Faith and Nation:
Report of a Commission of Inquiry to the
UK Evangelical Alliance

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

"From the very outset", says Archbishop William Temple, "Christian faith has intimately affected social as well as personal conduct, and the main Christian tradition carries with it a massive body of social teaching".[1]

This report is an attempt to recover and restate this perennial intimacy as it seeks to bring a Christian understanding and an evangelical commitment to tackling some of the social, cultural and political challenges of contemporary society. It also provides an opportunity and some tools (what follows is by no means exhaustive) to reengage the Church and Christian leaders in the big conversation about active citizenship and social responsibility as central to the mandate to be "salt and light" and stewards of God's creation.

Over the last five years, our global village has radically changed. September 11, 2001, and its aftermath altered our consciousness; it changed many of our ideas about "national security" and "international stability". In light of this, the question often asked is whether faith is a friend or a foe in the public sphere. Of course, the Church, along with other faith leaders, is a critical partner in this on-going dialogue for peace, reconciliation and community cohesion.

In commissioning this report, the Evangelical Alliance Council not only wanted to evaluate the contribution of Evangelicals to society, but it also wanted to inform its strategic thinking by understanding the place of religion in the socio-political life of 21st century Britain.

In order to navigate a course through the rich diversity of life in Britain, we have to bring our Christian vision and values to bear upon the problems and new challenges of public policy and contemporary culture, working for peace, justice, social and spiritual transformation. In biblical language, this means becoming like the men and women of Issachar who "understand the times" (1 Ch 12.32) and know what to do. In a modest way, this is what the Commission have attempted to do. It represents one of the most comprehensive studies ever carried out by the EA; and it has done so not just from a benign Evangelical curiosity, but from a commitment to serve and engage with contemporary Britain in ways which are relevant.

The report engages with many of the challenges facing contemporary society, including human rights and religious freedom, constitutional reform and disestablishment, education and faith schools, terrorism and debt-relief. In its challenging conclusions and recommendations, the report confirms a Christian mandate for active citizenship and social engagement in favour of peace, justice and the relief of poverty and suffering.

In arriving at its recommendations the Commission did not set out to establish easy consensus and so its approach has been exploratory rather than prescriptive in the wide range of cultural, constitutional and political issues it highlights. The detailed work offers Christians, people of other faiths and people of no faith, resources for constructive engagement and dialogue on a range of critical social and political in the months and years ahead.

On behalf on the Evangelical Alliance, I want to acknowledge our indebtedness to the Commissioners for their sterling work.

We hope that some of the issues raised will help us anticipate and intelligently respond to new developments which our multifaceted society will inevitably throw up in our own lifetime. But we also want the material to inform a prophetic response to politicians, policy makers and the wider public as we wrestle together with what faith means to our nation.

Joel Edwards
General Director of the Evangelical Alliance

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[1] See his *Christianity and the Social Order* (London: SCM Press, 1950), 32. (Originally printed in 1942).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.   PURPOSE, METHOD AND STRUCTURE

This report is the product of three years' work by a special commission of the Evangelical Alliance UK. As such, it represents a major contribution to the Alliance's Movement for Change initiative – a programme launched in autumn 2000 'to reinvigorate Christian witness and make a significant impact on the moral and spiritual heart of the nation.'

The Faith and Nation Commission undertook its task very consciously with regard to the significant decline in British church affiliation which has occurred since the 1960s, and which has resulted in only 6% of the population attending services regularly in England and Wales today. The Commission was also aware that these statistics reflect broader cultural, sociological and intellectual trends which are profoundly challenging the status, role and witness of the Church in 21st century Britain. In analysing these trends and addressing the challenges they present, the report focuses particularly on the changing public function of the church in a nation which no longer takes its bearings from Christianity in the way it once did. Specifically, it seeks to address a British national context no longer bound up with 'the faith of the church' as enshrined in the Bible, creeds, prayer books and Christian rites of passage, but marked instead by a growing diversity of religions and worldviews, clustered together by government under the catch-all rubric of 'faith'.

Against this background, the report assesses the identity and tasks of the Christian community at the start of the new millennium, as it works out its calling to be 'Church' in relation to the 'State' and the 'Nation', or nations, of the United Kingdom.

The Commission's terms of reference were as follows:

> Intending to evaluate and shape the ongoing contribution of Evangelicals to society, and seeking to uphold religious liberty, the Commission will investigate Faith and Nation in the UK. It will aim to inform the strategic thinking of the Evangelical Alliance through a study of the place of religion in the socio-political life of 21st century Britain. Integral to the Commission's analysis will be engagement with relevant theological and constitutional issues.

The emphasis on religious liberty here is a response to various secularizing forces which have already begun to challenge established Christian freedoms, and which are set to do so more forcefully in future. Chief among these is the introduction of new laws and policies driven by concepts of 'equality' and 'rights', which were once derived from the biblical doctrine of creation, but which now increasingly cast classical Christians as intolerant, exclusive and unfit for the civic sphere. The highlighting of socio-political, theological and constitutional aspects of faith is reflected in the three main strands of the report. Although these strands are closely interwoven in the final text, they were first treated separately by three sub-groups of the Commission, each of whom gathered written contributions from a wide range of sources in their field, and then convened sessions in which expert 'witnesses' made verbal submissions and were subsequently interviewed.

2.   FAITH AND NATION IN BRITAIN TODAY

Various worldviews have shaped the challenging situation in which British Christians now find themselves. Pluralism both defines and prescribes diversification as the social norm, celebrating difference in ways which can be positive for religious tolerance and democracy, but which typically deny Christian claims to objective, universal truth. Relativism likewise assumes that truth is contingent rather than ultimate, and so struggles with revealed, monotheistic religion. Secularism is ideologically committed to interpreting the public world without reference to God, whereas secularization describes the *de facto* marginalisation of religion from civic institutions, and its consequent 'privatisation'. Clearly, both have been evident in the decline of churchgoing and the gradual weakening of public Christianity in Britain. Also detrimental to the Church's witness has been individualism, which owes much to the Enlightenment's emphasis on the thinking subject as the locus of truth, and so tends to dethrone God in favour of human reason or will.

These trends are accompanied by a growing emphasis on national identity, both in the UK, thanks to devolution, and overseas, where recent conflicts in the Balkans and Sudan demonstrate the darker, nationalistic side of this trend. In Britain, it is English identity which appears the most vexed. This is further complicated by the fact that England is now a decidedly *multicultural* nation, due to the significant presence of immigrant communities. Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales also have immigrants, but since their national identity is relatively strong, lines of assimilation are more clear-cut. Conceiving 'English' or 'British' citizenship for a population as multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual as that which exists now is a great challenge. In this context Christians must be aware of the cultural trappings of their beliefs, and emphasise those aspects of their faith which are universal and essential rather than ethnically contingent. Any notion of citizenship must entail respect for other traditions and religious outlooks. It is on this basis that Christians can be good citizens - just as long as they are not forced by the ruling authorities to gag their own authentic gospel witness.

Questions of national character and citizenship bear especially on denominations which define themselves positively with respect to the nation or state. No doubt the contribution of Free, Independent and other non-established churches is immense. Yet it is typically these national and 'state' churches which offer the starkest measure of where Christianity stands in civic terms today. Although the Church of Scotland might in a sense be called 'established', and the Church in Wales is disestablished yet national, the Church of England's establishment has generated the most vigorous debate about the place of public religion in a pluralist context. In response to this debate, the Commission recognises that there are various specific constitutional issues at stake beyond the basic principle of establishment.

On bishops in the House of Lords, the Commission accepts that if a proposal to remove or reduce the number of bishops were made as part of a thoroughgoing reform of the second chamber, this should not necessarily be opposed. However, it would question any stand-alone initiative to remove the bishops, since this would send the wrong signal about the role of religion in public life - namely that it should be *officially* and *specifically* diminished. On the involvement of the Prime Minister in the appointment of bishops, the Commission understands that this could be seen as embodying the principle of lay participation in church decision-making, but does not believe that its removal would cause major constitutional problems. Indeed, it suggests that this might actually enhance the Church's integrity.

While the monarchy should be shaped as effectively as possible to meet the needs of British society in the 21st century, at the next Coronation the heir to the throne should be discouraged from using the title 'Defender of Faith' rather than 'Defender of the Faith', lest it be construed as syncretistic. Holding separate ceremonies for his accession as Supreme Governor of the Church of England and his recognition as Head of State might in the latter case allow more scope for the participation of other faith groups. Although the Commission is split on the propriety of establishment as such, it stresses that the relation of Church to State at any point in history is contingent, so that loss (or surrender) of established status need not jeopardise the capacity of the Church to fulfil its mission. Slow, natural attenuation of establishment, such as in the lapse of the blasphemy laws, does not warrant concerted resistance; but significant resources should not be diverted to its wholesale dismantling.

3.   **RELIGION, NATION, STATE AND SOCIETY: PRECEDENTS AND PRESENT MODELS**

The modern, abstract concept of the 'state' is unknown in the Old Testament. There, political power is embodied in identifiable rulers who may be favourable or hostile, but who are always seen as subject to the sovereign rule of God. Thus Jeremiah's advice to the exiles in Babylon has particular resonance: 'But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare' (Jer. 29.7). Israel gains strength in the midst of oppression from knowing that it has been called to live as God's chosen covenant community. Similarly, Christians in the New Testament gain strength from knowing that Jesus' kingdom is 'not of this world' (Jn. 18.36), and the eschatological promise enshrined in this statement makes it possible to submit the governing authorities now (Rom. 13.1-7). Having said this, there is a very real sense in which *everything is* God's, so that even Caesar's power is limited (Jn. 19.11). It is also clear that where gospel ministry is curtailed by civic authorities, they may be defied (Acts 5.29). The tension between these respectively quietist and activist texts is becoming more apparent in 21st century Britain, as

Christian organisations face legislative threats to their right to employ workers consistent with their own moral ethos, as police target Christians who articulate historic sexual ethics, and as Christian believers face prosecution as purveyors of 'hate speech' for distinguishing clearly between their own and other faiths.

In the post-apostolic period Christians were vulnerable to the vicissitudes of Roman imperial rule, veering between terrible persecution and relative peace. Refusal to honour Caesar above God accounted for much of their suffering, but this condition changed dramatically under the Emperor Constantine. The Edict of Toleration (311AD) granted them stability, while Constantine's patronage gave them political power and his successor Theodosius declared Christianity the official religion of the empire. This 'Christendom' model pertained for the next 1500 years or so. Different expressions of it developed in the East and the West, and the mainline Protestant Reformers diverged from one another somewhat on their theology of church and state. These divergences are reflected, for instance, in the different models of church-state and church-nation relationships which developed in the Churches of England (Anglican) and Scotland (Presbyterian), as well as in Wales and Ireland. Even so, all alike affirmed the Christendom compact. On the radical wing of the Reformation, Anabaptists like Balthassar Hubmaier and Menno Simons challenged this consensus by commending an independent, 'gathered church' ecclesiology and an explicit refusal to swear oaths or serve as magistrates. As Christendom fades, these Anabaptist emphases are becoming more popular among evangelicals, but the legacy of Christendom is still much debated, with some commending the opportunities afforded by state support for mission; others repudiating the Church's collusion with power.

With roots in both the magisterial and radical Reformations, Evangelicalism developed from the early 18th century as a movement which self-consciously subordinated ecclesiological concerns to its distinctive emphases on gospel proclamation, personal conversion, biblical supremacy and social concern. Indeed, as an avowedly trans-denominational phenomenon, it has rarely been aligned to any one paradigm of church-state relationship. Rather, it has operated in a more pragmatic way, making common cause with others as appropriate in evangelistic campaigning, and in a wide spectrum of political, social and community projects. In the 19th century these ranged from the anti-slavery reforms won by Thomas Clarkson, William Wilberforce and others, through the educational and employment campaigns of Lord Shaftesbury and Hannah Moore, to the religious liberties efforts mounted by the World Evangelical Alliance. Although the philanthropic zeal of the Victorian period waned somewhat in the first half of the 20th century, the post-World War II period saw a gradual recovery of evangelical social concern on both sides of the Atlantic, culminating in the Lausanne Congress of 1974 and continuing to the present. As the aristocratic principle of *noblesse oblige* which drove Wilberforce and Shaftesbury gave way to the more centralised model of the Welfare State, British evangelicals sought government sponsorship for their social initiatives, while still actively campaigning on 'moralistic' issues like pornography, abortion, euthanasia and the Sabbath. Latterly, campaigns like Jubilee 2000 and Micah Challenge very deliberately sought to engage government bodies, not just at national level, but also through international governmental organisations like the United Nations and the G7.

Increasingly in more recent years, evangelicals have found themselves in alignment on these and other social issues not only with Christians from other traditions, but also with members of non-Judaeo-Christian religions. Recognising the need to understand the social and political ethics of these other religious traditions in the increasingly multicultural context of modern Britain, and realising the dangers of ignorance when co-operating with them, the report offers a descriptive overview of the faith-state-church matrix as it is perceived in Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism.

4.   MODELS FOR SOCIAL POLITICAL AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

As a movement committed to the supreme authority of Scripture, Evangelicalism has characteristically sought to ground its social activism in the Bible. Here, there emerge powerful paradigms for civic and community renewal. God's creation and active maintenance of the whole cosmos means that for him, there is no sharp 'sacred-secular' divide. His sovereignty extends to all aspects of life - to political, cultural, economic and domestic spheres, as well as to religious ones (Gen. 1.1-2.24). Furthermore, the self-revelation of God as a Trinity of persons-in-relation emphasises that creation, salvation and final redemption are fundamentally *communal* acts. No doubt analogies between the 'society' of persons in the Godhead and human society can too readily neglect the radical otherness

of God, and may assume too much about his inner life. Yet at its best, recent evangelical reflection on these social and relational dimensions of the Trinity has helpfully informed Christian mission, and not least evangelical mission in the public square. The work of Miroslav Volf is of special note here.

The creation of humanity in God's image (Gen. 1.26-7) confirms that all men and women are possessed of dignity and worth, and should be treated as such without discrimination. It also suggests the foundational status of marriage, and of family as the 'first society' – the building-block of community life.

While all civic rule is subject to God's authority, the Bible does suggest a role for the state in his providence, most notably in the fair distribution of wealth, (Lev. 19.9-10; Deut. 24.19-22), the restraint and just punishment of crime (Ex. 21.12-36; Num. 35.16-34; Rom. 13:4; 1 Pet. 2:14), and the protection of aliens **(**Ex. 12.48-9, 22.21, 23.9; Lev. 19.33-4). On the basis that they have been instituted by God for these and other social purposes, governments are worthy of submission (Rom. 13.1-7; 1 Pet. 2:14-15). Even so, Jesus in his ministry demonstrates a coming kingdom of justice and peace which will be far superior to anything that has pertained hitherto (Matt. 13.36-43; 25.31-46, cf. Rev. 21:1-22:21). Christians must conduct their civic ministry as part of God's mission and in expectation of this coming kingdom, while recognising, in contrast to the claims of the Social Gospel and the implications of much Liberation Theology, that the same kingdom will not be fully manifest until Jesus returns.

Just as sin hampers the expression of God's kingdom in individual lives, so the effects of the Fall are apparent in what the apostle Paul on several occasions terms 'the powers' (Gal. 4; Eph. 6.12; Col. 1.16; 2.15; Heb. 6.5; 1 Peter 3.22). These are linked with corrupt social and political institutions, and confirm that sin can be 'structural' as well as individual. However, they are ontologically distinct from those institutions and are not to be demythologized. The powers are to be strenuously resisted by Christians, but will only be finally defeated in the last days.

Another important model for Christian social engagement is the model of the common good. Associated with Augustine, developed by Thomas Aquinas and adapted by the Protestant Reformers, it describes the peace, harmony and tranquillity that is possible in this world, as a reflection and anticipation of the life of heaven, and of the political good order and discipline that is needed to preserve it. As most thoroughly expounded in more recent times in Roman Catholic social teaching, it embraces the fulfilment of individuals, families and communities. Thus, citizens should actively participate in political life and should use their vote, not for selfish ends, but to advance the common good.

The concept of the common good is echoed to some extent by more recent attempts to commend the virtues of religion through use of the term 'faith communities'. Evangelical Christians may feel understandably ambivalent about the reductionism implicit in this phrase, but it is legitimate to see religion as generally seeking to inculcate not just a 'worldview' but a sustaining vision that values family life, truth-telling, social compassion and sexual fidelity, and which construes morality in a future aspect, so mitigating destructive hedonism and nihilism.

As the Church pursues its mission in keeping with the models and principles just mentioned, there are a number of outstanding practical challenges which it must face in the present British context. Evangelicals in particular will need to ensure that their historic commitment to personal evangelism is not dimmed by the often exhausting tasks of social engagement. Their mission will have to be strategic and prophetic, but also pastorally sensitive and accessible to those many who, in the post-Christendom world, know very little about the Bible and the Christian tradition. Here, the training of skilled apologists will be vital.

Growing legislative pressure on the distinctive claims of the gospel in relation to other faiths, and on its sexual-ethical imperatives, may necessitate political action, which may include protest and resistance. In this, as in other areas of social engagement, evangelicals will need to consider what forms of civil disobedience might be acceptable. Moreover, as they stand with others who might not be evangelical, and indeed not even Christian, in such contexts, they will need to determine what level of co-operation, or 'co-belligerence', is advisable. Both in the domestic parliamentary arena, and in the European Union, they will be confronted by complex possibilities for constitutional reform. In the educational sphere, heated arguments about the propriety of faith schools are likely to continue, and they will need to marshal cogent defences of them while also refining their theological perspectives on the far greater number of common schools.

Daunting though these and other challenges may be, withdrawal and disconnection from socio-political life are not a desirable option for evangelicals in the UK today. It is hoped that the work done here will persuade evangelical churches, groups and individuals to take up the challenge of holistic mission in strategic and effective ways, to the glory of God.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

For the full list of conclusions and recommendations, which places the findings and proposals arising from the Commission's work in more detailed context, see pp.160-169.

