

GOD AND CAESAR: CHRISTIAN FAITH AND POLITICAL DUTY

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Abstract

Some Scriptural passages suggest that as citizens of heaven, Christians are called to a higher form of life, a judgement which makes them eschew the political space labelled as corrupt, dirty or the world of sin. To be a true citizen of heaven, one must abandon the world's social order, a meddling in political affairs; he must love God and despise the world. Interestingly, the Sacred Scriptures present also ideas suggesting that man participates with God in bettering the universe and fulfils his role in the state by giving to Caesar what belongs to him. The aim of the paper is to reconcile the seemingly opposed injunctions of the sacred Scriptures from man's natural predisposition to politics overcoming the ideas in which those sacred Scriptures seem to contradict themselves and building up the synthesis that man is actually called to dual citizenship –the spiritual kingdom and the real world of now. Consequently, that Christians must calibrate between the eschatological expectations of the heavenly kingdom and the political demands of the social world order (God and Caesar). The author uses the dialectical method of exposition and hermeneutical approach in building up his arguments.

Keywords: God, Caesar, Christianity, Faith, Political Duty

Introduction

In a number of places, we see the Sacred Scriptures reminding the disciples that they 'do not belong to this world', that they are citizens of heaven, following the footsteps of Christ who declared: 'my kingdom is not of this world'. Many Christians seem to clasp on this notion as an excuse to escape or shy away from all political responsibilities. Others exonerate themselves from all public fora, the right to vote and be voted for. They abstain from various civic functions arguing that Christians are of another order of existence than of this world's social order of life. They are unmindful however, of other biblical passages where Christ enjoined his disciples to dual commitment both to the state and to the spiritual world order, signalling dual loyalties and obligations: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's".² At the centre of accusations against Jesus before the Pilate was the claim that he was meddling in political affairs: "We have found this man perverting our nation... and saying that he is Christ the king"³. False as this accusation may be, the misinterpretation was grounded on the interventions of Christ on the political arena.

Giving the dual loyalties, the question arising then is: how are Christians to navigate the dual responsibilities? Are Christians to hold political offices, form organizations for political purposes?, Would that be venturing too far into the political space? Does every cooperation with political authorities move Christians closer to the violation of their Christian authenticity? When we state that the human fulfilment is oriented to eschatological hope, does it mean that man has nothing to do with the powers now? It is the aim of this paper to examine these issues and see how possible one can be citizen of dual

nationalities. Although Christians' ultimate goal is the heavenly kingdom, the contention here is that it is the world of now that they have also been called to be its 'salt and light'. If a citizen does his duty to God, he will find that his obligations to the civil power and God coincide and are harmonious.

The Philosophical Foundations

It is widely acclaimed that man by nature is a political animal. Aristotle made it clear in his *Politics* that man is not self-sufficient, and thus needs to live in community. His very first statement in the above mentioned book reads: “Every state is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good; for mankind always act in order to obtain that which they think good.”⁴ A few paragraphs later, Aristotle made an absolute claim about the ineluctability of the human community in the actual existence of every man affirming that “he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is not part of a state.”⁵

Every mortal begins his/her actual existence in one community or another. It starts with a family of some sort which according to Aristotle, is the smallest form of community. He defined the family as 'the association established by nature for the supply of men's everyday wants'.⁶ When several families unite for greater good and aim at something more than the supply of daily needs, the first society to be formed is the village which is naturally a colony from the family.⁷ It is from here that Aristotle made two of his most important affirmations that every city-state exists by nature and that a social impulse is implanted in man by nature –“the city-state is a natural growth, and man is by nature a political animal”.⁸ Human beings by nature form couples and then households, villages and eventually the development of city-states.

