant variation is introduced, where he presents the essentials of Congregational Puritanism.

In summary, (1) the visible church is a particular congregation, never a diocesan or national body; (2) the church is formally gathered through mutual covenanting; (3) the church is composed of holy or regenerate believers; (4) the supreme head of the church is Jesus Christ, from whom the church has immediate and full power to order its entire life, without determination or control by any overhead body.<sup>52</sup>

The doctrine of non-Separatism was all-prevailing among the New England founders. The "saints" of Leyden, the Mayflower Pilgrims, entered into the so-called Mayflower Compact, which is nothing more than a church covenant, such as bound together the Leyden church, put to civic use. A Modell of Christian Charity by John Winthrop is basic reading if a person wants to understand the basic motive of the Massachusetts Bay colonists in coming to these shores<sup>and</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p. 85. He probably died as a minister in Virginia.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 84.



their conception of the social order, which is completely undemocratic.<sup>53</sup> This treatise also embodies the covenant theology, the core of New England ecclesiology.

John Davenport's Creed is also a basic document.

Davenport was the prime figure in the settlement of the New Haven Colony and his creed embodies the basic theology and ecclesiology of the first New Englanders. This Creed is Calvinistic with its emphasis on the sovereignty of God and double predestination. Of the twenty articles we quote the twelfth which is "Concerning his Kingdome":

That in the mean time, besides his absolute rule in the world, Christ hath here on earth, a spirituall Kingdome in his Church, which hee hath purchased and redeemed to himself as a peculiar inheritance, into the body whereof he doth by the power of his Word, and Spirit, gather his people, calling them through the Ministry of the Gospel out of the world, and from Idolatry, superstition, and from all works of darknesse to fellowship with Jesus Christ, and by him with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, and with his people, making them a royall Priesthood, an holy nation, a people set at liberty, to shew forth the vertues of him that hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light, and uniteth them together as members of one body in his faith, love, and holy order unto all generall and mutuall duties; and instructs and governs them by those instruments and ordinances which he himself hath prescribed in his word for the edification of his body the Church.<sup>54</sup>

Article fourteen is "Concerning a particular instituted Church, and the Privileges thereof."

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<sup>53</sup>A Bible Commonwealth, sealed against error from without and protected from schism from within.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 111.



That it is a company of faithful and holy people, or persons called out of the world to fellowship with Jesus Christ, and united in one Congregation to him as members to their head, and one with another, by a holy covenant for mutuall fellowship in all such wayes of holy worship of God, and of edification of one towards another, as God himself hath required in his Word of every Church of Christ, and the members thereof.<sup>55</sup>

The remaining six articles treat other aspects of the Church.

The story of religion in New England of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries could be pursued further with a treatment of the Mathers and later the Great Awakening and Jonathan Edwards, also the liberalizing tendencies which soon began to appear and the drift to the separation of Church and State. This much is clear that the basic idea of the early Puritan settlers was theocracy, a Bible state, an Israel in the New World, a reproduction of Old Testament Bible history.

This quote in Increase Mather is relevant:

Strong-willed and ascetic, he discovered in discipline the chief end for which the children of Adam are created. A profound admirer of the close-knit Genevan system, he was a Presbyterian in spirit, a man after Calvin's own heart, who clung to the old coercions in an age that was seeking to throw them off. If he counseled innovation it was in the way of strengthening ministerial authority, never in the way of liberalizing either creed or practice. It was the Congregationalism of the Cambridge Platform, and not that of early Plymouth, that he upheld; and to strengthen that order he turned earnestly to the practical work of Presbyterianizing.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>56</sup>George Waller, editor, Puritanism in Early America (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1950), p. 42. See Parrington's article in this book, "The Twilight of the Oligarchy."



From all this it is clear that in New England as in Geneva to build the Kingdom meant to extend the visible Church.<sup>57</sup> Since the goal of all human endeavor was the realization of a Bible commonwealth and the Church was regarded as God's agent for implementing God's rule in all areas of life and living, the Church was extremely active in the State. The secular authority was charged with regulating the conduct of men according to the Decalog, while the spiritual power had the duty to interpret the Decalog.