Religious Liberty

1. Recognise the preservation of religious liberty and freedom of religious expression as fundamental rights which must be defended, especially in the areas of broadcasting, education, social and community action, employment, and voluntary conversion from one religion to another without legal or economic penalties (Luke 10.25-37; 1 Cor. 8.1-13; Gal.5.22-3).

Role of Evangelicals in British National Life

2. Recognise that the term *evangelical* is much misunderstood and often vilified in public discourse, but that attempts to abandon it are unwarranted. Acknowledge that a constructive presentation of evangelical faith and practice must be a priority in the area of public policy.

3. Recognise that while politics involves compromise and negotiation on some fronts, authentic evangelical engagement with government and political institutions must resist any temptation to dilute the gospel in pursuit of public favour, to suspend essential evangelical convictions, distinctives and practices so as to comply with the demands of state or party, or to withdraw from the public sphere altogether.

Church, Pluralism and Human Rights

4. Recognise the right of different faith groups to constitute themselves according to their own beliefs and ethos, emphasising that government commitment to political equality should not be used as a pretext for interfering with the organisation or activities of such groups.

5. Protect human rights, on the basis that all people derive their value, dignity and purpose from their creation in the image of God.

6. Support and encourage equality in the areas of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age, as well as in religion, whilst recognising that an evangelical Christian perspective in this area may be very different from current secular views.

Keeping Sunday Special

7. Urge government to recognise the rights of workers to attend Sunday public worship and to maintain a weekly day for rest and family time. Emphasise that it is for the benefit of society as a whole that a proper balance between work and home life be encouraged, by legislation where appropriate. Uphold the rights of other religious traditions to reasonable time off work in conjunction with their own religious festivals.

The Media

8. Urge the broadcasting authorities to present more balanced treatment of religion, noting particularly:

i. The decline in religious broadcasting in the mainstream media and the tendency of terrestrial television in particular to caricature and misrepresent the nature of religion, and especially of evangelical Christianity

ii. The need for orthodox majority religious traditions to be more proportionately represented, with less focus on sectarian, marginal or extremist expressions of faith.

iii. The need for greater right of reply to be given to mainline, orthodox religious perspectives when minority views or hostile critique are emphasised.

Social Justice

9. Actively promote justice and compassion for the poor, vulnerable and oppressed, prioritising care through the maintenance of healthy welfare and charitable sectors for those who suffer disadvantage and need.

Environment

10. Urge government to honour the UN's millennium development goals through specific policies designed to meet associated targets.

Civil Disobedience

11. As far as possible, use political and legal channels to resist state demands which clearly conflict with Christian conscience.

The House of Lords

12. Urge that representation in any new revised chamber should reflect the diversity and contribution of faith in the nation.

13. Accept that if a proposal to remove or reduce the number of bishops is made in the context of a thoroughgoing reform of the House which is intended to enhance its significance and make an effective response to the decline of Parliament, this should not be opposed.

14. Resist any stand-alone initiative to remove the bishops, on the grounds that this would send quite the wrong signal to society about the role of religion in public life - namely that it should be officially and specifically diminished.

The Judiciary

15. Support the establishment of an independent appointments commission for judges, as a means to allaying suspicions about the judicial appointments process.

The Monarchy

16. Urge that the next Coronation service should:

    i.   Retain its historic character as an act of Christian worship, while being more ecumenical in form to reflect the growing diversity of Christian life and witness in the UK.

    ii.   Feature representatives from non-Christian faiths as guests.

    iii.   Avoid any suggestion of interfaith or syncretistic worship as not only wrong in itself, but incompatible with the monarch's role as Supreme Governor of the Church of England and 'Defender of the Faith' - that is, of the Protestant Christian faith by law established in England.

17. Resist the current heir to the throne's suggested re-titling of himself as 'Defender of Faiths', on the grounds that such a change may too readily be interpreted as an endorsement of syncretism.

18. Suggest that the Sovereign's concern for Britain's various non-Anglican faith-communities should more appropriately be expressed in ways that do not appear to compromise the explicitly Protestant Christian constitutional position of the Church of England.

19. Consider possible separate ceremonies confirming the monarch as Head of State on the one hand and Supreme Governor of the Church of England on the other, with representation of different religious groups more extensively acknowledged in the former.

Prime Ministerial Patronage

20. Accept that removing responsibility for the appointment of bishops from the Prime Minister's office would incur few if any significant constitutional difficulties.

Establishment and the Church

21. Acknowledge that concerted, wholesale disestablishment would involve longstanding and complex constitutional challenges, and accept on this basis that government and churches should not divert significant resources to such a project.

22. Accept that a gradual, ongoing attenuation of establishment is evident - for example, in the lapse of the blasphemy laws - and acknowledge that systematic resistance to such gradual attenuation is not necessarily warranted.

Religious Education and Schools

23. Oppose potential requirements for compulsory acts of multifaith worship that may be syncretistic and thus offensive to other faith groups, as well as to Christians.

24. Whilst acknowledging present-day social diversity, embrace significant new opportunities to develop Christian schools within the maintained sector.

Marriage and Family

25. Commend and support the divine ordinance of marriage as exclusively between one man and one woman, and promote it, together with the family, as central to the well-being of society.

26. Call on government to promote laws and policies and financial incentives that strengthen marriage and family life as foundational for civil society.

27. Resist church services of blessing for same-sex partnerships as unbiblical.

28. Support Christian civic officials (e.g., registrars and members of adoption panels) who find themselves compromised by new regulations that would force them to act contrary to their religious conscience, particularly in connection with civil partnership ceremonies for same-sex couples.

Human Life

29. Urge preservation of the sanctity and dignity of human life, especially at its beginning and end, and oppose extension of individual freedoms and rights in the practice of abortion and euthanasia.

30. Counsel caution in the field of genetic human experimentation, and insist that it be subject to rigorous ethical oversight.

Terrorism

31. Repudiate terrorism, and particularly its targeting of innocent civilians, as morally indefensible and evil.

32. Urge that a balance be struck between civil liberties and national security, wherein government neither exploits nor is to seen to exploit the heightened threat from terror as a means of arrogating power to itself for other purposes.

SCOPE AND PARAMETERS OF THE INQUIRY

This Inquiry investigates the relationship between Faith and Nation in the 21st century. Whilst it seeks to be broadly based and wide ranging it is however necessarily limited in scope. A presumption is made throughout the whole of the study of the pre-eminence of the Christian faith within a UK context, though this is not thereby intended to imply marginalisation of the roles of other religious groups. A focus on England in the Inquiry as the main arena for constitutional issues of Church and State is not meant in any way to minimise the importance of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to the debate. Indeed, each of those nations has played an important role, both in supplying submissions to the Inquiry and through representation on the Commission itself. It is acknowledged, however, that in some circumstances the comparative relevance of certain conclusions and recommendations may vary between nations. Also, Scottish and Northern Irish law is not infrequently quite different from English equivalents. The importance of the European Union, especially in constitutional matters and the experience of other nations is readily acknowledged.

However, the Inquiry has necessarily been limited by constraints of space and time in order to keep the project to manageable proportions. It will be readily apparent that the Inquiry has not sought to be exhaustive in scope, although within the overall constraints of the core agenda an attempt has been made to balance breadth with realism and proportion. It is also recognised that political events unfold rapidly. Therefore a cut-off point of September 2005 has been adopted for the sake of this Report.

It should be noted that references in brackets throughout the text of the Report which do not have accompanying footnotes refer to submissions received by the Inquiry. These are detailed in the Index.

1.   PURPOSE, METHOD AND STRUCTURE OF THE COMMISSION

1.1   Rationale for the Commission

In September 2000, the Evangelical Alliance Council endorsed a call to Evangelical Christians to seek to be a movement for change, "to reinvigorate Christian witness and make a significant impact on the moral and spiritual heart of the Nation". The Alliance recognised that a vision involving Christians working together to transform British culture and society is necessarily long-term. It also acknowledged that an essential constituent of a process of societal transformation involves a deep contemporary, and where possible, forward-looking understanding and conviction concerning the future role of Faith and Church in State and Nation at the beginning of the 21st century. Faced with huge challenges to historic orthodox Christianity presented by radical cultural, philosophical, legal, societal and religious shifts, how can the Church best serve the Nation whilst simultaneously challenging the institutions of power to honour God? Only through a better understanding of the relevant historical, constitutional, cultural, sociological, ecclesiological, and other issues could the Alliance legitimately claim to contribute a serious Christian voice to the debate which was already underway in the public sphere, and where secular and secularist interests were already commanding and driving the agenda. The Alliance therefore considered that a wide-ranging Commission which adopted an open-minded approach to the question of the future relationship between Faith and Nation was timely in offering it a basis on which the Alliance Council could develop its own position from an informed perspective. It hoped, by means of rigorous inquiry and careful reflection, to promote informed debate within the Evangelical constituency and gain a respected hearing for Evangelical Christians in the public arena.

1.2   'Faith and Nation' v 'Church and Nation'

The Commission has been keen to ensure that the scope of the Inquiry was not limited to the narrow issue of the relationship between Church and State. It deliberately considered religious faith in its broadest sense, acknowledging the plural society which now characterises the UK. It recognises that 'public life' includes not only the accessories of State and government, but also the courts, the media, education, the arts and non-governmental organisations, all of which help to inform culture and society.

The Inquiry is set against a backdrop in which organised religion in Britain has been declining since the 19th century. In 2005, estimates of those attending church on a Sunday as a percentage of the population were 6.5% for England, 6.8% for Wales, 10.1% for Scotland, and 6.6% for Great Britain as a whole. A bleak recent study by Christian Research produced in September 2005 has forecast that with congregations plummeting by two-thirds over the next three decades, Britain's churches may face virtual extinction with only 2% of the population attending Sunday services by the year 2040, of which 65% are expected to be over the age of 65. The 1851 census revealed that 40% of the population was attending church. Though in the 2001 Population Census only some 16% of the UK population claimed to have 'no religion', and 72% considered themselves to be 'Christian'[2], in fact only 9.4% of the population were described as actual church members. The rate of membership decline between 2000 and 2020 is anticipated to be in the order of 37% for Methodists, 31% for Anglicans, 28% for the Roman Catholic Church, and 17% for Baptists.

When it comes to the established Church of England, although in 1920 approximately 68% of births were baptised, in 2002 that figure had fallen to 18%. For the Anglican Church in England typical Sunday attendance is 2% of the population, with weekly attendance slightly

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[2] The percentage varied across the UK. In England and Wales it was 72%; in Scotland it was 65%; in Northern Ireland it was 86%. There are arguments for and against the accuracy of the Census figures. For an assessment see *UKCH Religious Trends No.5 2005/2006: The Future of the Church,* Peter Brierley (ed.) (London: Christian Research, 2005), 2.3.

higher at 2.3% and monthly attendance at 3.3%. Attendance at Roman Catholic mass is typically 2% whilst Free Church attendance comes out at 2.8%. Church attendance in Wales and Scotland in 2000 stood at just over 7% and 13% respectively. The Church of England has experienced a painful recent history with external sociological factors combining with huge internal struggles to produce a serious decline in membership which continued unabated during the last decade of the 20th century, notwithstanding the 'Decade of Evangelism' and the supposed strength of the parish system. Similar pictures of decline also apply to other Christian denominations, although the generally negative church growth figures nevertheless mask pockets of vibrant growth in Evangelical Christianity, especially amongst the new churches and Black Christians in established and independent churches. A recent forecast claims that Evangelicals will dominate the Church of England by 2020.

Islam is the largest non-Christian religion in the UK at 3% of the total population, with an increasing influence beyond its numerical representation. Muslims attending prayers at British mosques on Fridays are forecast to reach double the number of Christians at church on a Sunday by 2040. In general, Britain in the 21st century shows comparatively little interest in organised religion, with most people using churches mainly for weddings and funerals, and perhaps the baptism of children. Church weddings have been falling off steeply since the mid-1990s when legal restrictions on the type of venue eligible for a marriage licence were removed, and are expected to drop drastically from 36% of the total in 2000 to 15% by 2020.[3]

Against such a backdrop, where the prevalence of work, leisure and entertainment lifestyles has significantly generated fundamental changes in traditional ways of 'doing religion', this Inquiry seeks to examine from a combination of constitutional, sociological, cultural, and theological perspectives the place of faith in our society in the context of societal trends characterised by secularisation, privatisation, and pluralism.

1.2.1   Definition of Key Terms

The following terms deserve explanation since they are capable of multiple interpretations. Unless otherwise indicated the Report of the Commission adheres to the definitions set out below.

1.2.1.1 State

The term 'State' is generally employed in a rather restricted sense to refer to the civil government and magistrature and thus includes the executive, legislature, and the judicial, diplomatic, military, and law enforcement functions of the State – what Stephen Perks calls the 'administration of public justice'.[4] It should be noted, however, that contemporary secular political thought (at least in continental Europe, if not in the UK) tends to conceive it in much broader terms – nearer to the idea of 'Nation'.

1.2.1.2 Nation/National

The term 'Nation' is used to refer to "a large group of people sharing the same cultural and perhaps racial heritage and usually living in one territory under one government. The word 'national' means 'characteristic of or common to a nation', and sometimes imports an idea of ownership or control, particularly ownership or control by the State (or the Crown) as a personification of the nation."[5] In this Report the primary reference of 'State' and 'Nation' is to the United Kingdom State and the nations or countries that comprise the United Kingdom,

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[3] The above statistics are taken from *UK Christian Handbook Religious Trends 3 and 4*, edited by Peter Brierley (London: Christian Research, 2001, 2003 and Church Statistics 2002 (General Synod of the Church of England), and *UKCH Religious Trends No.5 2005/2006: The Future of the Church,* Pete Brierley (ed.) (London: Christian Research, 2005), 2.2-2.24. This was helpfully analysed in *The Church of England Newspaper*, September 9th, 2005, 2 and 24. It should be noted that many of the statistics quoted are based on one Sunday's snapshot.

[4] Stephen C. Perks, *A Defence of the Christian State* (Taunton: The Kuyper Foundation, 1998), 11-12.

[5] Norman Doe, "The Notion of a National Church: A Juridical Framework", in *Law and Justice*, No.149, Trinity/Michaelmas 2002, (Worcester: The Edmund Plowden Trust, 2002), 77-78.

though where the Church of England is specifically concerned there is a corresponding narrower focus on England.

1.2.1.3 *Church*

In general, the Report employs the word 'Church' or 'church' to refer to the institutional Church, namely the visible body of Christ or community of believers organised as a legally defined societal structure for the purpose of maintaining Christian public religious worship. Usually the broader understanding of 'Church' as 'the Church invisible' or 'the Church universal' is not in focus. The Report is concerned mainly with the body of Christ as an ecclesiastical and social institution. Where a particular church is in focus (e.g., the Church of England) this is usually made clear in the text.

1.2.1.4 *State, National and Established Church*

The term 'state Church' usually denotes a specific constitutional and legal establishment of a church in relation to the state which gives it both certain privileges (which may include political, legal and financial, as well as religious ones), and may also impose certain state controls upon its own inner life and government. The Church of Denmark would almost certainly have a stronger claim to be considered a 'state church' than the Church of England. Many people would prefer to regard the latter as the church 'established' by civil law in England, rather than a 'state' church, and this report adopts that perspective.

A 'national Church' is understood to be a church which is generally recognised by the country in question to be the main representative of the Christian tradition within that country, having decisively shaped its historical spiritual ethos and become entitled to speak as the majority 'Christian voice' of the community at large. A 'national Church' is not always a legal or constitutional concept (e.g., as in the case of the Church of Scotland, which is recognised in law as a national church) but often rather a subjective, even sentimental perception. It considers itself, and tends to be regarded by the population as a whole, as expressing the religious sentiments and historic spiritual identity of the majority of the people, and therefore able to represent the people and their aspirations religiously in the public sphere. A national church may also be a state church, but does not have to be. Sweden is an example of a national non-state church. The Russian Orthodox Church, for example, claims to represent Russian identity whilst simultaneously rejecting any description of itself as the 'State Church'. In fact, there is no legal definition of a 'national Church' that conforms to any juridical classification.

It is clear, therefore, that 'national church', 'state church', and 'established church' do not necessarily mean the same thing. It is quite possible for a national church to exist without the precise statutory framework or privileges of a 'state church.' The obvious example in Britain is the Church of Scotland which does not have the monarch as its titular head nor seat any of its clergy in the House of Lords. Some have found the model of the Church of Scotland to be an example of a positive arrangement in which the Church may be recognised as 'national' without the obstacles of establishment. This effectively represents a form of 'weak establishment' in which the state's acceptance of and support for the church enables it to actively disseminate the Christian faith nationally.[6]

1.2.1.5 *Evangelical*

As used here, the word 'Evangelical' denotes a transdenominational Christian movement represented by some 700 million people world wide. As well as affirming the beliefs of classical, orthodox Christianity, Evangelicalism owes its distinctive theological character to the emphasis of the Protestant Reformers on the supreme authority of Scripture over reason and tradition, and the justification of the sinner by grace through faith. In addition, it derives its particular stress on personal holiness and active witness from the great revivals, which took place on both sides of the Atlantic during the 18th century. Beyond these basic distinguishing historical marks the ecclesiastical diversity of Evangelicalism means that it encompasses a

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[6] With acknowledgements to Keith Clements (*Clements*) and Doe, *Notion of a National Church*, 77-78, 81-82.

range of views on the relationship of Church and State, Faith and Nation. A fuller explanation is provided in Appendix 3.

1.3   Key Objectives

1.3.1   Terms of Reference

The Commission of Inquiry's agreed terms of reference were as follows:

> Intending to evaluate and shape the ongoing contribution of Evangelicals to society, and seeking to uphold religious liberty, the Commission will investigate Faith and Nation in the UK. It will aim to inform the strategic thinking of the Evangelical Alliance through a study of the place of religion in the socio-political life of 21st century Britain. Integral to the Commission's analysis will be engagement with relevant theological and constitutional issues.