Although city states are the off-shoots of the families, it is not completely equal to saying that political communities spring up necessarily and without being deliberately established. Despite those two big claims of natural formation of society and man's natural political impulse, a city state is in the final analysis constructed rather than merely emerging.⁹ Though it springs naturally, human art helps the natural process of growth. The human art (*technē*) does not only imitate nature, it can also complete what nature cannot; and the practitioner of the political art must complete the trajectory that nature of its own impulse cannot.¹⁰

For Aristotle therefore, the formation of the city-state requires also conscious human intervention. The city-state exists for the sake of life, a good life. a life in common with other human beings which enables pursuits that are not possible in other human groupings or on one's own. These are made possible through man's possession of speech, given to man essentially for a proper construction of communities. 'Nature' Aristotle declared, “does nothing without purpose; and man alone of the animals possesses speech.”¹¹ The speech is designed to help man indicate what is advantageous or harmful, right or wrong. It is the special property enjoyed by man over other animals whereby man has then the **moral duty** to be involved in making his society just. The city-state is a community in which people share discussion of what is just and unjust, with the end of making them just.

Thomas Aquinas adopted Aristotle's claim that the human being is “by nature a political animal”, though he grounds it fundamentally in natural law and divine providence which is not surprising because he reworked Aristotle within Christian theology. He explained that even in the state of innocence (before the Fall), humans would have lived in organized society: “Man is naturally a social animal, owing to the fact that he is naturally more able to provide for himself by the aid of others than by his own unaided efforts.”¹² In other words, political life is part of human nature as created by God and not a result of sin. He argued that human beings must live in community for no man can secure the necessities of life alone and God has predisposed him by nature for this communal life by the possession of reason and speech which are ordered to cooperation. He said, “man is by nature a social animal, inclined to live in society.”¹³ In another of his books, 'On Kingship', he stated: “it is natural for man, more than for any other animal, to be a social and political animal, to live in a group.”¹⁴

Unlike Thomas Aquinas, some philosophers will disagree with Aristotle on 'man's natural disposition for the political' or the claim that political life is a natural extension of what it means to be human. But, they accept nevertheless man's unavoidable connection with the society. Hannah Arendt is one of them; in her major work 'Human Condition', she maintained that humans are political because they can act in concert and disclose their identities among others. While for Aristotle, the capacity for speech, reason, and moral judgement grounds the “political animalness.”,¹⁵ for Arendt, such capacities though important, do not necessarily lead to natural political inclinations; politics emerges only when individuals act in concert, in plurality, through speech and deeds in a common world they build together.

Hannah argues that the political realm is not given by biology or nature, but must rather be **constructed** through human action, plurality and speech. Politics emerges only where distinct individuals come together in a shared world and engage in free, public action; political life is thus an achievement of human artifice rather than a manifestation of natural essence: 'the polis is not the result of a natural development; it is a deliberately created space for action and speech.'¹⁶ Although Arendt differs with Aristotle on polis as being a natural form of Association, they both agree on the necessity of **the polis as pathway to the fulfilment of man's destiny**. For Arendt, politics is essential to human freedom and plurality.

Immanuel Kant on his part, sees politics and morality as deeply interconnected. He held that humans have natural inclinations toward self-interest, conflict, and what he calls “unsociable sociability.” Consequently, a lawful political order is necessary; politics, then is not merely a tool for managing society—it is a **necessary condition** for the development of moral agency and human freedom. Kant argued now and again that humans are not naturally cooperative or moral. He said: “Out of the crooked timber of humanity no straight thing was ever made.”¹⁷ Because humans are “crooked,” moral order does not arise naturally. Politics must provide a stable structure that channels human tendencies toward a

lawful and peaceful coexistence, a system that creates the necessary environment where moral self-discipline can grow.

Whereas Kant believed that there is a natural human inclination to connect with other and to be part of the larger whole; it exists also in man the natural inclination to destroy these social bonds through isolationism and divisiveness. He argued that this divisiveness is the source of all human conflict; it is what brings the states into conflict, this “unsociable sociability”. But interestingly, it is also what propels societies to historical progress. Without antagonistic aspect of humanity, Kant thinks we would not be compelled to grow culturally or intellectually. Our “unsocial sociability”—our desire to live with others but also compete with or antagonize them—pushes humanity towards progress, ultimately improving moral capacities. You cannot fully become a moral agent unless you live in a political system that protects your rights and freedoms.