The New England stream of Calvinism was early muddied by the influx of Arminianism and other forms of liberalism. If the first theology in America bore the Calvinistic stamp, the prevailing theology today, three centuries later, is far from Calvinistic. Some have referred to Calvinism in America today as a "struggling remnant," though recently there seems to be a revival. Be that as it may, Calvinism not only modified the constitution and life-forms of old established countries like Switzerland, Holland, and Great Britain, but in America it was a determining influence in the creation of a new state. It entered the very lifeblood of the nation and its influence is still discernible today.

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<sup>57</sup>The New England experiment with the Christian Indian villages is an interesting example of Puritan Statecraft. See Franklin Littel, From State Church to Pluralism: A Protestant Interpretation of Religion in American History (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1962), pp. 7ff.



## Comparison and Summary

Exegetical: the Church and the Kingdom. In Matthew 16:18 the concept of the Church is most closely related to the Kingdom. The Church is not only the creation of Christ's gracious rule, but also the sphere where He so graciously rules. For the proper edification of the Church the Lord has made all the necessary arrangements, given her an apostolic foundation, supplied the means of grace, and outlined the task.

The function of the Church. In determining the essential function of the Church it is clear that the constitutive element (that which constitutes the Church) has a bearing on its proper functioning. Since the Law is prominent both in Roman Catholic and Calvinistic views of the nature of the Church, the Church is manifestly characterized in these theologies as a legalistic institution. In Lutheranism the Gospel is regarded as the constitutive element and the Church is therefore characterized purely as an evangelical institution.

Since in Roman Catholic theology the Church is the hierarchy, the basileia of Christ is the basileia of the hierarchy. The essential function of the Church is to be found in the rule of the hierarchy, in the exercise of the magisterium and the ministerium, even as the Church came into being by divine authority. Although Calvinism unequivocally rejects the self-assumed role of the Roman



hierarchy, it regards the Church, the visible Church, as God's agency for the implementing of God's sovereign rule. Lutherans believe the essential function of the Church to be the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, for by these means the Kingdom comes and this is what His gracious rule requires. In contrast to the institutionalism of Rome and the subjectivism of much of Protestantism (the Church as a Verein for the cultivation of piety) this is a much needed accent in the ecumenical movement.

The goal of the Kingdom. In Roman theology there is an intense preoccupation with its own institution. The task of the Church is to extend its own institution, to maintain and strengthen its position in the modern world. The other function of the Church is to build a Christian world order under the aegis of the hierarchy. Although Calvinism refuses to identify the Roman Church as the Kingdom, yet it views the Lord's work in a similar fashion. To build the Kingdom is to extend the visible Church and the Church should strive to implement God's rule in all areas of human life and living. In contrast to these views Lutherans regard the goal of Kingdom work to be the building of the Una Sancta. Together with Roman and Calvinistic Churches the Lutherans reject the Anabaptist position of withdrawal from the world. However, in contrast to these Churches who seek to invade the secular order with social



programs, to legislate Christianity, and to subject the world to the Church's rule, Lutherans maintain that the Church's essential function is to preach the Gospel of the Atonement. Its contribution to society lies in the Christian lives and service of its people.

The means to establish the Kingdom. The divine law is regarded by the Roman Church as the means for establishing God's rule in every department of life. As the vehicle of the Divine Will the Roman Church has not hesitated to use coercion, temporal power, and political pressure as a means of grace to bring in the Kingdom. Because vigorous legalism characterizes the Calvinistic conception of Christianity, the Gospel is viewed as the source of all the laws in society and the state. Hence the Law, in effect, becomes the means also for establishing the Kingdom. Calvinistic theology leads to activism. Lutheran theology emphasizes that the Kingdom of God is established solely by the Gospel and the means of grace supplied so graciously by Christ the King.

Naturally the conception of the Kingdom and the role of the Church, which each theology has, has a shaping influence on its organization, cultus, education, and relationship to society. While in Roman Catholicism the governing principle is that everything must serve the lordship of Christ through the Roman Church; in Calvinistic Churches that everything must serve the lordship of Christ as expressed



through the "full" Word; the governing principle in Lutheran Churches is that everything must serve the proclaiming of the Gospel.

In a world in upheaval it is good to remember that in God's wise providence the kingdoms of this world are "the scaffolding used in the building of the Church."