1.3.2   Evangelical Ethos of the Commission

While the Commission includes a wide range of ecclesiological and theological outlooks in line with the terms of reference, its membership largely reflected the fundamental aim of producing an *Evangelical* Inquiry into the relationship between Faith and Nation. Whilst the Commission made a conscious attempt to consult other faith perspectives, its overall approach and tone has remained distinctly and intentionally Evangelical throughout.

1.3.3   The Commission's Relation to Wider Bodies and Networks

While the overwhelming majority of Britain's multi-cultural, multi-faith society desires to live in peace and freedom within a national context which is rooted historically in Judeo-Christian values, tensions and even conflict may result when this dominant culture collides with multiple minority groups. The privileges of historical religious establishment in the social order (especially the Church of England) may seem increasingly difficult to justify, though some would argue that a form of establishment provides a much-needed basis for stability. Nevertheless, our social and political future is dependent on our ability to hold together a diverse and rapidly changing culture, which nevertheless implies liberty of conscience, freedom of speech and religion, and the inclusivity and involvement of all the nation's citizens. Policies of exclusion or discrimination are incompatible with social order. Inevitable tensions therefore arise between the demands of increasing democracy and preservation of the traditions, security and integrity of the nation. Protection of established forms of religious, social and political life have been the source of many of the bitter struggles of history notably involving Protestant dissent and Roman Catholic emancipation. Some of their legacies continue to the present day. Now the representatives of other cultures and their religions form an increasing element of our society. A way must be found to live peacefully together whilst maintaining precious religious liberties and distinctives. But amongst the many far-reaching issues that require grappling with are those that question how and to what extent churches should relate to other faith groups, and in what circumstances they might adopt co-belligerent approaches with one another and with other religious groups in a common interest.

The Commission has inevitably adopted a distinctively Evangelical Christian faith approach in its deliberations. Nevertheless, it has consciously attempted to consider faith in a broad perspective, and has sought and received submissions from and consulted with sources outside the Evangelical and indeed Christian traditions. Due to inevitable constraints however, it has not been possible to enter into extensive inter-faith and non-faith consultations.

1.3.4   Evaluating and Investigating the Current Context

Though inevitably informed by historical considerations, there has been an emphasis in the Commission's work on understanding and evaluating the current socio-political, ecclesiological, cultural and constitutional situation so that its findings may accurately reflect the world as it is. For example, numerical decline in traditional religion has, however, been accompanied by the simultaneous rise of Evangelicalism and the charismatic movement, which

has impacted most mainline churches and largely accounts for the rapid growth of the new churches. Whilst the substantial non-established church sector increasingly focuses on the local community, it has nevertheless been criticised for relative unconcern as regards wider church structure and ecclesiology. Many commentators have viewed the recent experience of the Church of England as confusing and disorientating as it becomes engaged internally in a continual process of self-discovery and compromise and the need to come to terms with the extensive secularity of the environment in which it now operates. A key question for the Commission to consider has therefore been the response of the Church to liberal western democratic secularism, the impact of which may appear in the institutions of government and courts, but which in fact originates as a sociological phenomenon in society at large. Ironically, historic relationships between Church and State have aimed to limit the range of the State's power and protect the freedom of the individual religious conscience from violation by the State, rather than the restriction of private faith within the public sphere. The role of the secular state vis a vis religious belief therefore requires careful analysis and the genuineness of claims to neutrality in religious matters needs to be scrutinised and questioned.

1.3.5   *Shaping the Future*

Pressure for changes in the way the Church relates to the Nation have arisen from a variety of sources – Christian and non-Christian. The following factors have been prominent in recent popular debate:

- Perceived institutionalised religious discrimination seen to be increasingly at odds with e.g., the contemporary emphasis on individual human rights and equality.
- Unease about the continuance of an established Church.
- Desire to reflect in constitutional arrangements what is seen as a pluralist, multi-faith society.
- Questioning the desirability of maintaining a hereditary monarchy and a confessional Christian state.

Equally strong proponents, notably, though not exclusively, from the Church of England hierarchy, urge maintenance of the status quo.

1.3.6   *Upholding Religious Liberty*

Protection of religious liberty still remains enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights. But non-religious or anti-religious secularist forces based on an individualistic approach to human rights and equality agendas have recently tended to push their way into dominance in the regulation of public life. There are consequently frequent calls for the disestablishment of religion and the radical separation of faith from public life – indeed, perhaps towards a privatisation so complete that religious expression becomes invisible. Relativism, syncretism, and neutralism are regularly advocated in the face of the dilemmas posed by pluralism, the effect of which is increasingly to marginalise religion and to press for its disengagement from the various public areas with which religious activity has traditionally been associated. Emphasis on *equality* frequently comes at the expense of *diversity*. Increasingly, religious bodies may be expected to conform to secular models of 'correctness', even where these directly contravene the beliefs and ethos of the faith groups concerned. Recent examples of hostility to religion have included conflicts over rights to preach and broadcast an exclusive gospel in a multi-faith climate; the subject matter taught in faith-based schools; faith initiatives in the rehabilitation of prisoners; support of faith-based community care and voluntary activity by local authorities which have removed funding in protest at faith distinctives and trappings of supposed proselytism; freedom of religious organisations to define their membership basis. While many Evangelical Christians have recently been mobilised into public expression of the need to defend such perceived threats to religious liberty, liberal Christian strands have tended to welcome the secular agenda, using it to position Christianity as

an inclusive social justice movement whilst accusing Evangelicals of a victim and martyr mentality. Questions of religious liberty therefore remain at the heart of the present debate, allied to the future place of Christian spirituality and the Church within a culture increasingly alien to public religious expression. The recent experience of terrorism linked to religion has added fuel to the debate and carries implications even for those religious groups that explicitly reject the use of force for religio-political ends.

1.3.7.   Informing Strategic Thinking of the Evangelical Alliance

Although popular perception and statistical evidence suggest the Church in the UK is in serious decline, another side to the story confirms that many ordinary Christians take their faith seriously enough to do something about it in practical ways. When significant groups are involved, they become potentially a movement for change.

This encapsulates the Evangelical Alliance vision, and the Commission has been concerned in its Inquiry to inform that vision by means of its research, analysis and recommendations. Enunciating the gospel requires interpretation of theology for contemporary issues and relevant application of Christian values to offer godly means of reconstructing society. Such a shift in emphasis may be unnerving for Evangelicals who are increasingly encouraged to move beyond orthodox insularity and preoccupations with narrow moral issues such as abortion and sexuality. They will undoubtedly need to encompass a wider global repertoire of moral concerns about which God is equally passionate, especially those involving social justice. Movement from being heard primarily to convey a message of condemnation to proclaiming the language of compassion is an imperative for people claiming to advance the Kingdom of God in the current context. A biblical movement for change is therefore rooted in a correct scriptural understanding of the Kingdom of God at work in contemporary society.

1.3.8   Engaging with Relevant Theological Issues

The Commission acknowledges that serious questions relate to the concept of 'Church' in the 21st century, and the place of faith within an increasingly secular world, as has frequently been the case in past centuries and in many different cultures where the Christian gospel has taken root. Certain defenders of establishment may promote a vision for a resurgent 'United National Church in Mission' in which the Church of England takes a leading role supported by the other churches. Others dismiss such a vision as imperialist, outdated and manifestly unrealistic. They argue that there can be no case for any return to a Christendom model imposed on society – everything now must be negotiated in the multi-faceted public square. They further stress the need for the Church to exercise a greater prophetic and pastoral role, with palpable representation and presence in every community. Theological consideration of the contemporary and future relationship between faith and social order is therefore vital if we are to address the practical implications of the Church's primary task to seek first the kingdom of God, preach the gospel to everybody, and conform its members to Christ, whilst simultaneously engaging deeply and constructively with society. Questions such as how the Church can best preserve its distinctive, orthodox, Trinitarian character, remain faithful to its calling, and model its God-given values for the benefit and transformation of the wider community, whilst participating appropriately in the life and structures of a fallen world, are intrinsically theological in nature. To what extent should the Church form common cause with a secular state, even to the lengths of sharing institutional power and privilege? As the justification for a close relationship between Church and State is increasingly questioned from many sides, evaluation of establishment in our pluralist context is necessary.

There is also a need for relevant biblical, historical and ecclesiological study to understand the development and meaning for today of the idea of a national and established Church, and of the relative merits of separatist traditions. This takes place against a more recent background involving a complete paradigm shift from a pluralism of Christian faith streams to a more complex pluralism of world faith communities. Old and New Testament evidence is still often appealed to in seeking to justify the continuing appropriateness of the Constantinian model for the 21st century. However, many people now accept that this requires a clear contemporary re-interpretation to produce a historically accurate, yet realistically contemporary

basis for investigating how the Church should remain biblical, distinctive, focused, and relevant in our changing society. The Commission seeks to address candidly the question of whether or not, and in which way, a mutually beneficial partnership between Church and State is still possible. It is important to ensure that the Church continues to regard this as a theological and missional task.

1.3.9 Assessing Socio-Political Life in Britain

An essential feature of the Commission's study has been to examine the nature of socio-political life and its relation to religion. Britain, like many western European societies, can be said to be an increasingly 'secularised' society in that the institutions of organised religion play a much reduced role in public affairs and policy-making than in former times. But secularisation is only partly to do with decline in active membership of the churches, being rather a cast of mind in which religion is generally conceived of as much more a private, individual affair than a public, communitarian one (with notable exceptions as in Northern Ireland). In this respect, it is possible to speak of 'secularist Christians' who see little connection between their personal faith and their citizenship in the public and political sphere. But this must be seen in relative terms. British public life is probably less 'secularised' than that of France, for example, where arguably the doctrine of *laïcité* deliberately excludes religion.

The Commission therefore examines and questions secularisation theses which pronounce Britain to be secular or prophesy the death of religion. It acknowledges a paradox that apparent belief in the central tenets of the Christian faith somehow often fails to translate into active participation in the Church, and this raises a question concerning the extent to which Christian doctrine is truly understood and lived out. How much Christianity should engage in political campaigning and pressure for enforcement of moral viewpoints, and the extent to which secular rather than religious arguments should be employed by Christians in the public realm as Christianity fights its corner in the market place of faiths and ideas, is of major importance for the Commission. Is the Church to be understood, as some believe, as 'strangers and exiles'- people who have a duty to act not as settlers or residents in their host culture but as ambassadors to a society which, in banishing faith is in danger of self-destruction? In which case, should the primary mission of the Church be that of evangelism and promotion of Christian values by example, to offer the nation a moral compass and social glue, rather than challenging the political structures? In this sense, can the Church take advantage of almost unprecedented contemporary opportunity to exemplify key, transcendent, biblical values such as love, grace, justice, forgiveness and sacrifice at the heart of the Christian faith in calling for society to commit itself, for its own survival, to values and goals which transcend self-centred, individual, consumerist fulfilment?

These questions may not have easy answers, but the Commission hopes that by beginning a wide-ranging analysis and producing consequent pointers for the Alliance Council to consider, evangelicals may engage in necessary debate that will encourage future strategic direction.

1.3.10 Tackling Relevant Constitutional Issues

Inevitably, debate about the Church's role vis a vis State and Nation raises questions about establishment and disestablishment. Increased dissatisfaction, even from within the Church of England, concerning the government's current role in Church affairs, the prospect of constitutional reform, popular disillusionment with the monarchy, the process of devolution and European integration, the dominance of a secular human rights agenda sensitive to any idea of discrimination, the highlighting in both Parliament and media of public concern relating to perceived conflict between Faith and Nation, especially since September 11th, all combine to produce an overwhelming sense of a need for re-evaluation.

1.4   Core Questions

To facilitate seeking and gathering of a coherent body of contributions for the Commission of Inquiry it was decided to divide the submissions where possible into discrete, albeit inevitably overlapping, areas of focus to aid and clarify the response process. The three agreed focus areas were *theological, socio-political and constitutional*. Contributors were accordingly invited to respond (not necessarily exclusively) to the following guideline questions:

1.4.1   *Theological*
1.   To what extent is it possible to derive from the Bible a definition or definitions of a) Statehood; b) Nationhood?
2.   How has the understanding of the relationship between Church, State and Nation been developed theologically from the Patristic period to the present?
3.   What, if any, is the biblical and theological basis for a) a present-day 'State Church'; b) a present-day 'National Church', or 'National Churches', in Britain?
4.   How might developments on the ecumenical scene in Britain affect relationships between the Churches, the State and the Nation over the next 25-50 years?
5.   How might the increasing participation of other faith communities in the political process bear theologically on current debates about Church, Faith and Nation?
6.   Is it possible to formulate a distinctively pan-Evangelical response to the current debates about Church, Faith and Nation?

1.4.2   *Socio-Political*
1.   How should Christians respond to the contemporary shift in public policy-making, from Judeo-Christian ethics to a moral paradigm based on human rights?
2.   To what extent is Britain becoming a) a secular society? b) a pluralist society? What similarities and differences exist between secularism and pluralism, and how is each trend affecting Christian witness in Britain?
3.   What opportunities and threats are presented to Christian witness in Britain by increased emphasis on 'citizenship' and 'tolerance'?
4.   How is the devolution of government to nations and regions within the UK likely to affect Church-State relationships in future?
5.   Given the growing disenfranchisement of large sectors of the British population from the democratic process (e.g., the low turnout of younger adults at recent elections), what role might faith communities play in stimulating re-engagement?
6.   To what extent is religious liberty under threat in the current political context? How might faith communities seek to uphold religious freedom in the future?

1.4.3   *Constitutional*
1.   Does the model of a National Church help or hinder Christian mission in modern Britain?
2.   In what ways might the current relationship between the Crown and the Church be addressed over the next 25-50 years?
3.   In what ways might the current relationship between Church, Parliament and government be addressed over the next 25-50 years?
4.   What might the different nations of the UK have distinctively to contribute to the development of Church-State relations?
5.   What effects might the inclusion of other faiths in the constitutional process have on the role of religion in British society? How might their inclusion specifically affect Christian mission in Britain?
6.   Should the Church of England be disestablished? If not, why not? If so, how might this be done, and what would be the implications?

1.5   Composition of the Commission

Evangelical Alliance membership comprises approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ Anglican to $\frac{2}{3}$ Non-Anglican and needless to say embraces a considerable spectrum of views regarding the debate in question. The Alliance and the Commission recognised that not only was such a debate on Faith and Nation necessary and timely, but also potentially divisive in view of its far-reaching implications and controversial nature. The subject has tended frequently to be characterised by diverse entrenched positions and vested interests, which nevertheless cross denominational boundaries. Some Anglicans, for example, are keen proponents of disestablishment, whilst certain leaders of the Free Churches are equally keen to retain an established National Church. A Roman Catholic theologian and the Chief Rabbi, for example, have argued strongly the case for maintaining the establishment of the Church of England. It was important, therefore, for the Alliance to take account of wide representative opinion in helping it to shape its own thinking, even though it was appreciated that reaching consensus might prove extremely difficult in practice, or at least be achieved only at the expense of actually saying anything radical, challenging or sufficiently definitive. It was also vital to encourage a climate in which inevitable awkward questions might be fully addressed and real underlying issues not ducked. Accordingly, it was decided to set up a high profile Commission of Inquiry to operate somewhat in the manner of a Royal Commission, with Chairmanship and Commission membership as far as practically possible incorporating relevant expertise and reflecting wide representation. Submissions would be invited from interested parties that would be examined and debated. Conclusions and recommendations would be presented. It was intended that the best quality material would be published as the Commission proceeded with its work. Much attention was therefore given in approaching the task of composing an effective working Commission to seeking to gather together a sufficiently expert, wide-ranging, representative, but at the same time manageable membership, under the respected Chairmanship of Donald Shell, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Politics at the University of Bristol. A secretariat was contributed by the Evangelical Alliance Heads of Public Affairs and Theology. Accordingly, various relevant criteria were established in an endeavour to create a credible Commission which comprised some 20 members plus consultants, who have played diverse roles, including varying degrees of involvement on a voluntary basis within the overall Inquiry. Commitment was necessarily limited by time availability. However, we remain in the significant debt of all those who have contributed their time and expertise in helping to advise, revise and inform the Commission in its work.

1.5.1   *Selection of Commission Members*

In an endeavour to form a representative and expert Commission the Alliance approached a large number of individuals and organisations, many of whom were unable to participate owing to unavailability. Many of those who could not be part of the Commission offered to submit contributions. Selection of members was made on the basis of criteria that include such characteristics as nationality, ecclesiastical or theological tradition, ethnicity, gender, business and commercial background, youth, politics, etc.

See Appendix 1 for details of contributing Commission members.

1.5.2   *Formation of Sub-Groups*

With regard to the Inquiry process, in engaging with often complex and wide-ranging submissions, it was decided to break down the Commission's work into three major areas represented by sub-groups of the Commission. The sub-groups pursued their work under separate chairs, with the Commission Chairman supervising the overall plan of study. Inevitably, the work of the sub-groups tended to overlap from time to time. Specific sessions for the examination of oral contributors were conducted on the basis of the sub-groups. The outline remits of the sub-groups were as follows:

1.5.2.1 *Theological Sub-Group*

To engage in a detailed critique and evaluation of theological and ecclesiological models with a view to producing recommendations including practical implications to place

before the Evangelical constituency. To include theological examination of the concept, meaning and validity of establishment in our contemporary, pluralist context.

1.5.2.2 Socio-Political Sub-Group
Essentially to engage in sociological/cultural/theological investigation into the future place of faith in society in the context of increasingly secularising/privatising trends.