John Mbiti, one of Africa's most influential philosophers and theologians, treats man's political concern/engagement not as optional activity but as an essential dimension of human existence within African thought. Though he did not develop a systematic theory, yet his ontology carries clear political implications. His broader philosophical claim, often summarized as “I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am”,¹⁸ situates the individual within a deeply communal and social ontology. From this standpoint, participation in political life becomes a natural and necessary expression of being human. It is not external to identity, it is constitutive of it. To abstain from communal decision-making is to diminish one's own being. Indeed, Mbiti argues that in traditional African worldviews, the individual is inseparable from the community. What it means is that all aspects of life, religious, social, and political, are intertwined: “Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual.”¹⁹

Because the community is the primary locus of identity, engagement in communal decision-making (including governance, leadership, and conflict resolution) is not optional—it is constitutive of personhood.

In summary, thanks to man's natural speech endowment and communal ontology, human life is politically connected, spent in the discovery of the proper manner in which society ought to be organized. Every society has conflicting and competing interests. Through politics they reconcile, arrive at compromise and balance those diverse interests. It is this that led Aristotle to describe politics as 'coordination of differences and things without destroying them'.²⁰ Societies afford man in addition the most possible avenue or opportunity to actualise his natural potentialities; the expression of his human social liberties and protection of his person. The success or failure of life depends therefore upon what sort of society one lives in.

Theological Basis and Debates

With reasons, at least Scriptural, some people have rejected the harmony of Christian way of life with political engagements, holding that Christianity and politics are concepts with

different histories and goals. One of Augustine's theological approaches is rooted in his understanding of the opposition between the city of God and the earthly city of sin. Though there are many earthly nations, says Augustine, "yet there are no more than two kinds of human society, which we may justly call two cities, according to the language of our Scriptures."²¹ For Augustine, the two cities are motivated by opposing drives and are moving in opposite directions. They are formed by two different loves: "the earthly, by love of self, even to contempt of God; the heavenly, by love of God, even to contempt of self. The former glories in itself, the latter in the Lord."²² Although Augustine did not identify any of these two cities with the Church and the State, it was clear from his writing that doing politics is something different from building the city of God.

Augustine would argue at a point, that by nature God created humans for only one kind of dominion which is not political: "He (God) did not intend that His rational creature, who was made in His image, should have dominion over anything but the irrational creation - not man over man, but man over beasts" .²³ For him, this is why the righteous men in primitive times were made shepherds of cattle rather than kings of men. God intended this way to "teach us what the relative position of the creatures is, and what the desert of sin is".²⁴

In his second approach however, the idea of the existing dichotomy between two cities in Augustine, received moderation. Political life belongs to the earthly city, yet it is not devoid of value. Although earthly politics cannot establish ultimate justice, Augustine argued that Christians should participate in governing for the purpose of promoting "temporal peace."²⁵ Augustine's realism limits political actions because of preponderance to sin, yet he does not advocate withdrawal. Indeed, he encouraged Christians to serve the common good: "The earthly city... desires a peaceful concord of wills; and for this end it enjoins mutually helpful social relations."²⁶

Augustine argues that humans must corporate to achieve the common interest of peace. So long as man lives in this mortal condition which necessitates peaceful co-existence, he says, "make no scruple to obey the laws of the earthly city, whereby the things necessary for the maintenance of this mortal life are administered; and thus, as this life is common to both cities, so there is a harmony between them in regard to what belongs to it."²⁷ It was a welcome idea that Augustine made a connection between political life in this world and the eternal law of God. He made this connection in his political philosophy as he thought along both lines at the same time. According to Herbert A. Deane, Augustine believed that ... some 'traces' or 'vestiges' of true or heavenly justice [*supernae justitiae*] remain imprinted upon the minds of sinful men, and it is these 'traces' that form the basis for the human idea of earthly kings who happened also to be Christians. Kings can serve the Lord, says Augustine, 'even in so far as they are kings, when they do in His service what they could not do were they not kings.'²⁸ Thus Augustine stated: "Nay verily, let the kings of the earth serve Christ by making laws for Him and for His cause."²⁹