## CHAPTER VI

### COMPARISON, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

Both concepts, the kingdom concept and the church concept, appear in Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic theology. The purpose of this study was to find out how both of these concepts were understood in these three theologies and how they related the kingdom and the church concept. Our thesis topic is: "Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic Conceptions of the Kingdom of God as They Relate to the Role of the Church in the World." The theme indicates that an examination of the ecclesiology of each group was necessary in order to determine the nature and the function of the Church as each group understood it.

Modern scholarship has demonstrated that the term basileia places the emphasis on the ruler and his activity, on the rule. In Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic theology the emphasis is on the supernatural character of the Kingdom, the rule of God, the rule of Christ. The Kingdom of God is a transcendent concept with both a present and an eschatological character.

We have shown that the Lordship of Christ in Roman Catholic theology is to be equated with the living magisterium of the Roman Church. The Lordship of Christ in Lutheran theology is the gracious rule or sway of the redeeming Christ, the rule of the Gospel. The Lordship of



Christ in Calvinistic theology is to be equated with the rule of the "full" Word, the Word as the embodiment of the Divine Will. While Roman Catholic and Calvinistic theology tend to place undue emphasis on divine sovereignty and justice, the Lutheran approach is Christo-centric and soteriological in character.

In Roman Catholic theology the lordship of Christ is the lordship of the Pope, the magisterium of the Papacy which extends over the Word of God and Tradition. In Lutheranism the Word is the Word of God but its true purpose is emphasized and, in keeping with the soteriological character of that Word, the lordship of Christ is preserved as the lordship of grace, the rule of the Gospel. The soteriological character of the New Testament concept of the Kingdom is maintained. The Biblicism of Calvinism leads to a bibliocracy in which the real purpose of the Word is distorted and the lordship of Christ is described in terms of grace and law and the Kingdom concept is made to embrace legal and evangelical elements.

In both Roman Catholic and Calvinistic theology the distinctive stress on the lordship of Christ, whether it be through the Roman Church or through the "full" Word, leads to a corresponding stress on obedience. The way into the Kingdom is obedience. Lutheran theology, however, stresses faith, because it stresses the rule of the Gospel.

The term basileia may also be used in the sense of



realm, domain. Our objective was also to determine how the kingdom concept was used in relation to the Church in the three theologies, since this is a question that confronts us in the interpretation of Matthew sixteen.

Undoubtedly all three theologies believe that it is the function of the Church to extend God's rule. There are other elements for a common meeting-ground in the three ecclesiologies, but decided differences begin to appear when an attempt is made to explore the nature of the Church.

Rome finds the constitutive element of the Church in the hierarchy headed by the Pope. The Gospel was for Luther the constitutive element. By way of contrast Calvinism finds the constitutive element in the "full" Word (theocentric rather than the Lutheran soteriological approach to Scriptures). Obviously, these different approaches are involved in the distinctive sacramental views of each group.

In defining the Church the Roman Church states that the Roman Church is the Kingdom of God. In Calvinistic theology the Church is the company of the elect, while at the same time the visible Church is identified as the Kingdom of God. Lutheranism identifies the Una Sancta as the Kingdom. Lutheran ecclesiology warns against two extremes: externalizing and spiritualizing the concept of the Church.

The kingdom concept raises the question of authority in the Church. Ultimately the source of authority is



Christ, but in the Roman Catholic Church this authority is equated with the papacy. The Protestant Reformers substituted the rule of the Word: Luther, the gracious rule of the Gospel and Calvin, the rule of the "full" Word.

In describing the marks of the Church, the Kingdom, the Roman Church naturally dwells on the marks of its ecclesiastical structure, for the true church is distinguished from the false churches by the authenticity of its priesthood. The Lutheran Confessions dwell on the Gospel and the Sacraments, while the Calvinistic Churches dwell on the Word, the Sacraments, and Discipline. Luther placed the basileia in the forefront of his ecclesiology and there it belongs as well as its correlatives: the Gospel of Christ and Christian faith.

When the Kingdom of God penetrates this earthly sphere, it produces a tension between two sovereignties: the State and the Church. The Messianic or mediatorial Kingdom of Christ is to be distinguished from the temporal or secular kingdoms. The three branches of Christendom warn against the danger of identifying the State with the Kingdom of God. They view civil government as finding its source in the sovereign will of God, a creation order.