1.5.2.3 Constitutional Sub-Group
To engage in historical, ecclesiological, and theological study, including reference to experience elsewhere. To investigate the relevance of Christendom versus separationist paradigms in the contemporary world. To question how faith could best make itself heard in the public arena, both practically and constitutionally.

1.6   Gathering and Receipt of Submissions
In seeking submissions for its Inquiry, the Commission drew up a comprehensive list of individuals and organisations who have either made significant contributions to the subject under consideration or who have evidenced a keen interest in the topic. Every significant Christian denomination was invited to provide evidence, along with selected representatives of other faiths. Messages of support were received from some faith leaders such as the Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, who wrote:

> I send you my wholehearted support in this vital area of strengthening civil society and its moral and spiritual foundations. To be true to our own faith and at the same time a blessing to others – the challenge set by God to Abraham and Sarah remains a compelling challenge in the ongoing work of bringing the divine presence to our shared life

Each member of the Evangelical Alliance Board and Council was personally invited to submit contributions. In addition, advertisements were placed in key national and Christian press inviting submissions. Subsequent reminders were issued three months before the stated closing date to those who had been approached directly but who had not yet made any submission. The Commission's operational methodology was based loosely on the process of a Royal Commission or a Parliamentary Select Committee, inviting witnesses to provide written submissions, with selected individuals invited for further oral exploration by the Commission. In a few instances sub-groups decided to set up an ad hoc focus group to examine specific issues.

1.6.1   Written Submissions
In total, fifty eight individuals and seven organisations or churches contributed ninety eight separate submissions of written evidence during an open nine month period. A list of submissions received appears in the Bibliography. It is intended to publish these separately. Contributions received were examined by sub-groups in the first instance as appropriate. A number of potential contributors contacted the Alliance to indicate that they were after all unable to submit papers within the timescale, despite an earnest wish to do so.

1.6.2   Oral Contributors
Following sifting of written submissions by sub-groups, the Commission chairman and sub-group chairs agreed a priority list of those who should be approached to follow up their written submissions by graciously agreeing to oral review of their contributions. Although a few key individuals were unable to attend, most did so, with 12 witnesses in all being examined in 13 separate sessions organised and chaired by the sub-groups. The Commission chairman and Evangelical Alliance secretariat also took part in the oral sessions. All sessions were recorded and transcribed. The relevant transcriptions are expected to be published along with written submissions.

1.6.3 Plenary Sessions

As part of the overall Inquiry process a number of plenary sessions were conducted where all Commission members were invited to be present. These occurred at the beginning of the process, mainly to agree terms of reference, and at the end of the process when draft reports were analysed and discussed and recommendations to the Evangelical Alliance Council approved. A list of plenary and other meetings appears in Appendix 2.

1.6.4 Handling Diversity and Accord

The stated intention of the Commission of Inquiry was to consult widely, identify key issues, listen to diverse views, analyse and weigh the validity and implications of responses within the contemporary context, and seek to arrive at an acceptable form of consensus. Given the nature of the subject matter, it was recognised that whilst consensus might appear perfectly possible on the more fundamental and philosophical issues concerning the relevance and role of Faith in the Nation, it would become increasingly difficult to reach agreement in connection with how this should work out in practice. Though clear, united declarations of the importance of religious faith in the public arena remain relatively uncontroversial, so far as, for example, constitutional implications are concerned, the same level of agreement may not be presumed. It seemed likely that the Commission would realistically aim at offering a range of carefully weighed options to present to the Evangelical Alliance Council. Despite the difficulties anticipated by such varied perspectives, it was nevertheless universally accepted that the Inquiry process remained vital, not only for the Alliance itself, but also for the sake of stimulating national debate away from purely secular and media initiatives and agendas. The Commission concluded that the wide-ranging process proved eminently worthwhile, even though some of its conclusions and recommendations will inevitably be seen as either controversial or insufficiently radical depending on individual perspectives. The process of arrival at conclusions and recommendations to place before the Alliance Council was achieved on the basis of dedicated discussion and review, with differences being honestly ventilated and where necessary divergences acknowledged. Some members of the Commission tended to act more particularly in a peer group review role towards the latter stages of the Inquiry. The Report also benefited from extensive separate peer review. However, the Report as it stands remains the work of the entire Commission. Ultimately it is for the Alliance Council to arrive at its own views based on response to the analysis and recommendations placed before it by the Commission it set up for the purpose.

2.   FAITH AND NATION IN BRITAIN TODAY

2.1.   Key Cultural Trends

2.1.1   *Pluralism and Globalisation*

2.1.1.1 Meaning of Terms

It is doubtful that Britain was ever a truly Christian country, if by this it is meant that the majority of the Britons were committed believers in Jesus Christ. But in earlier ages Britain's cohesiveness as a nation owed much to a public framework of Protestant Christianity that shaped its laws, moulded its constitution, governed its moral life and underlay national identity. Christianity was in a virtual monopoly position, and those who dissented from it were seen as political, social or intellectual deviants. This overarching consensus has now dissipated, challenged by an increasing diversity of worldviews and faiths fuelled by a process of globalisation.

Globalisation denotes "a economic process in which the global system has become the reference point for transactions". In this context, categories such as *nation*, *state* and *region* tend to become relatively less significant in comparison with a worldwide consumer culture driven by mass media advertising, multi-national corporations and transnational electronic commerce.[7]

Unable to negotiate their way through the abundance of choice in order to decide on the most valid belief system, some people opt, at least nominally, for their family's traditional religion. Others simply avoid making a choice altogether.

Pluralism is the term now widely used to describe this proliferation of philosophies and faith-positions. In Britain, it is particularly evident in the sphere of religion. Here, people are no longer confronted by a single interpretation of God and the world, but by a profusion of choices and claims. The growth of non-Christian faith communities in the United Kingdom since the 1950s has played a key role in making pluralism a reality. Pluralism obliges government and media to represent fairly the multitude of interests now prevalent the population. However, this obligation has led some to treat pluralism no longer simply as a fact, but also as an ideology - a positive commitment to difference and multiplicity, with a concomitant suspicion of absolute or universal truth-claims. Ideological pluralists thus typically exalt choice as a self-evident social virtue while questioning certainty and rejecting religious particularism as harmfully 'dogmatic' or 'fundamentalist'.

This emerging pluralist context presents a number of challenges to British Christians.

2.1.1.2 Benefits of Pluralism

Despite the theological problems inherent in pluralism, most of those who submitted material to the Commission seemed happier to accept that Britain was a plural society than they were to endorse other designations such as 'secular' (see 2.1.3). The majority welcomed the fact of pluralism and believed not only that it was fostering a more open society, but that it was also providing Christians with new opportunities for witness and dialogue. In a context where all faiths and none can be promoted and adopted, the consensus was that the Christian gospel could be advocated without hindrance, though whether this state of affairs will continue in the future remains open.

2.1.1.3 Reservations Concerning Pluralism

A minority of contributors was less convinced of the benefits of pluralism. Several fears were expressed. First, some worried that ideological pluralism is being used to marginalise the Christian faith and remove it from its position of historic influence. They spoke

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[7] David Lyon, "Religion and Globalization" in Christopher Partridge (ed.), *Dictionary of Contemporary Religion in the Western World* (Leicester: IVP, 2002), 86.

of pluralism as 'a mask' to disguise secularism (see 2.1.3). One went as far as to call it a 'recent fabrication'. Secondly, some thought that pluralism inevitably advances relativism, both in terms of belief and morality (see 2.1.2 below). Thirdly, one contributor feared that a pluralist mindset had entered the church, and had led to a lessening of confidence in the gospel. Several expressed concerns that pluralism undermines belief in Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation, and makes such an exclusivist position 'politically incorrect'.

2.1.2 *Relativism*

2.1.2.1 Meaning of Relativism

Relativism is based on the assumption that there are no universal truths. Contingent reasons may be found for preferring one viewpoint to another, but no viewpoint is recognised as absolute. Behind this lies the idea either that there is no 'reality' of which we can be sure, or that if there is we have no certain or objective way of knowing it. All knowledge, therefore, is seen as subject to interpretation, social construction or perspective. While this does not necessarily make every worldview equally valid, it does mean that all truth claims must be held as provisional, rather than ultimate.

2.1.2.2 Relativism in Relation to Pluralism

Relativism often goes hand in hand with ideological pluralism. No previous age has afforded its people such an open world or so diverse a range of social experience. The possibility of travel and the global reach of the media combine to make people more aware of other cultures and beliefs than before. This can weaken certainty in the rightness of one's own beliefs. Even for those who do not travel, the existence of 'other faith communities' in the midst of traditional British culture introduces alternative ways of looking at God and the world and, in the eyes of some, undermines confidence that the Christian faith is the only way. Christianity then comes to be seen as the expression of a particular culture rather than being universally valid - a religion to be compared and contrasted with others and to be viewed as at most only 'relatively' true. This in turn has played a part in the marginalisation of Christian moral teaching from the public sphere. Morality, rather than being seen as universally true, is thought to be true relative to a particular culture, or even determined on the basis of individual choice. 'Right' and 'wrong' has given way, at best, to 'right and wrong for whom?' As Patricia Morgan of the Institute of Economic Affairs has noted, we have entered a world in which yesterday's immoralities have become today's family forms.[8] Not only are seven times more marriages dissolved today than in 1961, with divorce rates climbing above 40%; cohabitation outside wedlock has doubled in the last twenty years alone, as has the proportion of lone parent households. In addition, one child in every four now experiences the trauma of family breakdown.[9] Of course, the actual phenomenon of family breakdown is not new; as Morgan points out, however, what has changed is the scale on which it is occurring, and the widespread claim that it is actually 'nothing to worry about'.[10]

2.1.2.3 Effect on Government Policy

The combined effects of pluralism and relativism have been evident in moves by various modern British governments to adopt a self-consciously neutral stance on matters of institutional religion and personal morality. Successive British parliaments have seen areas of life once legislated in accordance with Christian moral precepts progressively deregulated, from Sunday trading to sexual lifestyle, from abortion to marriage and divorce. Judging by the submissions received for this project, many Christians have found this move away from public Christian morality troubling, and have sought to resist it out of a fear that the common good

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[8] Patricia Morgan, *Farewell to the Family? Family Breakdown in Britain and the USA* (London: Civitas: Institute for the Study of Civil Society, 1995).
[9] Source: Central Statistical Office, *Social Trends: 1996 Edition* (London: HMSO, 1996), 54, 57-59.
[10] Morgan, *Farewell to the Family?*

will otherwise be eroded. In their view, the extreme relativisation and privatisation of morality does not provide an adequate basis for a civil society or an integrated culture.

Closely related to these trends is the growing emphasis in British political life on the imperative of tolerance. This is dealt with specifically in 2.1.9 below.

2.1.3   *Secularism and Secularisation*

2.1.3.1 Meaning of the Terms

A distinction needs to be made between *secularism* and *secularisation*. *Secularism* is an ideology that seeks to structure and interpret the public world without reference to God or religion. Historically, committed secularists have often been few in number, but have frequently been aggressive and articulate in argument. While some secularists are atheists and more agnostics, secularism need not be antagonistic to religion as such. Rather, it asserts that religious faith should be confined to the private domain of individual, family and voluntary life, and should not impinge on the formal working of government, civic or national institutions. In this sense, secularism finds expression in the French principle of *laïcité*, and the popular American conception of the 'separation of church and state'. In distinction from secularism, *secularisation* describes the social process through which, as one common definition has it, 'religious thinking, practice and institutions lose social significance'.[11] Secularisation may be aided and abetted by secularism, but it may also be attributable to less self-consciously ideological forces, such as industrialisation, consumerism and family breakdown.

2.1.3.2 Current Understanding

The complex process of secularisation has to some degree ebbed and flowed since the Enlightenment, and is much debated by scholars. Until recently many sociologists believed that modern societies, including Britain, were set on an irreversible course towards a thoroughly scientific and technological worldview which would eventually dispense with religion altogether. The fact that many advanced societies have not taken this course, and have indeed experienced something of a resurgence of religion in recent years, has widely shaken secularisation theory. The decline in religious faith in Europe is now seen as the phenomenon to be explained, rather than its persistence in countries like the United States, China or South Korea.[12]

2.1.3.3 An Ambiguous Picture

While secularisation cannot be assumed as a corollary of technological progress, the fact that religious belief, practice and institutions are no longer as central to our way of life in Britain as once they were, is indisputable. Declining church attendance, decreased use of the church for 'rites of passage', and disregard in many schools for the obligation to provide a daily act of worship, are but some of the more obvious examples of this trend. In addition, the marginalising of even the established church, as demonstrated, for example, in the Millennium celebrations and in public policy formation, lends weight to the idea of secularisation.

Having said all this, the picture is not straightforward. Counter evidence is seen in the continued presence of Church of England bishops in the House of Lords; in the continuation of prayer in Parliament; in the compulsory status of religious education in schools; in the widespread outpouring of grief which found quasi-religious expression after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales in 1997; and in the fact that many still identify themselves as Christian, and even identify with a specific denominational label, even if they do not regularly attend worship. Some argue that in spite of poor rates of participation in church, belief in the central tenets of the Christian faith remains widespread. Grace Davie's description of such phenomena under the

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[11] Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Secular Society* (London: Watts, 1966), xiv.
[12] See *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics,* Peter L. Berger, (ed.) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

rubric of 'believing without belonging' has resonated widely in this regard.[13] Sociologists are giving increasing attention to the varied expressions of spirituality that exist outside institutional Christian churches, and mounting evidence of ambiguity suggests that describing Britain as 'secular' is at best simplistic and at worst quite inaccurate.

2.1.3.4 Submissions to the Commission

A majority of those who presented papers and made oral contributions to the Commission were not content with the description of the United Kingdom as a secular society. As one respondent commented, secularisation 'is in the eye of the beholder', with secularists seeing Britain as far too religious, Christians viewing it as far too secular, and 'those disposed to a right-wing view of the world' regarding it as 'far too pluralist.' Many presenting evidence saw the term 'secular' as inappropriate because of the burgeoning modern-day interest in 'spirituality', and because of their own experience of goodwill towards religion. Others spoke in paradoxical terms of a pervading 'secular spirituality'. Even those persuaded that Britain had become substantially secular did not assume that this would lead to the complete demise of Christianity. The future, it was argued, is never a straight-line projection of the present, and the existence of faith communities serving as pockets of resistance to secularisation could be taken as a sign of hope. Even so, some contributors emphasised that these communities need to be made more accessible and informal if they are to attract those who are currently unchurched.

2.1.3.5 Role of the Media

Several witnesses laid the blame for Britain's unduly secular image at the door of the media. Media leaders present the world as they see it and as they think their audiences see it, and unless they have contact with faith issues and religious communities they will convey a picture of the world as unreligious. A weighty analysis recommended by one of the respondents to the Commission argued that the media were 'unrelentingly hostile to religion'[14] and attributed this to a variety of factors, including a loss of deference in society, a conflict of values, and 'the ingrained hostility of the secular elite'. If faith is to impact 21st century society in Britain, it is essential that Christians play their full role within the media, and that the voices of secularism there be qualified and challenged by those committed to the gospel.

2.1.4 Individualism

2.1.4.1 Meaning of Individualism

Although the concept is much older, the term *individualism* was first coined in 1840 to describe a fundamental social and cultural shift and is closely linked to the impact of the Enlightenment. This entailed a movement away from the group as the fundamental unit of society, towards the individual. Though all societies demonstrate some awareness of the idea of separate persons, earlier societies worked on the basis that the tribe, clan or family is the basis and transmitter of culture and values. In contrast, the essential feature of modern societies is individualism. Attachments to others are looser than before, and the individual essentially determines his or her own way of life. Rising divorce rates and a significant extension of the time people live alone before marriage - both in themselves markers of individualism - have helped virtually to double the proportion of lone person households, from 17% in 1971 to 31% in 2001.[15] This process is allied to consumer capitalism, underpinned by secular humanism, and expressed in legislation focussed increasingly on individual rights and entitlements. Indeed, the exaltation of the self is experienced most blatantly in the shopping malls which have become the materialist cathedrals of our age. As Don Slater has observed, when the core values of a

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[13] The phrase was coined by Grace Davie. See *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).
[14] Lecture given at Gresham College by Madeleine Bunting, Religious Affairs Editor, *The Guardian* on 11th November 1996, entitled "The Media and Religion".
[15] Source: Central Statistical Office, *Social Trends: 1996 Edition* (London: HMSO), 50-51; "Percentage living alone, by age and sex: Living in Britain" at http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE (accessed December 2003).

culture come to derive from consumption, 'all social relations, activities and objects can in principle be exchanged as commodities', and this in turn effects 'one of the most profound secularizations' that can take place.[16] Or as Rodney Clapp puts it, in contemporary western culture, 'heaven is a vast supermarket; hell is a corner shop stocking only one brand of aspirin or toilet paper, or more significantly, only one brand of religion, morality or marriage.'[17] One of the political campaigns which the Evangelical Alliance has criticised recently - the move to allow transsexual people legally to change their gender from the one in which they were born and to enshrine this in a new birth certificate - can be seen as a radical manifestation of such individualism and consumerism.

2.1.4.2 Religious Roots of Individualism

Although the Enlightenment was supremely influential, to some extent, the rise of individualism could also be regarded as a natural outworking of the Protestant faith, though the latter of course also emphasised the importance of community. After all, Protestantism characteristically questioned need for both a hierarchical church, and for its clergy to act as intermediaries between the believer and God. Similarly, the stress in modern evangelicalism on the need for people to come to personal faith, rather than to shelter behind parental or cultural faith, has worked in tandem with the rise of individualism.