Like Augustine, Martin Luther also first distinguished, in his own way, between the spiritual kingdom (ruled by the gospel) and the temporal kingdom (ruled by law, sword and governing authorities). This came while reacting against the late medieval church's political entanglements: "*God has ordained two governments: the spiritual... by which the Holy Spirit produces Christians and righteous people under Christ; and the temporal... to restrain the unchristian and wicked.*"³⁰ His aim however, was to de-emphasize deep involvement of Christians in political order and thus provide safeguard for the gospel, especially the tendency by the church to wield political authority to coerce faith. He held that Christians live in both kingdoms: though saved by grace Christians are nevertheless subject to secular authorities for the sake of order. The church's primary task is preaching the Gospel, not running political programs but for order's sake they should be obedient to rules. Luther also affirmed that Christians, motivated by love for neighbor, should serve in government and obey just laws. For him, "Good government is the highest blessing of God on earth."³¹

Developing his political theology in the crucible of Nazi Germany, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran pastor and theologian, challenged any quietist or overly obedient interpretations of Luther, insisting that responsible Christian action includes resisting gross injustice. In his *Ethics*, he wrote, "the responsible person acts in the freedom of his own self, without the support of men, goods or laws, and decides... in accord with reality."³² According to Bonhoeffer, when the state "ceases to fulfill its duty to maintain justice," the Church "has an unconditional obligation to the victims of any ordering of society."³³ This included political resistance. He was involved in a conspiracy to assassinate Hitler which stemmed from what he considered a tragic but necessary act of responsibility.

In his book 'On God and Political Duty', John Calvin also stated that "man is under two kinds of government -one spiritual, by which the conscience is formed to piety and the service of God; the other political, by which a man is instructed in the duties of humanity and civility, which are to be observed in an intercourse with mankind"³⁴. He warned not to see this distinction 'as though Christians were less subject to the external government of human laws'³⁵ or lead us 'to consider the whole system of civil government as a polluted thing which has nothing to do with Christian men'.³⁶ He insists that though we should strive for spiritual reign of Christ, the spiritual and the political lives are not at variance with each other; while on earth living out our civil obligations 'commences already within us some preludes of the heavenly kingdom'.³⁷ He stated emphatically that "if it is the will of God that while we are aspiring toward our true country, we be pilgrims on the earth, and if such aids are necessary to our pilgrimage, they who take them from man deprive him of his human nature."³⁸ To entertain any thought of extermination of the exercise of civil polity among Christians is "inhuman barbarism". He pointed to St. Paul who recommended to us every kind of just authority or civil government when he said: "There is no power but of God; that the powers that be are ordained of God. Rulers are ministers of God, revengers to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same".³⁹

It is lack of understanding to continue to argue that 'politics is a dirty game', sinful and thus to be kept away from it. Both John the Baptist and Jesus referred to the political concerns of their day. In both the Old and New Testaments, God's representatives spoke out against abuse of political power and sought for just use of power. This is one of the contexts by which Christ reminded his disciples to be "salt and light". Hence, participation in politics does not detract from spirituality; one can say instead that a spirituality unrelated to politics is questionable. If politics is dirty, then Christians need to get involved to make it clean. That is why Christ came, not to identify with the righteous but to remedy what was corrupt. If there is corruption, evil and confusion in our society, it may be partly because of the lack of Christian contribution and participation. There is nothing more dangerous than to build a society with a large segment of Christians who have no relevance to their society. It may be good to know says Colson that the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche had introduced the God-is-dead concept in 1889 but Nietzsche's point wasn't about God's existence, it was about His relevance. God was declared dead, Colson says, "because we live, play, procreate, govern, and die as though He doesn't exist."⁴⁰

