

Christianity and the Nation-State

In *Christianity and the Nation-State*, Gary Chartier provocatively offers readers unexpected critical distance from some familiar ways of understanding, justifying, and navigating existing political arrangements. People in multiple societies are posing important questions about the authority and functions of the contemporary nation-state and about potential alternatives to this seemingly inescapable institution. Chartier seeks to develop a distinctive theological response to the conditions prompting these questions. Affirming liberalism and cosmopolitanism, he reflects critically on nationalism, localism, religious establishment, and theological accounts of political authority. He highlights links between sin and state power and underscores deficiencies in democratic rhetoric and theory. He rejects the idea of a global government, advocating a nonterritorial alternative he labels “radical consociationalism.” Moreover, he presents concrete suggestions for life under the rule of the state.

GARY CHARTIER is Distinguished Professor of Law and Business Ethics at La Sierra University in Riverside, California.

“The deep moral intelligence, theological acuity, and relentless intellectual honesty of Chartier’s argument set this book apart. And, perhaps needless to say, its challenge to Christian self-consciousness could scarcely be more urgent at this moment.”

DAVID BENTLEY HART, Collaborating Researcher, *University of Notre Dame*

“At a time when Christian nationalism is in the news, this book contributes to a broader and deeper tradition of Christian critique of the nation-state. Chartier’s fascinating proposal depends neither on pacifism nor on cosmopolitanism, but rather puts forward an updated ‘consociational’ model of overlapping and deterritorialized networks and communities building the common good. Both in its negative critique and its positive proposal, Chartier’s book is informed, provocative, and provides an antidote to today’s increasingly toxic politics.”

WILLIAM T. CAVANAUGH, Professor of Catholic Studies, *DePaul University*

“Gary Chartier’s *Christianity and the Nation-State* is a bold, forceful critique of the authority of the nation-state from a Christian point of view. It should be read by Christian and non-Christian readers concerned with liberty, diversity, and the proper and improper use of coercion. His consociationalist model of governance is an important contribution to political theory and Christian theology.”

CHARLES TALIAFERRO, Boe Distinguished Professor Emeritus, *St. Olaf College*

“Gary Chartier contends that the modern nation state is not just morally ambiguous, but is morally illegitimate, dangerous, and unnecessary. More boldly still, Chartier predicts that in due course, the international order of political states will dissipate and be replaced by a radically new global configuration of overlapping ‘consociational’ societies. He harbors hope that this radically new social order will generate unprecedented common global good. One does not have to accept this hope as plausible in order to appreciate

the many strengths of Chartier's main moral thesis. Beginning to end, he displays a wide-ranging command of the relevant scholarly literature, his analysis is incisive and penetrating, his arguments are finely nuanced and rigorous, and the discussion is rich in fresh insights and provocative perspectives. On the whole, this book is a very valuable contribution to both theological and broadly philosophical social moral theory and ethics."

JOHN SCHNEIDER, Professor of Theology, Emeritus, Calvin College

"One can go a long way with Gary Chartier's attempt to defend what he calls a 'radical consociational society' without finally eschewing all moral legitimacy to the notion of a state *as such*. A serious application of the principle of subsidiarity might bring us closer while still heeding the *abusus non tollit usum* caution. Professor Chartier's theological examination of anarchy is informed and well argued. He puts into one place an articulate and theologically informed case for the stateless society."

ROBERT A. SIRICO, President Emeritus, Acton Institute

"In this thought provoking book Gary Chartier challenges facile deductions from Scripture and assumptions taken from the natural law tradition. It is a valuable and innovative contribution to the Christian conversation about the ordering of society toward a peaceful and cooperative common good, that is so dear to Catholic social thought. The first impression is that of a radical book; then, you realize it's reasonable: It uses radical language to make you think."

MARTIN SCHLAG, Moss Professor of Catholic Social Thought,
University of St. Thomas

"Chartier has written a thought-provoking book on the necessity of consent for the legitimization of political associations. He carefully develops a non-pacifistic critique of the contemporary political state, and urges Christians who, without much, if any, reflection, possess a positive attitude toward the state in general and the

nation-state in particular to think critically about their view. This is an important book."

STEWART GOETZ, Professor of Philosophy, *Ursinus College*

"Gary Chartier's *Christianity and the Nation-State* is a highly valuable exploration of possible social order without sovereign States. Regardless of whether or not one finally agrees with his proposals, everyone who is honestly engaged in thinking beyond the political status quo will benefit from reading his work. It is time for Christians to stop with half-way measures and rear-guard actions and start seriously, creatively thinking about politics. We are indebted to Chartier for showing us what this looks like."