2.1.4.3 Emergence of Contemporary Individualism

When individualism first rose to prominence in the 18th and 19th centuries, its excesses were restrained by the continuing influence of strong families and voluntary associations - not least the Church and its ancillary groups. Through bodies like the Boys' and Girls' Brigades, the Band of Hope, Sunday Schools, Crusader Camps and Children's Special Service Missions (CSSMs), individuals learned to work with others for the common good. The decline of the family and such voluntary organisations has led many to fear that individualism is now unrestrained, and detrimental to the maintenance of community or any sense of the common good. Individualism without an allied process of character formation can be destructive, leading to an overweening 'rights' culture, to self-centredness, and to the self as the final judge of true doctrine. Since individualism depletes the social capital that is necessary for communities to function effectively, questions are increasingly being raised as to how cultures of individualism will be able to sustain themselves in the future.[18]

2.1.4.4 Implications for the Church

For Christian communities, the implications of all this are numerous. The Church that once did so much to bind social fabric of society is now being portrayed by many, especially in the media, as belonging to a bygone age. The degree to which people are educated in the faith and socialised into Christian values is now far less than it once was. Many are suspicious of authority figures - be they priests, preachers or parents. Increasing numbers seem to resent others telling them what to believe: they like to decide for themselves. The concern for correct doctrine has been replaced by a concern for personal opinion, personal assertion, or personal feeling. Subjectivism reigns: people assume they have the right to come to individual belief or moral choices without being constrained by others, or by Scripture and tradition. Freedom to choose has become a core value in society, and it is increasingly assumed that any cost incurred in the making of choice is one that 'society' should be prepared to pay on behalf of the autonomous individual. In a perceptive commentary on such trends, the Chief Rabbi, Jonathan

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[16] Don Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 27.

[17] Rodney Clapp, *Families at the Crossroads* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP, 1993), 61.

[18] The questions are being asked more urgently in the USA than in the UK but are not far below the surface of many anxious political initiatives. See Robert Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), and Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Touchstone, 2000).

Sacks, claims that we now suffer from the privatisation of morality and the nationalisation of responsibility.[19]

2.1.5. *Privatisation of Religion*

2.1.5.1 Religion: Private Option and Consumer Choice

It is widely accepted that religion, which once occupied a central place in the public square, is being increasingly forced into the sphere of private choice. A fissure has opened up between the public and private dimensions of life, and religion has progressively 'evacuated' the public realm and retreated to the private. This picture is not complete or uniform however. Many reminders of religion's place in the public sphere remain. The established Church of England continues to enjoy a privileged position constitutionally, and to be the vehicle for national religious ceremony. In reality, however, it acts like other churches – more like a voluntary organisation. Private decisions for marriage, confirmation and other such rites of passage do still move religion to some extent into the public sphere. Nonetheless, these are exceptions to the general truth that religion has become a matter of private choice rather than social obligation. Religion now often functions as a lifestyle preference or a retail commodity. As with many consumer choices, the influence of the family on the option chosen should not be underestimated. Children often purchase the same brand name as their parents. But beyond the family, and perhaps peer or friendship groups, there is little influence exerted to direct one to any particular religious path.

In this context, it is important to note the challenge to the privatisation of religion recently posed by Muslims in Britain. It was pressure from Muslims wishing to assert their religious identity which led to a question about religion being included in the 2001 census (and thus, to the finding that 72% of Britons still consider themselves Christian, a statistic frequently cited by churches, but which could equally imply people were simply identifying themselves as 'other than' Muslim, Sikh, etc). Indeed, British Muslims have been prominent in declaring that a privatised faith is a contradiction in terms. On this point at least, many British Christians would wish to agree.

2.1.5.2 Societal Indifference to Religion

The restriction of religion to the private sphere means it is largely a matter of indifference to society at large - unless it offends in some way against an accepted social norm with respect, for example, to its handling of money, its treatment of children or, especially to secularists, its perceived dogmatism. This means there is no pressure to worship in one particular way, and that a wide variety of religious practice is acceptable, however bizarre, providing it remains in the private world and is not allowed to interfere in the public realm of work, education or policy-making. Where religious practice does require some recognition in the public sphere, this may be granted simply in order to bolster credibility of the claim to be a multicultural society. Thus Sikhs have been allowed to wear turbans and carry religious daggers where these would otherwise be forbidden. Muslim girls have been allowed to wear traditional dress rather than uniform in British schools (in contrast to the position taken by the authorities in France). Many Christians now believe that public authorities in the UK have shied away from defending their minority rights out of a desire to play down an imperialist past in which Christian mission is thought to be implicated. Yet the same authorities do seem to have been keen to defend minority rights for other religious groups, partly, no doubt, in the name of multi-culturalism.

2.1.5.3 Pastoral Ministry and Public Truth

The privatisation of religion means that the pastoral ministry of the Church, based as it is on building relationships of trust, becomes especially vital. But, as several witnesses to the Commission pointed out, to restrict the ministry of the Church to the local and personal alone

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[19] Jonathan Sacks, *The Politics of Hope* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1997), 132.

would be disastrous. After all, the gospel is public truth (see further in section 4); it is not the constitution of a private religious club.

2.1.5.4 Evangelical Contribution to Privatisation of Religion

Evangelicalism might in some respects have unwittingly contributed to the privatisation of religion. Its emphasis on personal conversion and piety can too easily be distorted into privatized faith, and its focus on 'eternal' values can too easily encourage a withdrawal from the concerns of the present world.

2.1.5.5 Strategies for Reclaiming the Public Square

Can Christians reclaim a key role in the public square and if so what strategies should be adopted? In this regard, to what extent should Christians be positively encouraged to enter the key public arenas of education, politics, the arts and the media?

Certainly, attention needs to be given to how Christians should engage in debate once they take their place in the public square. Until recently, it was often suggested that to engage in any public debate concerning values or moral questions Christians had to adopt secular arguments rather than religious ones, and had thereby to translate their thinking into secular language in order to be heard. It was then hoped that such translation would foster agreement, at least of a 'lowest common denominator' kind. In so far as such a strategy has managed to produce any values that bind our society together at all, they have tended to be too abstract, and have lacked moral imagination. It has also prompted Christians to remain silent about their faith and its values, so excluding their true worldview and motivation from public discussion. Consequently, the ground has largely been occupied by those who have little or no faith.

Recently it has been argued that Christians should neither need nor adopt such a strategy (Taylor, J.). On this understanding, to pursue it is to fall into the privatisation trap - to pretend that the spiritual dimension of life is less significant than its material aspects, and thus to concede unwarranted ground to secularists. Besides, some would now contend that this strategy has been made redundant because in more recent times the government has realised the positive contribution faith communities make to the welfare of society. Indeed, since its return to power in 1997, New Labour has continued the previous Conservative government's policy of actively welcoming faith communities as partners in seeking to create a more wholesome society - not least in the inner cities. In doing so, the other faith communities have shown little embarrassment about basing their arguments on their religious faith, or deriving their authority from their own sacred Scriptures. While this is neither an invitation to simplistic proof-texting nor an encouragement to avoid serious and constructive engagement with the issues, it does raise the question as to why Christians need to be timid about asserting their faith in the public square. As one contributor to the Commission (Avis) argued,

> Christianity should fight its corner in the market place of faiths. Bridges can be built from private, domestic and communal expressions of religion to public faith and from public expressions of faith back to private religious practice. The abundant opportunities to do this should not be gratuitously renounced through misplaced humility, fallacious thinking or lack of nerve.

2.1.5.6 Unnecessary Fear of Coercion

The fear that public advocacy of a religious position will lead to that religion being imposed on others is quite unwarranted - a myth circulated by those who have vested anti-religious interests. The plea is not for totalitarian fundamentalism, but for Christians to take their place as citizens in an open and democratic society and to argue their case for values, the common good and the gospel in such a manner as to persuade others.

2.1.6   *Decline and Marginalisation of Religion*

2.1.6.1 Decline in Religious Practice

       Statistical evidence gathered over many decades consistently shows that religious practice is in decline across the United Kingdom.[20] The rate of decline varies according to region, and even denomination or theological stance. In some cases the decline is dramatic. The decline is evident in falling membership. Since membership is a problematic concept for churches with some not fitting neatly into the 'membership' category and, since it is suspected the people are not 'joiners' in the way they once were, several statisticians have shifted the basis of their calculation to attendance. But here too there is evidence of decline. Evidence confirms that people are also attending church less frequently than they once did. Though the Church remains in touch with a vast number of people, either through its main services, or occasional offices or ancillary organisations and activities (some estimates suggest as much as 62% of the population[21]), there is a smaller committed pool of active and regular participants who are essential if the Church's ministry is to continue and thrive.

2.1.6.2 Institutional Marginalisation of Religion

       In addition to evidence of decline in the practice of religion, there is evidence of a trend towards the marginalisation of religion in national life, some of which was referred to above in 2.1.3.3. The place of bishops has been preserved in the House of Lords, but carries little real political weight. The Scottish Parliament has taken over the role of the Assembly of the Church of Scotland that had long-been considered as Scotland's unofficial Parliament. But the Parliament's sessions now do not begin with prayer. In local councils, the place of the Mayor's Chaplain and of the saying of prayer at the start of Council Meetings has come under pressure, first from those of other faiths and secondly from those of no faith. Religious assemblies in schools are often observed in the breach and frequently have, by all accounts, less intentional Christian content to them when they *are* held. Public service broadcasting maintains the 'God Spot' but under protest, and frequently asserts that audience figures are kept artificially high because of its protected status. Priests and pastors, once respected as community leaders and wise counsellors, are now often ignored by professionals in the caring services, whilst voluntary community work motivated by Christian endeavour can now find public funding withdrawn or refused, particularly where there is any suspicion of proselytism.

2.1.6.3 Growth of Spiritualities

       The growing marginalisation of traditional Christianity in the UK has not led to the triumph of secularism, though some would argue it has in the public sphere. Rather, a variety of alternative spiritualities has blossomed to fill the void, though some would also argue that secularism itself has attained the status and character of a religion. These alternative spiritualities often do not give rise to anything other than the most fluid and transient of organisational forms. Adherents frequently dabble in such beliefs and practices rather than show commitment to them, and any group activity is often incidental rather than being central to life. In the light of this, such spiritualities are even more marginalised in society than the institutions of traditional Christianity. They have little real social impact and there is no evidence yet that they will have any major influence on shaping British culture in any serious way. However, the fact that many quest for spiritual meaning, yet largely do not see the Church as a viable channel for providing that meaning, is a serious indictment of the Church which should cause it to re-examine itself. In her oral contribution to the Commission, Grace Davie pointed out that the two growing segments of British Christianity were Cathedral worship and Charismatic worship, both of which in different ways met the needs of a new generation of

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[20] See Peter Brierley, *Christian England* (Eastbourne: Marc, 1998), *passim* and *Religious Trends 1-5* (London: Christian Research, 1998-9, 2000-1, 2002-3, 2003-4, 2004-5). The accuracy of religious data and its interpretation is a complex matter on which see, *Public Faith? The State of Religious Belief in Practice in Britain*, Paul Avis, (ed.), (London: SPCK, 2003), especially 123-139.
[21] Brierley, *Religious Trends 3* (London: Christian Research, 2002), 2.3.

spiritual seekers. Whilst provoking the Church to examine itself, it should be noted at the same time that the rise in the number of seekers provides Christians with new openings for conversations about their faith.

2.1.6.4 The 'Death of Christian Britain'?
The changing place of Christianity in our national life does not necessarily mean the 'Death of Christian Britain'.[22] Depending on one's theological position, a move from being allied to the structures of power towards the margins of society may even be considered an advantage. Whether this is so or not, arguably the Church has been in a not dissimilar position before in the 18th century when it experienced a revival of its life and fortunes. Furthermore, its history demonstrates that creative strategies of evangelical mission can be devised in any cultural situation and be blessed by God for the spread of the gospel.

2.1.7 *Human Rights, Religious Liberties and the Law*
One of the profound changes of the 20th century has been the orientation, since 1948, to a human rights framework that seeks to exert universal application. The framework has been developed at inter-governmental and nation state level through political co-operation and legal regulation. States and public bodies find themselves increasingly judged according to international and domestic criteria relating to human rights. The human rights record of states has become not only the gateway to international benefits, but also the rationale for action against states accused of human rights infringements.

The result of this paradigm shift has been that key legal, political and social issues of the 21st century are now contained within the human rights framework. Primacy is given to issues such as equality, freedom from discrimination, and racial, religious and social justice. In the UK a new Commission for Equality and Human Rights will place under one roof responsibility for all strands of human rights concerns – including race, religion and belief, employment, sex and sexual orientation, age and disability. There are currently serious public debates concerning the appropriate level of general individual freedoms for citizens to be balanced with increasing national security needs created by international terrorism. Human rights concerns also include rights to education, representative regional, community and national politics, and issues relating to urban deprivation in inner cities. Various human rights concerns can, of course, appear mutually inconsistent.

Evangelicals find they are increasingly called upon to justify stances stated to be in contravention of human rights, as well as being regularly consulted for their views on balancing religious human rights with others. In an area increasingly the object of legal regulation, it is also possible for evangelical leaders to find that they are faced with a classic dilemma - to keep to the letter of the law and consequently act in ways that could undermine their beliefs - or effectively disregard the law if appropriate legal exceptions fail to be sanctioned by the state.

2.1.7.1 *Regulation of Human Rights and Religious Freedom*
UK law and policy in this area has been profoundly affected by a range of European, International and domestic legal regulations.[23] In 1998 the UK government enacted part of the 1951 European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) into English law, giving rights to its citizens, for the first time, to bring legal actions and enforce convention

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[22] The phrase is used as the title of Callum G. Brown's book, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2001), in which he somewhat unusually and controversially argues that Christianity collapsed relatively suddenly in the 1960s because of the loss of Christian discourse within the family. The other key chronicler of the demise of Christianity in Britain is Steve Bruce. Among his many writings are *Religion in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), and *God is Dead: Secularisation in the West* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

[23] Of most relevance to the UK are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (though without legal force in the UK); The European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms 1951, (partially incorporated into UK law in the Human Rights Act of 1998, and in fact effective for Scotland a year before England by virtue of Devolution legislation); the EU Charter on Fundamental Freedoms, Directive (2000/28/EC).

rights in UK courts. Article 14 of the Convention[24] sets out a general "equality principle". Protocol 12 to the Convention ensures that the "equality principle" is extended to apply to rights granted under national laws. And Article 9 of the Convention[25] recognises religious freedom as a human right to be protected.

The primary focus of the UK Human Rights Act is the State and public bodies who have duties imposed on them, rather than individuals. "Public body" is defined widely, and therefore where religious organisations exercise functions of a public nature they may be included in the definition of a public body for the purposes of the Human Rights Act. This confused state of affairs is currently under debate in the UK Parliament in ongoing equality legislation and the forthcoming Discrimination Law Review where it is being suggested that religious organisations in receipt of public funds for community projects will become public bodies for the purposes of those specific projects.

It is therefore now far more likely that religious groups could be found to infringe the law by doing no more than adhere to their beliefs. Arguably, aspects of those beliefs could consequently be deemed unlawful. The areas of most difficulty have been identified as employment discrimination, freedom of self-regulation, proselytism and freedom of speech and freedom to gather and protest, as well as contributions to society that receive public funding.

2.1.7.2. Judeo-Christian Tradition and Human Rights

Many submissions to the Inquiry were in broad agreement that the Judeo-Christian tradition underpinned the philosophy of the human rights paradigm - a belief shared by those working on the development of the European Constitution and the European Charter on Fundamental Human Rights. Although several submissions were of the opinion that the European Union caused problems in the area of religious liberty, yet at the same time it was acknowledged that within the European framework lies the basis and the need for finding common ground with other religions. From a purely UK judicial perspective, several submissions considered that the doctrine of human rights was actually part of a Christian ethical framework in any case.

Equally however, some submissions to the Commission were concerned that the ascendancy of the human rights paradigm has eclipsed the importance of the Church. Julian Rivers argued cogently that whilst public ethics remained Judeo-Christian at the level of context, they had been translated into the secularised language of human rights, and ultimately implemented as a distinctive human rights approach with the Christian dimension removed. A minority of submissions to the Commission considered that the Judeo-Christian basis for human rights was no longer publicly recognised.

Several submissions pointed out that Judeo-Christian ethics and the human rights paradigm were significantly different, noting that Judeo-Christian ethics were far more comprehensive than human rights. Whilst these submissions saw benefits to be obtained in a human rights ethical paradigm, at the same time they saw little value in arguing for any reversal of the concurrent clear shift away from the Judeo-Christian tradition.

2.1.7.3. Ascendancy of Human Rights Paradigm

The human rights paradigm has introduced a selfish era involving a vocabulary and even an industry of *my* right, and *my* equality. Moreover, the word '*my*' denotes a paradox embedded within the human rights paradigm. Submissions by Scott-Joynt and Battye highlighted their perception of an imbalance in the direction of individualism demonstrated by the Human Rights Act. They

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[24] Article 14 of the ECHR is a general article and states that convention rights must be secured without discrimination on grounds "*Such as colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, or other status*". Article 14 therefore creates an overriding equality principle tied to convention rights. Protocol 12 to the ECHR further provided that no one shall be discriminated against by any public authority on (inter-alia) the grounds of religion.

[25] Article 9(1) allows individuals the right to the "enjoyment" of their religion - although such "enjoyment" is constrained immediately by Article 9(2) allowing the state to limit religious freedom in the public interest (generally considered under the three headings of public policy, health and safety and state security).

were in broad agreement that there had been a clear shift away from Judeo-Christian ethics as the underlying rationale for public policy towards a secular human rights paradigm.

A further concern of some contributors (notably Summerton) is that Evangelicals are uneasy because liberty of conscience is increasingly interpreted by secularist government to exclude the legitimacy of Evangelical expressions of religious belief and conscience. Conflict therefore arises in relation to law and conscience. Some grounds for conflict arise because those responsible for drafting legislation either are ignorant of or choose not to safeguard religious liberties, and fail to consider issues of conscience and religious belief that take account of the Evangelical Alliance's constituency as well as others. The result is that whilst liberal Christian tradition is not affected, increasingly the viewpoint of Evangelical Christianity is being placed firmly outside the boundaries of UK law by the legislators and courts, whilst Evangelical concerns have to be fought for, often on the back foot.