All good citizens including Christians have moral responsibility to influence government policies; register, vote and influence others on public opinions. In his speech at the Republican banquet in honor of Senator Stephen A. Douglas in September 16, 1859 Abraham Lincoln said: "He who affects public sentiment does a far greater service to society than he who enacts statutes."⁴¹ Christians should therefore seek political participation even as they go about their duties of evangelizing the world. Without this participation and representation, there is no assurance that even the freedom to evangelize will remain secure. Can we maintain the fundamental freedoms and liberties we enjoy while standing apart from the political process? The political and social trends of the last generation should offer clear warnings that freedom and liberty require diligent care and attention.

Christ's revelation in person and deed is a jubilee announcement that has everything to do with the politics of this age. For anyone to abscond from politics for fear of sin, the question one would readily ask is: 'What has Christ's redemptive revelation redeemed?' This question is better answered by referring to the meaning of creation which is the established context for God's judgment against sin and His redemptive fulfilment of all things. The high norms of God's justice and love are not set only against the world government. They hold for everything and everyone in the creation, every institution and relationship, including political life. We cannot find a biblical basis then for arguing that political life and political authority are wholly sinful. Sin is manifest precisely in the way that human beings distort and destroy just and loving human relationships. Admittedly, great injustice prevails in the creation because humans have not obeyed God's high norms. But, in this respect, political life is no different from all other areas of life where perfection is not yet visible in its fullness.

Modern Arguments on Christian Political Duty

It is an essential quality of every Christian, especially Catholics to be involved in social actions aimed at better quality of life for all. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops once proclaimed: “In the catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. This obligation is rooted in our baptismal commitment to follow Jesus Christ and to bear Christian witness in all we do”.⁴² They cited a relevant passage in the 'Catechism of the Catholic Church' which reminds us that “it is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person. . . . As far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life?”⁴³. They further insisted that “Catholics who bring their moral convictions into public life do not threaten democracy or pluralism but enrich them and the nation. The separation of church and state **does not require division between belief and public action**, between moral principles and political choices, but protects the right of believers and religious groups to practice their faith and act on their values in public life.”⁴⁴

Christians, especially Catholics must be proactive and do more than challenge laws which threaten their freedom or ethical principles, e.g, the laws that support abortion, gay marriages, Sunday workdays, euthanasia etc. They should be pre-emptive, helping to construct a healthy and just republic in which good laws predominate. “It is not enough” says Luther King, “for the church to be active in the realm of ideas, it must move out into the arena of social action.... Only by doing this can it be effective in its attack on outside evils”⁴⁵. Christians must bring their transcendental values to bear in the order of social and political life.

Everywhere in the world of today, there is certain lack of moral values: love parades, legal nude camps, gay marriages with legal adoptions, abortion laws, euthanasia, exaggerated sense of pluralism etc. These ideas and life practices are increasingly promoted because people in these divides find themselves in the government. There is a progressive devaluation of values, so much so that it is now difficult for anyone to declare something right or wrong, to call one thing good and another bad without being termed to be judgemental. Without a set of transcendent values, nothing governs how we are to live together. It makes the case urgent that those who convey moral values should step into the civic realm. James Boice once wrote, “Religious people are ... the only citizens who actually advance the nation in the direction of justice and true righteousness.”⁴⁶ Christianity provides for individual concerns and for the ordering of a society with liberty and justice for everyone. It offers both a transcendent moral influence and a transcendent ordering of society without any oppressive theocratic system.