In principle the Roman Church opposes church and state separation, since the Catholic plan is a close union of the State with the Church, while the Protestant reformers maintained the sovereignty of each in its sphere. The three



groups stand for a free church and would deny the authority of the State over the Church. The Roman Church stands for the supremacy of the spiritual over the secular, for ecclesiocracy. Calvinism also stands for church independence, in addition for a bibliocracy which substitutes the Bible as a law-book for the Pope and which historically sought to realize its ideals in the Bible Commonwealth of Geneva and New England. Lutheranism theoretically stands for the sovereignty of Church and State in their several spheres, but succumbed to a sort of Erastianism in Germany.

The Roman Church seeks to be recognized as the State Church, the true religion. Calvin, too, would have then State support the Church by enforcing the first table of the Law. The Anabaptist position of withdrawal from the world was rejected by all three branches. The Roman and the Calvinistic Churches have gone to the other extreme: invasion of the secular order with social programs and attempts to legislate Christianity. Lutheran theology recognizes the duty of the Church to witness to the Moral Law, but holds that the Church's essential contribution to society lies in the Gospel of the Atonement.

The Roman Catholic and Reformed piety tend to be a piety of compulsion, oriented in the Law. Lutheran piety is oriented in the Gospel, its mainspring is grateful service. In Lutheranism good works are the joyful evidence of the regnum dei, in Reformed and Roman Catholic piety



the evidence of God's sovereignty. Politically Roman Catholics and the Reformed have often been characterized as activististic, the Lutherans as quietistic.

In determining the essential function of the Church in the world it is clear that the constitutive element has a bearing on its proper functioning. Since the Law is prominent both in Roman Catholic and Calvinistic views of the nature of the Church, the Church is manifestly characterized in these theologies as a legalistic institution. In Lutheranism the Gospel is regarded as the constitutive element and the Church is therefore characterized purely as an evangelical institution.

Since in Roman Catholic theology the Church is the hierarchy, the basileia of Christ is the basileia of the hierarchy. The essential function of the Church is to be found in the rule of the hierarchy, in the exercise of the magisterium and the ministerium, even as the Church came into being by divine authority. Although Calvinism unequivocally rejects the self-assumed role of the Roman hierarchy, it regards the Church, the visible Church, as God's agency for the implementing of God's sovereign rule. Lutherans believe the essential function of the Church to be the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, for by these means the Kingdom comes and this is what His gracious rule requires. In contrast to the institutionalism of Rome and the subjectivism of much



of Protestantism (the Church as a Verein for the cultivation of piety) this is a much needed accent in the ecumenical movement.

In Roman theology there is an intense preoccupation with its own institution. The task of the Church is to extend its own institution, to maintain and strengthen its position in the modern world. The other function of the Church is to build a Christian world order under the aegis of the hierarchy. Although Calvinism refuses to identify the Roman Church as the Kingdom, yet it views the Lord's work in a similar fashion. To build the Kingdom is to extend the visible Church and the Church should strive to implement God's rule in all areas of human life and living. In contrast to these views Lutherans regard the goal of Kingdom work to be the building of the Una Sancta. Together with Roman and Calvinistic Churches the Lutherans reject the Anabaptist position of withdrawal from the world. However, in contrast to these Churches who seek to invade the secular order with social programs, to legislate Christianity, and to subject the world to the Church's rule, Lutherans maintain that the Church's essential function is to preach the Gospel of the Atonement. Its contribution to society lies in the Christian lives and service of its people.

The divine Law is regarded by the Roman Church as the means for establishing God's rule in every department of



life. As the vehicle of the Divine Will the Roman Church has not hesitated to use coercion, temporal power, and political pressure as a means of grace to bring in the Kingdom. Vigorous legalism also characterizes the Calvinistic conception of Christianity. Because the Gospel is viewed as the source of all the laws in society and the state, the Law, in effect, becomes the means also for establishing the Kingdom. Calvinistic theology leads to activism. Lutheran theology emphasizes that the Kingdom of God is established solely by the Gospel and the means of grace supplied so graciously by Christ the King.