A major issue for evangelical Christians is the fact that some areas of social life about which they have strong faith-based views (e.g., sexuality, life issues, marriage, family) are now covered by domestic legislation based on individualistic and relativistic secularist ethics, as well as European and international human rights law. Often such legislation allows no exemption from its provisions on account of religious belief. CARE expresses concern that in this climate there can be cynical recourse to human rights legislation for the advancement of rights at the expense of religious belief.

2.1.8. *Rising Profile of Other Faiths*

Immigration has brought large numbers of adherents of other religions to the UK in the 20th century, a trend continuing into the 21st century. This phenomenon has helped to ensure that in common with many European nation states since 1945 the UK has not seen religion disappear as many predicted. The government is genuinely interested in securing balance between all religious groups, in order to ensure the stability also of secular society. This has resulted in a tendency to marginalise the Judeo-Christian tradition as merely one among many beliefs, despite the fact that it remains firmly embedded in UK history, culture, law and politics. This provides an increasingly problematic context for the Church.

2.1.9. *Tolerance and Intolerance*

'Tolerance' has become an attitudinal key word in debates about how we can live together in our multi-cultural, multi-faith society. But there is still a struggle to understand what 'tolerance' means today. 'Toleration' is firmly rooted in the legal-religio-political landscape of the UK. It is based on the principle that the State's power to suppress a religious tradition is voluntarily suspended, so that legal regulations refrain from labelling certain religious beliefs as unlawful. Toleration in this context means less than 'freedom', because the power to suppress remains, even as it is kept in check.

Within Christian theology and practice, toleration has a more dynamic aspect. It implies a readiness to live alongside worldviews and lifestyles which diverge from Christianity, and perhaps even seek to undermine it. The Evangelical Alliance has defined 'toleration' in terms of respecting difference and understanding diversity. However, concern is developing among Evangelicals generally that in the legislative sphere, their own position seems decreasingly tolerated. Particularly since the events of September 11th 2001, attitudes towards religion have become noticeably more polarised. In this context, it has become necessary to emphasise the importance of toleration across the spectrum of faith groups if society is to see its various constituencies living side by side whilst simultaneously feeling connected to and having a stake in the overarching political system under which they live. After 9/11, a significant tide of opinion, in the UK and elsewhere, turned against Islam. In some quarters, this hostility carried over into the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Media commentators now commonly portray religion as disruptive, dangerous and even potentially treasonable - a 'disease' infecting the body politic. Legal and political officials increasingly voice similar sentiments.

Toleration, then, is an issue of great current importance. Interestingly, however, submissions to the Commission dealing with the subject revealed a degree of ambiguity about the term, and the concept it denotes. While many wished to support the basic idea of toleration

as integral to human rights and a free society, they expressed a general unease with the way in which toleration is now being construed in the civic arena. For example, Chisnall supported the idea of toleration, noting that Jesus urged religious people to demonstrate it. CARE argued that Christians should model toleration without conditions. Harte proposed that the law should be even-handed in relation to toleration. But what this might mean in practice was less clear from the submissions. If Christians are tolerant of others in a plural society, should they then not expect tolerance in return? A major concern shared by submissions on this subject was the way 'tolerance' is increasingly conflated with 'inclusiveness', when the two concepts are neither identical nor interchangeable.

Having said all this, in her submission to the commission Fran Beckett's salutary reflection was that "Christian intolerance of certain moral positions must be accompanied by equal [in]tolerance of injustice. It is our preoccupation with the former and largely ignoring the latter that has seriously undermined the credibility of our witness". Even so, it clearly emerges from the material submitted to the Commission that the Church can and should make a serious and valuable contribution to ongoing debates about the nature and function of tolerance in 21st century Britain.

2.1.10 *Nationalism*

Nations are made up of increasingly diverse populations, and today typically contain a vast range of cultures, beliefs, interests and religions. The UK is itself composed of several national, ethnic, racial and linguistic groups, and its history testifies that nationalism can be both a focus for group solidarity and a tool of oppression.

The United Kingdom constitution rests on many contentious assumptions, for example, that we are a kingdom; that we are united[26]; that Parliament is representative of the people and expresses the will of the majority. Most importantly, perhaps, it rests on the decidedly debatable premise that 'Britishness' is reliant upon birth and socialisation within the territory of the realm. And while Britain contains many diverse groups, the claim that we are fully pluralist in a political sense is hard to substantiate.

As certain forms of nationalism strive for homogeneity, so in extreme cases it fuels the kind of ethnic cleansing seen recently in the Balkans and Sudan. However, the same basic desire for homogeneity can also be manifested more subtly in the rejection of others on grounds of gender, race, ethnicity, nationalism, disability, or religion. Christianity has of course played a very important role in developing national and communal identity in Christendom. Increasingly today, religion is yoked to ethnicity and nationalism as a useful identifier of 'the other' to be feared, suppressed and /or annihilated

In constructing a specifically ethnic identity, nations typically invoke a range of amenable cultural traditions and historic, poetic and mythic texts. At present in the UK, it is the English who are experiencing most difficulty in this area, as they struggle to forge a distinctive identity as strong as that of the Welsh, Scottish and Irish. One issue that has prompted heated public debates in recent years has been the use of national symbols. To give one example, tensions have arisen in England over use of the flag of St. George to support the English football team during international tournaments. One reason for this unease has been the ongoing tribal conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Glasgow as played out in the aggressive symbolism attached to Union and Saltire flags vis-à-vis the Irish Triclour at Rangers-Celtic matches. Some local authorities have actually tried to forbid this practice, arguing that it also causes offence to non-indigenous members of the community. In addition, it has been said that such flag-flying has contributed to racial tensions because of its simultaneous promotion and use by the racist British National Party.

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[26] The United Kingdom came into existence as 'the Kingdom of Great Britain' in 1707 through the uniting of the former Kingdoms of England and Scotland. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, was created in 1801 by the merger of the 'Kingdom of Great Britain' the 'Kingdom of Ireland'. Upon Irish independence in 1922 when the Anglo-Irish Treaty created the Irish Free State, it became the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Arguably, the Protestant religion was a key uniting factor in what constituted 'Britishness' between say 1650 and 1950.

Whilst some football supporters may also support the BNP, most simply want to back the national team in a manifest way. Indeed, there is nothing inherently bad or immoral in using a flag to denote a geographical area, as long as such use is inclusive, i.e., extended to all who live there, regardless of their ethnic origin. Even if some who have settled in a particular territory from elsewhere choose not to associate with this symbol, it seems odd to forbid its use because they may feel that it does not belong to them. In many nations, the flying of the national flag is viewed with pride, as something which unites, rather than divides, constituent ethnic groups. A clear American identity, for example, has been successfully created in the USA. Pointed questions could therefore be asked about how a fringe political party like the BNP has managed so easily to subvert the national flag, and how it might be reclaimed as a more positive symbol of inclusive national identity for the 21st century. The history of the English flag is intertwined with Christianity as part of English cultural heritage. Is it discredited because it has its roots in that heritage, or can it move beyond the more negative, exclusive associations of its design to represent the additional strands of faith and culture that characterise contemporary English society? Given Jesus' own generosity to people of other faiths and cultures in his own land, we certainly hope that it can.

It is important to recognise in this context increasing concern about the apparently uncritical nationalism of American evangelicalism and the supposed Christian Right's focus on so-called 'power politics'. It is appropriate to remind Christians across the world that they are mandated to honour the Lordship of Jesus Christ above any national, social, cultural or political loyalties, since any identification of the Christian faith with nationalism and particular political agendas is likely to compromise its integrity.

2.1.11   *Multiculturalism, Citizenship and 'Britishness'*

The political definition of 'Britishness' at the end of the 20th century continues to be highly problematic. With increasing awareness of multiculturally rooted civil unrest in the context of which Trevor Phillips, Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, has recently warned about segregation, parallel lives, and the 'ghettoisation' of Britain's cities, it is important to highlight the role of political and economic integration, citizenship and education to tackle such trends which, as Phillips warns, could lead to the creation of 'fertile breeding grounds' for extremists.

The Evangelical Alliance, in their response to the government report on 'Safe Havens', stressed that citizenship and nationality are important issues in today's society, particularly as our communities become more diverse. Their response noted the importance of properly tackling questions about what it means to be a citizen, since these questions are key to understanding who we are and how we fit in to where we live. While citizenship classes, now compulsory for those entering the UK, can certainly help arrivees to understand the systems and structures that exist in here, it is just as important for those who are already resident in the UK, and in particularly the indigenous population, to understand and respect the culture and ethnicity of those entering Britain.

The Alliance also argued that asylum and immigration policy should be marked by a tolerance of diversity. It added that the teaching of citizenship should not lead to amalgamation, as represented by the old idea of a "melting pot" of cultures. Instead, it argued that that such teaching should ideally result in mutual respect and understanding of the integrity and diversity of different people groups and concentrate not so much on 'integration' as 'assimilation'. Interestingly, Trevor Phillips supports greater integration. In 2004 he initiated a robust public debate on the meanings of integration, Britishness, core values, cohesion and multiculturalism. He challenged what he regarded as outdated concepts of multiculturalism – the ideology of difference – as opposed to the fact of diversity in a country where social, cultural and ethnic diversity has been present for several centuries. Phillips argued that multiculturalism grew out of a desire to recognise that diversity is a good thing, and to appreciate the many excellent qualities that newcomers brought to Britain. However, he pointed out that today's new challenges cannot simply be answered in what he saw as the outmoded language of race relations. Phillips's dismissal of multiculturalism and preference for integration has been widely criticised as itself outdated and a pretext for a one-way process of assimilation. Nevertheless, most critics agree

that society is in need of a commonly-accepted social framework within which individuals and communities can interact

In his submission to the Commission Turner noted that citizenship was originally a Roman concept reinterpreted for a Christian context, and that this in turn was reminiscent of the call to be citizens of the world. The word 'citizenship' always incorporated the notion of moral behaviour. Some others submissions expressed fear that British national citizenship was under threat from the European Union, and from the notion of 'EU citizenship' in particular. In his submission, Glasman, having emphasised that the "origin of citizenship lies in the city, in what the city is and what it takes to be a participant in the life of a city", continued by discussing the modern nationalised version of citizenship. This was a form of citizenship springing from modernity and dealing with mass society and new technology. His submission also contended that part of the problem encountered by the attempt to foster a shared sense of place is that many of those who migrated to Britain were demeaned and exploited in the process, and so retain a mistrust of the institutions which control their adopted home.

The Jubilee Centre submission saw citizenship as a potentially powerful tool to be used for "reintroducing the language of responsibility into a rights oriented culture." Referring to current government initiatives on so-called 'active citizenship', they correctly observe that while it is desirable that there may be some idea of commonality that citizens can own, such commonality should simultaneously be free of any presumption of one particular faith, should not "deny the importance of faith" and should "respect the reality of our Christian heritage". In the current climate of increasing decentralisation, there remain promising opportunities for faith groups to develop locally and become dynamic partners in local community.

In the exhortation of Christ to render to Caesar that which is Caesar's, and to God what is God's (Matt. 22.21), the Christian finds from the notion of 'heavenly citizenship' a helpful model towards good citizenship in the relevant nation state, as well as for obedience to God in the worldwide family of Christians. It is important for Christians to remember that their experiences of nationhood can place a cultural veneer over their understanding of Christianity. This veneer can be problematic because it can lead to denial of the Christian experience of others, and to judging that experience negatively on account of cultural and contextual unfamiliarity.

As Christians we are called to live in a multicultural environment, to be aware of the cultural trappings of our beliefs, and to emphasise those aspects of our own faith which are universal and essential, rather than socially or ethnically contingent. Any notion of citizenship must have built into it an authentic and enduring respect for other cultural traditions and religious outlooks. On this basis, Christians should be able to act as good citizens, just as long as they are not forced by the ruling authorities to adhere to beliefs and traditions which damage their own authentic Christian witness.

2.2 Church and Nationhood in the UK and Europe Today

2.2.1 Introduction

The current climate is characterised by increasingly controversial debate concerning the relation between church and state or church and the nation. The Commission's deliberations have been marked by wide divergence on the issue, with a not unexpected tendency for those with links to the established church to be more ready to see the benefits of establishment, together with the risks of abandoning it, and those from radical or new church backgrounds relatively eager to perceive new opportunities afforded by the 'demise' of Christendom and the Constantinian tradition, if not indeed to hasten such demise where it is not yet complete. And of course this dichotomy goes much wider than the mere issue of establishment. We would be remiss if we did not stress at this point a fundamental division in Evangelicalism which has largely restricted progress in this area and which ultimately may prove irreconcilable.

Both Christian and secular media regularly address the theme, and arguments pro and con the established order frequently appear to fall into line with the nature and political/theological stance of the respective publication. Numerous books relating to the role of the established church appear with each successive year. The Commission has inevitably found itself having to adopt a balanced approach to the debate whilst seeking to explore viable ways forward, and perhaps inevitably this gives rise to criticism that ultimately the project is self-limiting in its scope.

2.2.2 Established Churches

'Establishment' is a controversial term that can be defined both narrowly and widely - often depending on whether it is being attacked or defended. A church is usually said to be 'established' when that church enjoys some kind of legal and constitutional position in the polity of the state, though 'legal recognition' is not the same as being 'established by law'. That recognition usually involves some form of obligation to the state on the part of the church concerned. From the Church of England's perspective there is above all, a responsibility to bring the ministry of the gospel, the sacraments and pastoral care to every community in the land and to make the Christian voice heard in the arenas of public policy. Establishment in its stronger forms gives the state certain responsibilities in relation to the church and may even confer some kind of influence or control in certain areas of church life.[27]

Any organised form of Christianity may be 'established': in Scotland it is the Reformed faith or Presbyterianism; in Scandinavia Lutheranism. The Roman Catholic Church is subject to establishment of a kind by virtue of Concordats between the Holy See and a number of states. The Eastern (Orthodox) Churches have historically been national churches, closely intertwined with the life and identity of the state and recognised by it. There is no reason why even churches with an Independent or Congregational polity, that in recent times have made it a point of principle to keep their distance from the state, should not be established, and indeed this is not without precedent (as for example in New England).

Anglicanism is fully established only in England, though other churches (or provinces) of the Anglican Communion have various legal and constitutional links with the state in their own countries (the Church in Wales is a particularly interesting example: see below).[28] If establishment is certainly not confined to England, it is not confined to Christianity either. Any organised religion may be established. The Jewish faith unquestionably was established in Old Testament times: church and state were intimately linked and in practice coterminous, though there was often tension between religious and political leaders, priests and kings, with prophets being sometimes associated with the cult (Ezekiel) and sometimes with the court (Isaiah). A single body of law embraced liturgical, moral and civil norms and rules. The great religious festival of the Passover commemorated God's act of national deliverance and the 'sacrament'

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[27] Paul Avis, *Church, State and Establishment* (London: SPCK, 2001), 74-91.
[28] See Norman Doe, *Canon Law in the Anglican Communion: A Worldwide Perspective* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

of circumcision identified Jewish males as members both of the religious congregation and of the nation of Israel.

Beyond Judaism and Christianity, the religion most likely to be established is Islam. Where Islam is protected by the state, as is the case in a number of Middle and Far Eastern and African countries, and where Islamic law is adopted into the law of the land (*Sharia*), Islam may be said to be established.

It is a moot point, and one which Christians might ponder, whether it is not better, from a Christian point of view, for any form of Christianity (Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican or Protestant) to be established, rather than some other faith; and, by the same token, whether it is not better for any major theistic faith to be established rather than none. Perhaps a godless state, committed to a purely secular ideology and hostile to all religion, is the worst scenario that we can envisage.

Establishment need not be exclusive, so that only one church can be established in a particular state. In the United Kingdom there are two churches that are established, though in slightly different ways: the monarch is an Anglican in England and conforms to the Church of Scotland when residing north of the border. In Finland both the Lutheran majority church and the Orthodox minority church have their constitution and confession of faith laid down by the state and the clergy are state employees. In Belgium and the Czech Republic several churches and indeed faiths are established to the extent of enjoying generous financial state support. Establishment is not in principle incompatible with pluralism, tolerance and even-handedness.

Establishment is nowadays understood by many to be flexible and take several different forms. If establishment refers to formal state recognition of a church in law and in the constitution, and to the corresponding obligations, especially pastoral ones, that such recognition lays upon the church, then clearly there are various degrees of establishment - there are strong and weak forms. All churches necessarily relate to the state within whose territory and under whose laws they exist and carry on their mission. Churches, like all other institutions in civil society, are subject to and benefit from laws that protect property, employees, the administration of charitable functions and the vulnerability of minors. The state can and will intervene in the 'internal' life of any church if the public interest seems to require it, though many fear this principle is inimical to toleration and may be abused, for example, in some communist and Orthodox countries.

Increasingly throughout the world, states are requiring churches to register in order to be recognised as public bodies. Such registration is at the discretion of the state, which will satisfy itself that the faith and polity of the church, as submitted for its approval, are not detrimental to the public well being. On the one hand, recent trends suggest that churches which have historically been strongly established, like the Church of Sweden and the Church of England, have gained greater freedom to order their own affairs and have thus become more loosely established. On the other hand, it seems that certain churches which have never been established are being brought into a closer relation to the state. There is a levelling up and a levelling down going on simultaneously, which may lead the churches to conclude that they are ultimately very much in the same boat where church-state relations are concerned, and may encourage them to speak and act together wherever possible.

2.2.3   *Establishment, Disestablishment and the Churches*

There has been a sustained progressive attenuation in the relationship between the Church of England and the State, and this process seems likely to continue.