If we can tell ourselves the truth, every political upheaval and unsettling dynamics of life affects both Christians and non-Christians alike. And that is why Christians are called by God to be salt and light; not only within the four walls of their Churches and religious gatherings but in the society at large. The issue of justice for instance, which is at the heart of politics forms the common life of humanity. Thus, a Christian, according to Carl Henry,

“need not restrict political cooperation to those who share his theological convictions, because political order and justice are not responsibilities that devolve only upon persons who respond to the Gospel. Whoever recognizes that justice confronts all men as an objective claim may cooperate in seeking and advancing a society of law and order, even if the Christian alone perceives the Living God as the transcendent ground of jurisprudence and justice.”⁴⁷

In summary, every Christian should be engaged in providing healthy political environment for all the citizens. One of the founding fathers of America, Thomas Jefferson once said: "No one can be called happy without his participation in public happiness. No one can be called free unless he experiences public freedom. No one can be called happy or free unless he shares in and contributes to public power."⁴⁸ Christians should not fear to step into political engagements, actively working for changes in various political platforms or government policies that would otherwise impact negatively on our moral beliefs. The distinctive character of this Christian political service should not be ecclesiastical sponsorship of political proclamations and pressure groups but is demonstrated in its high quality of justice for every citizen in the public domain.

Christian Youth's Activism in Nigeria

Christian participation in politics has long been a subject of theological reflection, civic debate, and practical engagement. In religiously plural and politically polarized societies such as Nigeria, the question becomes even more urgent: how can Christians engage the political sphere responsibly while maintaining their faith commitments and contributing to national political discourse?

Historically, many Nigerian Christians have approached politics with ambivalence, oscillating between withdrawal from worldly affairs and active engagement in governance. While some view it as morally compromised, others see it as a necessary avenue for societal transformation. However, contemporary realities—marked by corruption, insecurity, and economic inequality—have increasingly compelled Christians now to reconsider political disengagement. The prevailing posture among major Christian bodies has leaned toward responsible participation. Organizations such as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) consistently emphasize that political involvement is not only a civic duty but also a moral obligation rooted in the pursuit of justice, peace, and the common good.

The CBCN, for instance, has repeatedly issued pastoral letters and communiques urging Christians to vote conscientiously, reject electoral violence, and hold leaders accountable. Similarly, CAN has mobilized Christian communities during election cycles, advocating for transparency and warning against religious marginalization. These interventions highlight a theological conviction: that faith must inform public life without descending into sectarian dominance. Encouraged by these bodies, many believers now see political engagement as an extension of their faith commitment. Christians, when rightly informed and motivated, change the character of political debate. They bring the moral standards of

God's kingdom into the civic realm and thereby become agents of His common grace. When Christians enter the public square, they recognize as God's people the authority of Christ's kingdom; they bring its ethical standards into the stream of history, and through them Christ's kingdom breaks the 'vicious and otherwise irreversible cycles of violence, injustice, and self-interest'⁴⁹

The most defining feature of recent political developments in Nigeria is however, the rise of youth activism. Young Christians, empowered by education, digital tools, and a sense of urgency, are increasingly shaping political discourse. Their engagement often transcends traditional church structures, taking the form of social media campaigns, grassroots organizing, and issue-based advocacy. This growing involvement of Christian youth in electoral politics was particularly evident during the 2023 general elections. Many mobilized around issues such as corruption, governance, and economic reform, often using faith-based language to frame their advocacy. This signals a shift from passive citizenship to active participation, a shift from earlier periods when political involvement was often discouraged from the pulpit. Many of these youths presented themselves for elective posts in the platforms of even less known political parties and won in the election. Ultimately, the goal is not merely political influence, but the promotion of justice, peace, and human dignity—values at the heart of the Christian faith.

The End SARS protests also serves as a powerful case study of Christian youth involvement in the public sphere. While not exclusively a Christian movement, many young Christians played key roles, motivated by moral outrage against police brutality and a desire for justice. Churches and Christian leaders were divided in their responses though ---some supported the protests as a righteous cause, while others cautioned against disorder. This highlights the tension between prophetic activism and institutional conservatism.