Naturally, the conception of the Kingdom and the role of the Church, which each theology has, has a shaping influence on its organization, cultus, education, and relationship to society. While in Roman Catholicism the governing principle is that everything must serve the lordship of Christ through the Roman Church; in Calvinistic Churches that everything must serve the lordship of Christ is expressed through the "full" Word; the governing principle in Lutheran Churches is that everything must serve the proclamation of the Gospel.

In the three theologies the true destiny of the Church is considered to lie in eternity. The Kingdom is inaugurated by God and viewed as present, yet it is also something that lies in the future. Hence, the proclamation of the Kingdom must also be eschatological. In a world in upheaval



it is good to remember that in God's wise providence the kingdoms of this world are "the scaffolding used in the building of the Church." Thy Kingdom come.

The Mission of Christ's Church is grand from every perspective. To carry out the Mission the Church will continue to discuss the nature and function of the Church. Hermann Sasse dwells on some of the difficulties encountered in this area when he says:

The present writer, who has been active in the World Conference of Faith and Order for ten years, who has translated thousands of pages of ecumenical documents and papers and has himself written repeatedly on these questions, has come to the conviction that the reason for our inability to express doctrinal consensus is to be found in the tragic fact that modern Protestantism has lost, along with the understanding of the dogma of the Church, in her nature, her function, and her content, the ability to think dogmatically, that is, to think in terms of a trans-subjective truth which is given to us in the revelation of God. This is also the reason we are no longer able to reject error and heresy. Our fathers at the time of the Reformation had that ability.<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of the Church was discussed in the Lutheran World Federation Assembly at Helsinki in the summer of 1963. It was discussed at Cambridge, England, recently by delegates from thirteen conservative Lutheran bodies in nine countries who formed a continuation committee to further their cooperative study on the "Doctrine of the Church." It was one of the first things on the agenda of the second session of Vatican II in Rome. Whatever the difficulties,

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<sup>1</sup>Hermann Sasse, "Crisis of the Ecumenical Movement," Christianity Today, V (April 10, 1961), 582.



the importance of this doctrine in the present situation of the Church is unquestioned. With a better understanding of herself, her nature and function, the Church will be able under the guidance of the Spirit to carry out her Mission more effectively.

In such discussions on the "Doctrine of the Church" such a central and dynamic concept as the Kingdom of God will hardly be ignored. The purpose of this thesis was to compare Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinistic concepts and to relate these concepts to the role of the Church in the world. In our opinion the subject for a further study could be the progress of the kingdom concept in the Reformed Churches, especially in America. Niebuhr's The Kingdom of God in America is a step in this direction, but more work needs to be done.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>The appendices of this thesis suggest that there is ample material for a rich and rewarding genetic study of the progress of the kingdom concept in the Reformed Churches of America.



## APPENDIX A

### BASILEIA OF RELIGIOUS LIBERALISM

Religious Liberalism, which emphasizes freedom from tradition and authority, sought to bring Christianity up-to-date. It accepted the empirical methods of Ritschl and his concept of the Kingdom and became under Rauschenbusch, Gladden, and Matthews the Social Gospel. Calvin had insisted on application of the principles of the Kingdom in the spheres of social and political life, hence the Social Gospel movement is the ultimate of this, also a reaction to individualism.

Nature of the Kingdom in Religious Liberalism. The Kingdom is the brotherhood of man under the golden rule. Since the Kingdom is regarded as a present reality and its supernatural and eschatological character is destroyed, the Kingdom is reduced to a mere ethical concept. It is merely a new social order, in which man attains his ideal natural development and for some it becomes identical with civilization.

Goal of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is wholly a thing of this world, simply a part of God's moral government of the world. Since the immanent God, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit, is bringing on the Kingdom by a process of natural evolution, it is a natural phenomenon.

Means to bring in the Kingdom. It has no theology of



redemption. It sets forth only a theology of culture, which is optimistic, since it proclaims the essential goodness of man. Man must be saved through society and not vice versa. It embraces a program of humanitarian reform, shallow meliorism. Since it transforms the Gospel into a legal code, religious liberalism has a one-sided emphasis on the work of man.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Selected References: C. H. Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism, 1865-1924 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940). John Horsch, Modern Religious Liberalism (Scottsdale, Pa.: Fundamental Truth Depot, 1921). Fred E. Mayer, "The Rise of Liberal Theology in Congregationalism," Concordia Theological Monthly, XV (October 1944), 649ff.