The role of bishops in the House of Lords has been considered above. Their disappearance from the second chamber could well take place and would form another step towards disestablishment. The role of the monarch has already been considered too, and the possibility of change there has been noted. The way bishops are appointed has also been referred to, and just as this was quite fundamentally altered in the late 1970s with the setting up of the Crown Appointments Commission, so it may be altered again. The case for doing so would in many minds be strengthened by the removal of bishops from the Lords.

Parliament's role in legislating has diminished over the years with legislation establishing the Church Assembly in 1919 then Synodical government in 1970. The Synod now

proposes Measures, which Parliament must accept or reject but cannot amend. Measures have to be considered by a Joint Committee (of Lords and Commons), which has to report on the expediency of the proposed Measure "especially in relation to the constitutional rights of all Her Majesty's subjects". A Measure, if rejected in either House, can be laid again. This happened when the Commons rejected the Clergy Ordination Measure relating to the ordination of women. But the present system does allow for the possibility that those who object to a Measure prepared by Synod can seek to generate enough opposition in Parliament to block the Measure concerned. In effect, this is what happened on the ordination of women, when the Commons rejected the Measure in a thin House late at night. Measures are introduced by bishops in the Lords or the second Church Estates Commissioner (an MP appointed to this role by the Church) in the Commons. The MP in this office also answers questions in Parliament on a regular basis concerning Church matters (a procedure which curiously has no parallel in the Lords). The General Synod also has the power to legislate directly, by canon, for the life of the Church, without recourse to Parliament.

There are a plethora of arguments surrounding the whole question of establishment. From a constitutional standpoint the 'privileged' position of the Church of England is certainly much reduced today as compared to the past, as is the degree of legal regulation imposed by virtue of its established status. Where such regulation exists conventions have developed about its use. Thus, attempts by parliamentarians to use parliamentary means to legislate for the Church of England are generally eschewed by fellow parliamentarians (for example, over 'Prayer Book protection'). If circumstances were to change and the Church to find Parliament imposing what it did not want, or failing to agree what it proposed, then the Church would certainly have to reconsider its position.

There could come a point where the continued attenuation of Church and State resulted in an 'effective disestablishment' (bishops gone from the Lords, and the Crown declining to take part in their appointment any more; Parliament deciding to abandon procedures for enacting Measures; Parliament deciding to repeal statutory bars on the throne being held by a Roman Catholic[29]; and so on). Alternatively, disestablishment could come about 'big bang style' if either party, Church or State, were to seek it. But the 'big bang' might turn out to be a dull damp squib as politicians and lawyers grappled with obscure details and unexpected consequences. Disestablishment could hardly be any simpler than the supposedly straightforward task of abolishing the Lord Chancellor!

2.2.4   *UK Context of Church Relations*

In the four countries (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) that make up the United Kingdom there are four somewhat different patterns of the relationship of the churches to the particular nation and to the state that includes them all. These patterns are 'somewhat different', not completely divergent. They have elements in common that can be attributed to the fact that in the UK Christianity is comparatively homogeneous. It is not, on the whole, in a state of mutual suspicion, hostility or conflict. Historical continuity is strong in that there are two established churches and two disestablished churches (perhaps one should say more correctly: churches that have been 're-established' as free churches: see below).

Several church 'families' cover more than one nation of the UK. The Methodist Church of Great Britain, the United Reformed Church and the Baptist Union of Great Britain exist in England, Scotland and Wales. The Roman Catholic Church is not distributed on a national basis, except in terms of its bishops' conferences. There are four Anglican churches in Britain and Ireland, member provinces of the Anglican Communion.

Inter-church relations in the UK are quite advanced both locally and nationally, compared even with other parts of Europe. Various ecumenical dialogues, especially within England, bring the churches into theological conversation, sometimes resulting in a formal agreement for a new relationship and shared mission (such as the Anglican-Methodist Covenant of 2003). There are numerous local and regional Churches Together groups as well as various types of Local Ecumenical Partnership. The four-nations ecumenical instrument is Churches

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[29] A Royal Marriages (Freedom of Religion) Bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 8 March 2005.

Together in Britain and Ireland (which includes the whole of Ireland), while each nation has some kind of national instrument (Churches Together in England; ACTS in Scotland; CYTUN in Wales). The Evangelical Alliance brings together individual Christians and congregations or parishes of several Christian traditions and thus contributes to the positive climate of inter-church relations in the UK.

2.2.5 *The Church of England* [30]

The Church of England, as the established Church in England, is not currently seeking to become more 'free', and voices calling specifically for disestablishment within the church are relatively few. That is largely because during the past century the Church of England has gained freedom from state control that is substantial and (in the view of most Anglicans) sufficient. The Church of England enjoys enviable opportunities for evangelism, pastoral care and other forms of mission that its established and historic position provides. The question many Christians, both inside and outside the Church of England, will want to ask is: could not that church do more to exploit those opportunities?

Many would regard the essence of establishment of the Church of England as rooted in its psycho-social position developed by virtue of its historic national monopoly. However, it may nowadays be argued that it is the diocesan-parochial system of pastoral ministry and mission that characterises establishment, rather than the presence of twenty-six bishops in the House of Lords, the largely symbolic role of the monarch as its Supreme Governor, and the involvement of the Prime Minister in the appointment of bishops and deans.[31] With its parish churches, clergy and lay ministers in virtually every community of the land, and numerous chaplaincies in the armed forces, hospitals and education (though now often multi-denominational and increasingly multi-faith) the Church of England is portrayed as ideally structured for mission in some highly publicly visible ways. The rationale for establishment on this view is the Church's responsibility on behalf of the gospel for all people and all communities, a responsibility that is recognised by the state. The relation of the monarch to the church symbolises such national recognition and corresponding national responsibility, though it has wider spiritual significance, too.[32] Establishment should not necessarily be regarded as a comparatively modern innovation, brought about at the Reformation by the actions of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. The reality of establishment, if not the word itself, goes back to the Emperor Constantine's adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire early in the fourth century. Needless to say, there was no separation of Church and State, or of sacred and secular, in medieval Europe. During the Middle Ages Church and State became slightly more distinguishable aspects of the one Christian commonwealth and society. Like Siamese twins they were conjoined yet still distinguishable bodies. Theologically they were united in God, but both God's deputies, the pope and the Holy Roman Emperor, wrestled for dominance (as did their more local equivalents, such as Archbishop Thomas à Becket and King Henry II). Locked together in a sacral model of society and a hierarchical ordering of the universe, pope and emperor, bishop and prince struggled for supremacy. The Reformation altered the dynamics of this across Europe, as the powers of papal jurisdiction were assumed by national and local rulers, but it did not affect the essential principles that held Church and State together right through the upheavals of the 16th century.

The expression 'by law established', in reference to the Church of England, originally meant that the national religion had become 'settled', 'determined' or 'resolved', by the action of the state, after a period of turbulence and conflict. From 1660 onwards 'the church by law established' held negative associations particularly for non-conformist Christians who contrasted it with 'the church by grace established'. It was not until the second half of the 20th century that the term 'establishment' acquired more general pejorative or satirical overtones,

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[30] An indispensable guide for serious students of the Church of England is Norman Doe, *The Legal Framework of the Church of England: A Critical Study in a Comparative Context* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

[31] See, for example, Paul Avis, *Church, State and Establishment*.

[32] See Ian Bradley, *God Save the Queen: The Spiritual Dimension of monarchy*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd), 2002.

though many Non-Conformists already disliked the term in the 19th century. In the 20th century the use of the expression 'The Establishment' began to be employed in a largely non-religious sense for the half-imagined privileged and wealthy elite who are alleged to manage affairs behind the scenes, usually managing them badly, though to their own advantage.

The Church of England enjoys considerable freedom under Parliament to manage its own affairs, but total authority has not been delegated to it in a wholesale manner. The Church of England controls its own doctrine, liturgy and discipline, though the place of the Book of Common Prayer is secured by law. The General Synod, which is made up of the three houses of bishops, clergy and laity, has authority to govern and legislate by canon for the life of the Church without reference to Parliament. Legislation that either breaks new ground or that might bear on the rights of the Queen's subjects under the law is enacted by Measure, which requires parliamentary approval.

The fact that the Prime Minister, in advising the Queen on the appointment of diocesan bishops, has discretion between two names put up by a commission of the General Synod remains a stumbling block to some Christians. This residual role of the state appears to them to be the last objectionable relic of earlier state control of the Church. However, many English Anglicans probably regard this as a relatively minor matter and do not see it as a major issue of principle. Nevertheless, many committed Anglicans believe the appointment of a diocesan bishop should be a matter of national significance and also of concern to all the people and communities within a diocese, not merely to those who attend church regularly. The arrangement could also be seen as a useful check on appointments that might be made in haste and repented of at leisure.

Anglicans consider the heart of the Church of England is to be found in the territorial ministry of the word, the sacraments, and pastoral care through dioceses and parishes, though this depends as much on historical factors as on established status. The diocesan bishop is canonically the 'chief pastor of all that are within his diocese, as well laity as clergy' (Canon C18). Traditionally, parish clergy have ministered not just to churchgoers but to everyone in the parish. This ministry to the whole community began to fail in the industrial revolution and has become increasingly difficult to sustain in recent decades. In some parishes, it has to be said, the gospel mission to the whole community has lapsed through a loss of vision, will and motivation. The calling of the Church of England as a national, established and territorial church is currently going by default in a culture and a society drifting further and further from its Christian roots, where outreach among the unchurched and involvement in the wider community is all the more imperative. Ecumenical collaboration, such as that signalled by the Anglican-Methodist Covenant and the informal conversations between the Baptist Union and the Church of England's Council for Christian Unity, can help to some extent in bridging the mission gap. However, what is urgently needed is a major re-envisioning of the mission of the Church of England, fresh strategic thinking about how such a mission might be possible, and then the harnessing of the very considerable potential of laity and clergy in order to attempt this.

The Anglican church north of the border is the Scottish Episcopal Church. It is a tenth the size of the Church of Scotland and also of the Roman Catholic Church in that land. It is a member province of the Anglican Communion. It elects its own bishops and in theory governs its own affairs without recourse to the State. It is, therefore, a 'free church', particularly in relation to the Church of Scotland.

2.2.6   *The Church of Scotland*

In Scotland, the Church of Scotland (the Kirk) is established by virtue of the Scottish reformation statutes, the arrangements for the Union of the Parliaments, various legal cases and the Church of Scotland Act 1921. The Church of Scotland is catholic, Trinitarian and adheres to the Scottish Reformation. It acknowledges a duty to bring the ordinances of religion to all the parishes of Scotland. It also maintains congregations in various capitals of Europe, including London.

The Church of Scotland was reformed and its relationship with Roman Catholicism severed, by four Acts of the Scottish Parliament in 1560. The General Assembly Act 1592 c.8

finally settled its governance as Presbyterian, and it has remained so despite a brief attempt to impose prelacy in the 17th century. Commissioners from the Church played a major role in the framing of the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1646, and that Confession was adopted as the Kirk's principal subordinate standard of faith and approved as such by statute. Tension between the Presbyterian and Anglican churches north and south of the Border led to both being specifically protected in the arrangements for the Union of the Parliaments in 1707.

In the early 19th century the growth of an evangelical party within the Kirk led it to two important attempts to reform itself. One related to the way in which ministers were called to a particular charge. The other concerned the ability of a Presbytery to create a new charge and give its minister a seat in Presbytery. In both instances the civil courts struck down the reforms. The government of the day refusing redress, about one third of the ministers, elders and members of the Church withdrew to form the Free Church of Scotland. Led by Thomas Chalmers, one of the founders of the Evangelical Alliance, they claimed that the Church should be free of state interference. As it happened, within thirty years the appointment of ministers and the powers of the Church of Scotland were reformed by statute as part of Victorian developments in social legislation and administration no longer based on the parish system.

Also in the 19th century various moves had resulted in church unions among minor groups. Most of these came together to form the United Free Church of Scotland in 1900, a union which itself gave rise to the very important Free Church Case of 1904 establishing that in matters of property the trustees of a denomination hold for those adhering to the original purposes of the denomination.

In the early 20th century the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church negotiated 'Articles Declaratory of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland in Matters Spiritual'. These were declared lawful for the Church to hold by the Church of Scotland Act 1921, clarifying the relationships of the Kirk and the civil authority. Union was achieved in 1929 when the two churches formally accepted the 'Articles' and a Basis and Plan of Union. (Subsequently, minor other denominations have united with the Church of Scotland). The 'Articles' affirm the divine Headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, and its reception from Him of its right to be subject to no civil authority to legislate and to adjudicate finally on all matters of doctrine, worship, government and discipline in the Kirk, while recognising the authority of the civil magistrate in its similarly God-given sphere. This reflects historically the close relationship of the churches of the Reformation, both Lutheran and Reformed, with the State. The Reformers held a very high view of the State in the providential purposes of God and saw the civil magistrate or ruler as a minister of God for the protection of the Church, for the enforcement of morals and the upholding of true religion. That said, the Kirk has never been supine in its relations with the state.

The conciliar structure of the Kirk is now composed of Kirk sessions, presbyteries and the General Assembly, the latter meeting annually (Synods have been abolished). The Moderator of the General Assembly, elected for each Assembly thereafter, plays an ambassadorial role, but has no special or official status. To each Assembly the Crown sends a High Commissioner, who sits in a gallery that is technically outside the Assembly Hall. He or she addresses the Assembly but does not influence or control its debates. In former years the debates of the Kirk acted in many ways as a Scottish parliament. How far this continues after devolution still remains to be seen.

2.2.7   *Formerly Established Anglican Churches: Ireland and Wales*

The Church in Wales and the Church of Ireland are both formerly established churches, now long since disestablished but with some differences between them. The Church of Ireland, which includes both Northern Ireland and the Republic, was historically a minority church, associated with the Anglicized land-owning aristocracy whose presence was resented in what was then a staunchly Roman Catholic country. William Ewart Gladstone, convinced that the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Ireland, if combined with land reform, would calm that troubled land, initiated steps which resulted in its disestablishment by Parliament in 1870.

The Church in Wales consists of the four Welsh dioceses that were formerly part of the Church of England and the two dioceses created since disestablishment. The historical pattern was the same as in Ireland: a largely alien Anglican presence, associated with a minority, English-speaking land-owning class, for whom the idea of an indigenous Welsh expression of Christianity, flowing especially from the 18th century Evangelical revival, was incomprehensible. The disestablishment and partial disendowment of the Welsh dioceses was approved by Parliament in 1914, as a result of concerted nonconformist agitation and against the bitter opposition of Welsh Anglicans, and came into effect after the First World War in 1920. Because the Church in Wales was constituted and endowed by the action of the state legislature, some have claimed that it is not a 'disestablished', but a 're-established' church, albeit with the freedom to manage its own affairs under the law.

In practice, as well as in its legal foundation, the Church in Wales could be regarded as a quasi-established church. It still has a national profile and role and its proportion of Christian affiliation in Wales has grown through the relative decline of nonconformist churches. Its primate takes his title not from a particular see, but from the country or nation: 'Archbishop of Wales'. The law of marriage was excluded from the provisions of the Welsh Church Act 1914 and the Marriage Act 1949 applies to Wales as it does to England: parishioners who meet the requirements have a right to be married in their parish church. Similarly, parishioners have the right to funeral services in their parish church and burial in the churchyard. In practice, the pastoral provision in respect of baptisms, as well as marriages and funerals, is similar to that of the Church of England. In a number of respects, the Church in Wales still has the look and feel of an established church. No doubt, as in England, more could be done by the Anglican bishops, clergy and people to seize the missionary and evangelistic opportunities that its situation presents.

2.2.8   *The Free Churches in England, Scotland and Wales*

The denominational Free Churches are, of course, by definition not established: they are free to govern themselves in worship, doctrine and discipline under the law, without state interference which mainly motivated their struggle for freedom. Their tradition has historically been that of dissent from the Established Church, though more recently numerous independent evangelical congregations, Pentecostalism, Black Majority Churches and other 'free church' groups have seen rapid and substantial growth. The link between classical Pentecostalism and the burgeoning neo-Pentecostal or charismatic movement is hugely significant for the growth and development of contemporary ecclesiology. It is also significant in terms of its social impact, not least in the immigration to Britain of many African-Caribbean Pentecostals and Evangelicals since the 1950s.

 Suffering religious, civil, legal, political and social disabilities for their nonconformity until near the end of the 19th century, from the 17th century dissent evolved into free and subsequently into independent or gathered congregations (as distinct from territorial ecclesiology). In the period from 1660 to about 1900, not to be Anglican effectively implied constitutional, political and social exclusion, and vestiges of this can still be encountered today.

It is pertinent to ask in what ways the 'Free Churches' are more 'free' than the Church of England (or the Church of Scotland for that matter)? Of course, their vision of freedom historically was motivated by the desire for liberty from episcopal and state control or interference. But arguably much of the power and dynamism fuelling evangelical revival during the last three centuries has come from outside the established church and has influenced it from outside. Those who embrace the Free Church tradition believe that their 'freedom' makes their mission more effective, and there is evidence to support this.

Of course, the question of Free Church identity remains fiercely controversial. Some Anglicans like to point out that the Presbyterian Church of England, despite its obvious nonconformity, sought in the late 17th century to be recognised as the established form of church polity. They therefore suggest that the United Reformed Church, with its Presbyterian foundation, is fundamentally establishmentarian in its traditional make up. Because Methodism sprang from the Church of England and followed on the heels of the historic Dissenting tradition, it is pointed out that some Methodists are uncomfortable about being labelled 'Free

Church'. It is also noted that both the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church have come about in their present forms through a series of Acts of Parliament.