Conclusion

People have reasoned that given what Christianity has offered the world of thought and human history it is difficult to deny a possible harmony and concord between Christianity and politics. A genealogist historian stating what point history has arrived said: "Because of its foundation within the abyssal profundity of the soul, Christianity represents to this day the most powerful means –never yet superseded but not yet thought right through either –by which man is able to struggle against his own decline."⁵⁰ The history of the Church is replete with various ideas, passing through stages of confusion and growth. In 16th century for instance, the Anabaptists had insisted that Christians should avoid all manner of participation in government and politics seeing politics as laden with sin. We have tried to examine this idea and have seen that it has no basis in human nature and divine intention. Although we acknowledge the presence of sin in our world, our role is not fulfilled by standing on the side-lines of life, bemoaning the evil condition of the world and longing for the return of the Lord while doing nothing.

The above attitude is in conflict with the injunction of Christ to be 'salt of the earth and the light of the world'⁵¹ and does not fulfill the double obligations to Caesar and to God. When Christians abandon the public square, what happens to community values and the moral standards? Throughout history we've seen the effect of Christian influence: in the abolition of slavery; destruction of apartheid systems, promotion of universal literacy, attention to the value of the human person, quality education (first as a means of evangelization in Nigeria) and laws that protect factory workers and women –impact which doesn't come from silence or withdrawal but from faithfulness.

This article aimed to established the imperative of Christians' double citizenship of heaven and of the world, of faith commitment and of participation in the political space, considered especially as the double imperative of the Gospel. To navigate the two spheres, the faith commitment must penetrate through the temporal space and animate it with the right sense of human values. It is however necessary to bear in mind that this involvement of Christians in the political space is not aimed at entirely wiping out the social and political problems of the world, neither is it done with the hope of ushering in Christ's kingdom or what Karl Barth would suggest, “the molding of the State into the likeness of the Kingdom of God”,⁵² but to provide a glimpse of something better, to exhibit our hope for what's to come. Karl Henry would say it is 'aimed at ...preserving what is valuable in the present social order.'⁵³ It is not to build an utopia but to maintain relative peace and justice in the world. This clarity of purpose is equally expressed by Jacques Ellul. “The Christian must plunge into social and political problems' he writes, “in order to have an influence on the world, not in the hope of making it a paradise, but simply in order to make it tolerable — not in order to diminish the opposition between this world and the Kingdom of God, but simply in order to modify the opposition between the disorder of this world and the order of preservation that God wills for it.”⁵⁴

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⁶ *Ibid*, 1252b

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- ⁴¹ See Richard Doster, *Politics: Why Christians Must Be Involved*, November 4th, 2014 <http://byfaithonline.com/politics-why-christians-must-be-involved-2/>
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- ⁴³ See, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops "Faith and Politics: Catholics are Called to Political Action Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City", <http://www.dioslc.org/images/government%20liaison/Faith%20and%20Politics.pdf>.
- ⁴⁴ Catechism of the Catholic Church, published by William H. Sadlier, Inc. 1994, nos. 1913-1915.
- ⁴⁵ U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *ibid*.
- ⁴⁶ Luther King Jr. M., "The Stride toward Freedom", in *The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* edited by James M. Washington, N. York: Harper Collings Publishers, 1991, p. 479.
- ⁴⁷ See "The Christian factor in 2015 Presidential Election" December 29, 2014, <http://victorikoli.blogspot.com/2014/12/the-christian-factor-in-2015.html>.
- ⁴⁸ Henry, C., "Christian Social Involvement", in *International Reformed Bulletin* (July 1966), p. 27.
- ⁴⁹ See Arendt, H., *On Revolution*, London: Penguin Books, 1990, p. 225; Joshua J. Dara "The Role of Christians in Politics" <http://www.thetowntalk.com/story/life/2014/10/17/dara-role-christians-politics/17462625>.
- ⁵⁰ Cf Francis, Pope. *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2020. par. 227
- ⁵¹ Derrida, J., *The Gift of Death*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996, p.50
- ⁵² Matt. 5:13-14.
- ⁵³ Barth, K., "Christian Community and Civil Community," in *Community, State, and Church*, New York: Doubleday, 1960, 168-71
- ⁵⁴ Henry, K., *Aspects of Christian Social Ethics*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 72.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid. 96.