ANDREW WILLARD JONES, Assistant Professor of Theology, *Franciscan University of Steubenville*

"The temptation for the Church to identify its cause with the cause of a particular political entity, or to seek its goals by means of governmental force, is as old as Constantine. Drawing in part on the specific resources of the Christian tradition, and in part on arguments accessible to those of any creed or none, Gary Chartier makes a compelling case for a skeptical theological attitude toward the claims of the nation-state, and offers an inspiring vision of peaceful, diverse, creative, cosmopolitan human association where, in the words of Christ to his followers, the exercise of dominion and authority as practiced in the Gentile kingdoms 'shall not be so among you.'"

RODERICK T. LONG, Professor of Philosophy, *Auburn University*

"*Christianity and the Nation-State* offers a formidable challenge to the idea of the state itself and forces readers to confront an enduring and alluring temptation, namely, to try to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God by seizing political power. Gary Chartier gives us reasons to resist."

ART CARDEN, Professor of Economics, *Samford University*

Christianity and the Nation-State

A Study in Political Theology

GARY CHARTIER
La Sierra University



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For

Alicia C. Homer,

Elenor L. A. P. L. B. B. Webb,

Stephen R. Munzer,

and

Roderick T. Long

These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots, and he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to his courtiers. He will take one-tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and his courtiers. He will take your male and female slaves and the best of your cattle and donkeys and put them to his work. He will take one-tenth of your flocks, and you shall be his slaves. And on that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD will not answer you on that day.

SAMUEL

Who does not know that kings and leaders are sprung from men who were ignorant of God, who by pride, robbery, perfidy, murders – in a word, by almost every crime at the prompting of the devil, who is the prince of this world – have striven with blind cupidity and intolerable presumption to dominate over their equals, that is, over mankind? To whom, indeed, can we better compare them, when they seek to make the priests of God bend to their feet, than to him who is head over all the sons of pride and who, tempting . . . the Son of the Most High, and promising to Him all the kingdoms of the

world, said: “All these I will give unto Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me”?

POPE GREGORY VII

[T]here was no man born marked by God above another; for none comes into this world with a saddle on his back, neither any bootied and spurred to ride him.

RICHARD RUMBOLD

The world is full of great criminals with enormous power, and they are in a death struggle with each other. It is a huge gang battle, using well-meaning lawyers and policemen and clergymen as their front, controlling papers, means of communication, and enrolling everybody in their armies.

THOMAS MERTON

The battle of freedom in this century is the battle of small societies to maintain their inherent life as against the all-devouring Leviathan of the whole – a Leviathan not less but more dangerous if its form be democratic.

JOHN NEVILLE FIGGIS

On all sides pundits proclaim that the nation-state is in trouble. The truth is, it has been in trouble ever since Christ rose from the dead.

OLIVER O'DONOVAN

It was once impossible to imagine countries without Kings. A time will come when they look back and say the same of Presidents.

EDWARD SNOWDEN

Contents

Acknowledgments	<i>page xv</i>
Introduction	1
Political Theology	1
States and Nations	3
Groundwork	5
Where We're Headed	18
1 Created Diversity	24
Trinity and Diversity	28
Welcoming Difference	30
A Politics of Diversity	40
Association	55
Nationalism	59
Place	73
Cosmopolitanism	77
2 State Authority	83
Sin	84
Consent	104
Preferring States Despite Their Liabilities?	116
Divine Power and State Power	117
The Bible and State Authority	118
Covenant	138
Orders or Mandates	145
Protecting Rights	149
Tradition and Representation	160
Divine Accommodation	168

xiv CONTENTS

3	Social Order	171
	The Common Good	172
	Alternatives to Leviathan	177
	Radical Consociationalism	185
	The Church and Social Order	207
	Global Governance	211
4	Engaging States	222
	On Not Building a Christian State	223
	Cooperation	227
	Ideological Mystification	229
	Assessing Participation	234
	The Limits of Participation	240
	War and Vengeance	245
	Saying “No” to Killing Prisoners	257
	Welcoming the Stranger	259
	Global Poverty	267
	Conclusion	272
	Where We’ve Been	272
	Potential Constraints on Critique	279
	Excessive Claims?	281
	The Political Church	283
	The Possibility of Substantial Change	291
	Works Cited	298
	Index	317
	About the Author	323

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