

The Intersection of Church and Secular Politics

- I. The domains of Christ and Caesar (secular civil power) are separate. **MAT 22:21.**
 - A. Christ's kingdom is spiritual and not of this world. **LUK 17:20-21; 18:36.**
 - B. Christ's kingdom is a nation in this world. **MAT 21:43 c/w 1PE 2:9.**
 1. The church has a national leader: Christ.
 2. The church's Leader has an administration: the pastorate.
 3. The church has ambassadors to those on the outside: evangelists, pastors.
 4. The church has a body of law to regulate it: Scripture.
 5. The church has regular conventions: worship assemblies.
 6. The church has a state dinner: communion.
 7. The church has a judicial system to apply its law and punish offenders: the church court where its members are jurors who examine evidence in the light of Scripture and make appropriate determination.
 8. The church has an immigration policy: repentance, faith, baptism.
 9. The church has a military to advance its domain and protect it from the enemy. It consists of pastors, teachers, evangelists, church members: all who wield a spiritual sword, the word of God. **EPH 6:17; 2CO 10:3-5.**
 10. The church does not have the power of the civil *magistrate* (a civil officer charged with the administration of the laws, a member of the executive government) but it can separate company from offenders and turn them over to civil power as needed.
 - a. Saints are to be subject to the magistracy where obedience to God is at stake. **TIT 3:1 c/w ACT 5:28-29.**
 - b. Civil powers may not concern themselves with some offenses that the church cannot condone (eg. heresy, envy, effeminacy, covetousness).
 - c. But there are offenses which the church cannot condone which the civil power should have a concern in (eg. murder, theft, extortion, fraud, rape, child molestation, kidnapping) and such an offender may have to be turned over to civil authorities.
 - C. The church has a duty to teach and enforce among its members both man's relationship to God and man's relationship to his fellow-man. **MAT 22:37-39.**
 1. The church must condemn known blasphemy and false worship which are direct offenses against God, and separate company from such.
 - a. God Himself is the directly aggrieved party, the only "victim."
 - b. Under the O.T. such sins were punishable by execution unto death. **LEV 24:16; DEU 13:1-5.**
 - c. Mind that God is well able to handle impious men Himself with judgments on their lives. **LEV 10:1-2; ACT 5:1-11; 1CO 11:29-30.**
 - d. History has shown that the best way to combat these errors is not by the force of the sword but by the persuasion of conscience. **ACT 17:29-31.**
 2. How one relates to God is a matter of personal opinion that ought not to be a matter of coercion. **2CO 5:11.**
 - a. It is a weak argument that can only prevail by force, especially in a matter of a "victimless crime" (where there is no direct tort of a fellow-man).
 - b. The State need only concern itself with man's duties towards his fellow-man. **ACT 18:12-17.**
 - c. "Government has no more to do with the religious opinions of men than it has with the principles of mathematics." (Elder John Leland)
 - d. "If government can answer for individuals at the day of judgment, let men

be controlled by it in religious matters; otherwise let men be free.”
(Elder John Leland)

- II. Jesus Christ was a special kind of political disturber.
- A. His coming was the shaking of heaven and earth. **HAG 2:6-7, 21-22.**
 - B. His kingdom would break in pieces and consume the kingdoms of this world. **DAN 2:44.**
 - C. He came to shake up society. **MAT 10:34-36.**
 - D. He challenged the nation’s leadership. **LUK 20:17-19.**
 - E. His victory over death and the grave gave Him rule over all nations.
PSA 2:7-8 c/w HEB 1:1-5.
 - F. But Jesus was not a political factionist stirring up party strife. **MAT 12:19; 21:5.**
 - 1. He favored neither Pharisee, Sadducee nor Herod. **MAT 16:6; MAR 8:15.**
 - 2. He was not much concerned about taxation. **MAT 17:24-27; 22:17-21.**
 - 3. He submitted to Rome where He could, and later used them to punish Israel.
MAT 22:7.
 - G. His primary interest was spiritual matters.
 - 1. God’s kingdom and righteousness were emphasized to the disregard of present evil.
MAT 6:33-34.
 - 2. God’s house was more important than Herod’s throne. **MAT 21:12-13.**
 - 3. He evaded offers of secular power. **MAT 4:8-10; JOH 6:15.**
 - 4. He came to liberate men from the bondage of Satan. **1JO 3:8.**
 - H. Jesus Christ has shown the world the hollowness of political power over men while Someone else is King in their hearts.
 - 1. The primary glue of mighty human empires is force but the bond of Christ’s kingdom is charity. **COL 3:14.**
 - 2. “I know men, and I tell you, Jesus is not a man. He commands us to believe, and gives no other reason than his awful word, I AM GOD. Philosophers try to solve the mysteries of the universe by their empty dissertations: fools: they are like the infant that cries to have the moon for a plaything. Christ never hesitates. He speaks with authority. His religion is a mystery; but it subsists by its own force. He seeks, and absolutely requires, the love of men, the most difficult thing in the world to obtain. Alexander, Caesar, Hannibal conquered the world, but had no friends. I myself am perhaps the only person of my day who loves Alexander, Caesar, Hannibal. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and myself founded empires; but upon what? Force. Jesus founded his empire on Love; and at this hour millions would die for him. I myself have inspired multitudes with such affection that they would die for me. But my presence was necessary. Now that I am in St. Helena, where are my friends? I am forgotten, soon to return to the earth, and become food for worms. What an abyss between my misery and the eternal kingdom of Christ, who is proclaimed, loved, adored, and which is extending over all the earth. Is this death? I tell you, the death of Christ is the death of God. I tell you, JESUS CHRIST IS GOD.”
(Napoleon Bonaparte, cited in *Halley's Bible Handbook*, 24th Edition, pp. 542-543)