## APPENDIX B

### BASILEIA OF FUNDAMENTALISM

Since the Reformation Chiliasm was represented by various mystical sects. During the last half-century Premillennialism has been advocated by many evangelical Christian leaders within the bosom of existing churches, especially the Reformed. The predominant Premillennialism is wedded to Dispensationalism. This type of Kingdom thinking has found a haven in the antiliberal movement known as Fundamentalism or Evangelicalism.

Nature of the Kingdom in Evangelicalism. The Kingdom of our Lord is essentially a Jewish kingdom, an earthly kingdom to be established at Jerusalem. Since it is to be the restoration of the ancient theocracy, its character is theocratic. Since the Church and the Kingdom are radically separated in Dispensationalism, we may speak of a two kingdom theory: the Kingdom of God established by Christ during His public ministry and the Kingdom of heaven or Christ to be established during the millenium, a kingdom based on Law.

Goal of the Kingdom. The reign of Christ, when the millenium begins, will be shared by the risen and glorified saints of all ages. Dispensationalists await the rapture, the rejuvenation of the human race, the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the visible reign of Christ, the reception of



kingly authority, the exclusion of all ungodly men, etc.

In short, they expect a heaven upon earth.

Means to bring in the Kingdom. The establishment of the Kingdom will not be a gradual process, but catastrophic. It depends on the coming of the Messiah, on miracles, on the pouring out of the Spirit. Many have the conviction that it will not be established by the preaching of the Gospel and operation of the Holy Spirit. Hence, the Church is in error when she regards these means as essential in establishing the Kingdom. Though they are adherents of the Gospel, they disparage the Gospel and actually elevate the Law above the Gospel. They deny the efficacy of the means of grace.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Selected References: Oswald T. Allis, Prophecy and the Church (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1945). L. Berkhof, The Kingdom of God (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951). Fred B. Mayer, "Dispensationalism Examined and Found Wanting," Concordia Theological Monthly, XVII (February 1946), 89ff.



## APPENDIX C

### BASILEIA OF NEO-ORTHODOXY

A growing dissatisfaction with the liberal construction of the life of Jesus led to the eschatological view. The realistic theology was a reaction to liberalism and its fond dream of bringing in the Kingdom of God. It could not identify the Kingdom with the social order. This new liberalism rejected the immanence theology of the older liberalism and attempted to lead men back to faith in the transcendent God. It is identified with such men as Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, and others.

Nature of the Kingdom in Neo-orthodoxy. The Theology of Crisis denies the present reality of the Kingdom. The Kingdom will come as a gift, it is not a task. Karl Barth distinguishes between the Church as a present and the Kingdom as a future reality. There is a strong emphasis on the exclusively transcendent, eschatological, anti-evolutionary character of the kingdom concept.

Goal of the Kingdom. The Kingdom is not the result of social evolution, but a gift of God and the goal of history. We are not to expect a gradual ascent to the Kingdom of God by which the forces of evil will be gradually vanquished. Rather the forces of evil must increase until the last day. Some of the realists do not share the pessimism



of Barth who does not believe in the ability of the churches to improve the present social order.

Means to Bring in the Kingdom. Neo-orthodoxy erases the distinction between Law and Gospel. The Kingdom cannot be regarded as an achievement of man, nor as a present experience, but merely as a coming reality, for which the Christians individually and the Church collectively can only pray and hope. The Kingdom of God will only be realized by a supernatural work of God in the future world, in the new heaven and earth.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Selected References: Charles C. Ryrie, Neo-Orthodoxy (Chicago: Moody Press, 1956). Chester E. Tulga, The Case Against Neo-Orthodoxy (Chicago: Conservative Baptist Fellowship, 1951). Jerome Hamer, Karl Barth (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1962). T. F. Torrance, Karl Barth: An Introduction to His Early Theology, 1910-1931 (London: Student Christian Movement Press, Limited, 1962). Cornelius Van Til, Christianity and Barthianism (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1962).



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