The term 'Free Church' has acquired a very different meaning in Scotland as distinct from England and Wales. The Free Presbyterian Church emerged in 1843, not in opposition to the concept of a 'national church' as such, but through a seceding group of Church of Scotland evangelicals who rejected a specific ecclesiological procedure maintained by the established church from 1712 – namely, the right of wealthy landowners to appoint ministers to a parish over the heads of its members. Many of the most prominent Free Church secessionists in fact played a key part in the formation of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846. In 1893 a schism within the Free Church of Scotland itself led to the formation of the Free Presbyterian Church. Again, the argument here was not specifically concerned with national representation or state oversight, but with the Free Church Declaratory Act, which distanced the Free Church of Scotland from strict adherence to the Westminster Confession. Those who left to become Free Presbyterians did so on theological rather than ecclesiological grounds. The Westminster Confession historically could be said to reflect establishment Presbyterian aspirations.

The United Presbyterian Church began as a more explicitly anti-establishment body. Having been distinguished by a particular commitment to overseas mission, it resisted state funding of the church on the grounds that it might shackle and compromise evangelistic zeal. However by 1900 it united with the Free Church of Scotland to form the United Free Church. Even so, this move was opposed by a small minority on the Free Church side, which asserted rights to all the property of the Free Church. In 1901-2 the courts found against this minority, but in 1904 the House of Lords reversed that decision and the Westminster government had to step in to effect a settlement. The United Free Church then re-united with the Church of Scotland in 1929, though once more a small number went their own way as the 'United Free Church of Scotland (continuing)', or 'Continuers. Here, most of the objections were against the Establishment of religion under the State. The Free Church of Scotland was split again in January 2000, when 31 of its ministers formed a breakaway group in protest at perceived liberalisation and immorality.

What does it mean to be a Dissenter or nonconformist today? Do reasons for dissent still exist? Religious uniformity, backed by state sanctions and persecution, has not existed for just over one hundred years when the last nonconformist disabilities were finally removed. The Church of England is not a state-controlled church. Our culture and society is characterised by pluralism and huge indifference to the claims and credentials of all the churches. Are the divisions between the established and the free churches on points of principle or for other reasons? Wherein lies the contemporary validity and force of the dissenting tradition?

The traditional hostility of English Dissenters to the idea of an established Church is now comparatively muted. Legally enforced conformity and uniformity of worship, doctrine and polity was last attempted in 1662 and lasted only until 1689 with the coming of toleration. Civil and political disabilities for Protestant Dissenters were substantially removed in 1828, though certain disabilities remained until the late 19th century. The denominational Free Churches began to soften their hostility to establishment in the 1920s.

The Baptists stem historically from some combination, that has not yet been definitively clarified, of the English Separatists, who emerged in the late 16th century, and Continental Anabaptism of various kinds. Both strands repudiated the idea of a Christian commonwealth and a territorial, established Church of England. They replaced the ecclesiology of Christendom, which the Reformers had left intact – that of a Christian society or nation – with the model of an eclectic, gathered congregation in covenanted fellowship. They baptised (or 're-baptised') their converts and emphasised church discipline in the form of excommunication. Altogether, this tradition has repudiated the idea of a national, established church and – in Britain at least, though not in the U.S.A. – it has therefore perhaps tended to find itself as a denomination more at the margins of civil society, not least as a result of its lack of central formal representation. The Baptist Union is a voluntary association or network of local churches rather than an organised 'church denomination' with a hierarchical representational structure. However, it came into being, like the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, through Act of Parliament.

The Methodists may perhaps be regarded as a special case. Methodism's roots in the first half of the 18th century are certainly Anglican – John and Charles Wesley and John Whitefield being clergymen of the established Church. Though in their outdoor preaching ministry they sat lightly to parochial and diocesan structures, they did not question the principle of establishment. John Wesley's original aim was to reform and revive the established Church and to strengthen its national mission, but the Methodist societies became entirely independent of the Church of England from the end of the 18th century. However, Methodism gained adherents from historic Dissent and from those who had never been nurtured in any church. For a period, the Wesleyan Methodist Church maintained an essentially conservative political outlook, but this was eroded by Methodist support for Roman Catholic Emancipation in the 1820s, which was generally opposed by the Established Church. The Primitive Methodists held strongly disestablishmentarian views. Methodist opposition to the 1902 Education Act, which required non-Anglican taxpayers to fund Church of England schools, set Methodists at odds with the Established Church. The Anglican-Methodist Covenant for England of 2003 brought the Church of England and the Methodist Church of Great Britain into a declared new relationship of mutual recognition and mutual commitment. Methodist leaders and Anglican bishops have agreed increasingly to work and speak alongside each other in civil society at regional and national levels. The 2004 report *Church, State and Establishment*, received by the Methodist Conference, refrains from calling for actual disestablishment of the Church of England, but diplomatically states that further changes to the relationship between the Church of England and the state 'would better enable our growing together in Christian witness in England'.

In the later 20th century and early 21st century the 'free churches' are increasingly identified not just with the historic dissenting 'organised denominations' but also with Pentecostals and 'organic networks', as reflected in the huge rise of devolved evangelical groups, such as Icthus, Vineyard and New Frontiers, as well as networks that cross denominations, such as New Wine, the latter ironically stemming from the Church of England itself but operating in a supra-denominational manner.

2.2.9 *The Roman Catholic Church in Britain and Ireland*

The Roman Catholic Church is of course a global church with around a billion baptised adherents. In the UK it exists in three bishops' conferences: those of England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland (Northern Ireland as well as the Irish Republic). The jurisdiction of the pope in England and Wales was abolished in the 1530s by the Henrician Parliament, but the medieval structures of parishes, dioceses, cathedrals and Convocations of the Clergy continued. Roman Catholics suffered various religious, civil and political disabilities until Roman Catholic Emancipation in 1829. In 1850 the Roman Catholic episcopal hierarchy was reintroduced in England on a territorial basis, with a metropolitical see at Westminster – an action that was regarded as an outrage by many in England at the time.

In the UK the Roman Catholic Church is not 'established', as it is in a number of other countries, by means of a Concordat between the government and the Vatican State, involving mutual privileges and obligations. There is, however, no equation between Roman Catholic Concordat and Anglican Establishment. Arguably, the Roman Catholic Church is recognised in law, though again this does not imply any form of established status. Since the 16th century, it has been the case that 'the Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England/Scotland', which means that the pope has no power to decree laws for British subjects or to enforce any such decrees through the courts of the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church has a national distribution of churches, members and clergy. It is, however, open to discussion whether that makes it a 'national' church, since such a designation would depend on a church's avowed intention to minister to the whole nation, and its ability to do so.[33]

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[33] On the definition of a national church see Norman Doe, 'The Notion of a National Church: A Juridical Framework', *Law and Justice*, 149 (2002), 77-91; Paul Avis, *Church, State and Establishment* (London: SPCK, 2001), ch. 2.

Rather, the Roman Catholic Church is perhaps best described as a universally present 'free' church.

2.2.10 Chaplaincies

One of the clearest manifestations of the continuance and development of 'civic religion' in the United Kingdom is the presence of chaplains in the armed services, hospitals, prisons and academic institutions, as well as in police stations, airports, sports clubs, shopping centres and business districts. Of these, military, medical, prison and further education chaplaincies are most directly linked to the state through specific legislation and, in some cases, through public funding.

Chaplains to the armed services are designated as commissioned officers under Queen's Regulations. Of around 300 chaplains currently working full-time in this capacity, some 54% are supplied by the Church of England; 16% are Roman Catholic; 12% Church of Scotland, 8% Methodist and 6% others. In each case, the relevant denomination grants approval for the appointment, and some costs, but salaries and other expenses are paid by the Ministry of Defence, amounting to an annual outlay on this sector of approximately £18 million.

The Prisons Act (1952) stipulates that every one of the 129 prisons in England and Wales must have an Anglican chaplain. However, while the Chaplain General must also be a Church of England cleric, members of other Christian denominations, and of other faiths, also serve as prison chaplains, most in a part-time capacity. Of the 184 full-time prison chaplaincies in England and Wales, 147 are Anglican. Annual public expenditure on prison chaplaincies amounts to about £11 million.

Hospital chaplains are authorised under the National Health Service Acts. Some occupy 'generic' posts, approved by their respective denominations but paid for by the NHS, while others are effectively funded by the denomination concerned. England alone has 422 full-time hospital chaplains, of whom 350 are Church of England clergy, and some 3,000 more who operate on a part-time and/or voluntary basis. As with military and prison chaplaincies, the increasingly multicultural profile of modern Britain means that more chaplains from non-Christian faith groups are being appointed in this sector.

Church denominations and other faith groups fund chaplaincies in most centres of higher education in the UK. In 2004, there were 174 Church of England Chaplains in Universities, and 35 in Colleges of Further Education. Here, too, chaplaincy teams are increasingly ecumenical and multi-faith.

2.2.11 Continental European Churches and Establishment

Across Continental Europe we find a mixed pattern of the churches' relationship to the State: established churches, disestablished churches and various half-way houses.[34] Things are not always what they seem. In France, with its modern anticlerical tradition, the Napoleonic Concordat with the Holy See was abrogated in 1905, but the constitution still acknowledges 'the Supreme Being' of the Enlightenment. Roman Catholic churches built before then are owned and maintained by the municipal authority. In Germany, where the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches have been 'disestablished' since 1919, the constitution speaks of 'responsibility before God'. There are numerous concordats or other treaties between the churches and either the Federal government or the Bundesländer; there is a guaranteed public role for the churches; a voluntary church tax administered by the state; and confessional theological faculties in state universities. In Belgium there is a paradoxical combination of

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[34] See Gerhard Robbers (ed.), *State and Church in the European Union* (Baden Baden: Nomos Gesellschaft, 1996); Gerhard Robbers, 'Diversity of State-Religion Relations and European Union Unity', *Ecclesiastical Law Journal*, 7 [no. 34] (2004), 304-316; B. Schanda, 'Church and State in the New Member Countries of the European Union', *Ecclesiastical Law Journal 8* (2005), 186-198.

state-sponsored pluralism and multiple establishment, as the salaries, housing and pensions of the ministers of various churches (and of some non-Christian faiths) are provided by the state, and as the state maintains church buildings.

Denmark offers the strongest form of establishment in Europe: the Lutheran Church of Denmark has no legislative machinery apart from that of the Danish parliament; the government minister responsible has considerable authority; and parish councils are the most local tier of church government. Nevertheless, the Danish church elects its own bishops. The Church of Sweden, which until recently was the spiritual expression of the Swedish nation, has renegotiated its relationship to the state, gaining freedom in managing its affairs and electing its bishops, but retaining state recognition as the national church in the constitution, with the monarch as its first member, a church tax (that all churches may use) administered by the state, and certain legal obligations, especially in relation to funerals and burial grounds. The state subsidises religious newspapers. It may therefore fairly be said to remain an established church. In Finland, as mentioned above, both the Lutheran and the Orthodox forms of Christianity are established. In Norway discussions have been taking place about changes to establishment. The question suggests itself, in relation to the current flux in church-state relations in parts of Europe, whether the pressure for change is driven by a sense of injustice towards minority churches, by a vision of more effective gospel mission, or by a politically correct pluralist and relativist ideology?

2.3   Constitutional Reform: Present and Putative

In debate concerning church-state relations there has often been a widespread impression that constitutional issues involving much-needed reform were at the heart of many Christians' agendas, particularly with regard to the monarchy and the role of bishops and the Prime Minister. The Commission sought specific input on these subjects in an endeavour to gauge the level of concern.

2.3.1   *Pressure for Reform*

Submissions made to the Commission on constitutional reform were not extensive, and most of those offered were focussed on a relatively small number of matters. Thus the role of bishops in the House of Lords attracted frequent mention, as did issues surrounding Church establishment. There was some 'evidence' about devolution, but this tended to emphasise the importance of treating the four nations within the UK State distinctively, rather than to assess in constitutional terms developments that have taken place or possible further changes.

It is probably inevitable that Christians and church groups should focus on special interests. In so doing churches replicate the pattern of other groups within society, for example universities or trades unions. But to pretend that the most significant question relating to parliamentary reform is whether or not a few bishops continue to have a presence in the second chamber is to illustrate a lack of genuine Christian engagement with mainstream public life. This presents those writing this report with something of a dilemma. We wish to represent accurately and to reflect upon the submissions received. But we would betray our calling (and our terms of reference) if we did not at least point to the larger agenda with which we believe Christian involvement that has integrity must battle.

It may be that there is greater agreement among Christians on marginal issues, such as bishops in the Lords or the desirability of retaining Establishment in some form, than there is on questions of greater significance. But agreement on these relatively marginal issues is far from complete, as submissions to the Commission have demonstrated. Certainly, on the larger agenda of reform those Christians who have views at all do disagree. This should not be seen as a matter of regret. No particular set of constitutional arrangements can carry a Christian imprimatur. Certain principles, for example about the dignity of individuals and the importance of power being made accountable, need to find expression. But this can be done in a great variety of ways, dependent on particular historical, geographical and cultural factors.

In evaluating the pressure for constitutional change it is necessary to begin by offering some brief comments on the nature of the constitutional settlement within the UK. The

constitution is frequently described as 'grown not made'. It is the product of history rather than of any *a priori* design. The lack of a clear break in the modern period (no successful revolution; no defeat in war) has obviated the need for an entirely fresh start to be made. The British constitution contains much that is written, including much that is expressed statutorily (though not codified), but also relies heavily on convention.

For some this is a matter of regret, for others a matter of celebration. Some emphasise the failure to consummate the democratic principle, and the need for fundamental constitutional reform to bring this about. Others emphasise the virtues of gradualism and pragmatism, and the success with which democratic freedoms have been nurtured within the context of a legitimised state, albeit one that remains in constitutional terms archaic.

Christians may quite reasonably take either view. We see no overriding principle that should direct Christians to one or other position. More important is to encourage Christians to be involved in the debate and to recognise the strength of arguments deployed on both sides. Whilst Christians will of course take sides, they may at the same time reasonably contribute a degree of intelligent scepticism about both fashionable nostrums of reform, and about the alleged superiority of the status quo. In this and in other matters it is helpful if Christians and churches in disagreement with each other are able to model a manner of constructive and principled disagreement rather than merely join ritualised party debate.

Pressure for constitutional reform has grown greatly in recent years. In some respects this has been pressure for particular constitutional reforms. But it has also been pressure for fundamental constitutional reform that addresses the unwritten or uncodified nature of the British constitution. Charter 88 was formed in order to ensure that the tercentenary celebrations of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 did not simply become a celebration of that event, but included recognition of the fact that what happened in the 17th century was incomplete in terms of establishing a modern constitution. A draft written constitution was produced for England. The main point of this was not the carrying through of particular changes, such as reform of the Lords, or electoral reform, or devolution, but the idea of formally enacting a constitution, and in so doing removing the formal sovereignty of the crown in parliament. This would have placed parliament and the crown under the constitution, with their roles and powers defined by the constitution. It is possible to conceive of a written/codified constitution that actually brought about very little change in the actual roles and powers of the various elements within our constitutional system. But if such a constitution was enacted these would be placed within a formal framework of law, which would be entrenched, meaning that it would not be capable of alteration by normal legal process, but would require amendment to the constitution. The manner in which this could take place would be spelt out in the constitution; for example it may require a two-thirds rather than a simple parliamentary majority, or a vote repeated in two successive parliaments, and/or ratification by means of a referendum. A codified constitution may well retain the constitutional monarchy, but certainly in Charter 88's formulation it would have set the monarchy within the context of a democratic state, with power flowing from the people - defined as citizens not subjects - rather than from the Crown.

Whilst this may have certain theoretical and indeed practical attractions, it has not been a very serious part of the agenda of constitutional reform. The obstacles, both legal/technical and political/practical seem too great. And most people remain unconvinced about the alleged advantages. After all, written and formally codified constitutions that command great respect, such as that of the USA, contain many silences. Conventions develop and become authoritative. It is this lack of codification and the continued ultimate supremacy of the crown in parliament that allows the British constitution to be described as "whatever the government of the day can get away with" (Professor J. A. G. Griffith), or as a "back of the envelope" constitution (Professor Peter Hennessy). Professor Anthony King entitled his recent Hamlyn lectures "Does the UK still have a Constitution?", arguing that although we had various descriptive rules, no principles give any clear rationale to these.

Pressure for fundamental reform arises in part from this perception of the inadequacy of the constitution in terms of the basic constitutional task of providing effective constraint on those who wield power. The Crown in Parliament retains sweeping power. Accountability for the exercise of this power is to parliament, which in effect has come to mean to the majority

party in one House of Parliament. This is what Hailsham meant by elective dictatorship, and it worried him. The constraints on this power are political only. These may be demonstrated at times (the fall of the government in 1940; the fall of Thatcher in 1990), but when a party leader who is Prime Minister retains the support of his party, other constraints on the exercise of power may be very limited and accountability too can be threadbare. One may support the present arrangements as the only practical constitutional arrangements for the time being, while still also recognising the very real concern that they give rise to.

There are other reasons why pressure for particular constitutional changes has increased in recent years. The reliance within our constitutional arrangements on political constraints places a heavy emphasis on the party system and in particular the role of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. The alternation of parties in office has been an important feature of this. But for eighteen years the electoral pendulum failed to swing, and this may again be happening.

Labour has chosen to describe the reforms it has been making as 'modernisation'. Arguably they could be said to have not been driven by any basic principles. They were rather designed to provide some kind of remedy for particular grievances. No overall vision of the constitution gave shape to the Party's proposals, and none has seriously emerged since it took office. In proceeding in such an ad hoc manner Labour has acted in a way that is entirely consistent with British constitutional development. Pragmatic, politically feasible adjustment has been the hallmark of past constitutional change too. Changes made to the House of Lords have not been driven by any desire to enhance the role of Parliament or to restore a more genuine bicameralism. Devolution was largely a response to political pressures in particular parts of the UK, and not part of any attempt genuinely to develop a federal structure or even to devolve political power in a meaningful way. Most of New Labour's constitutional changes have been part of the usual processes of politics, pragmatic adjustments rather than principled redesign.

In summary therefore, the pressure for change has arisen from several factors, including the desire for fundamental change, exemplified by Charter 88; the accumulation of particular grievances about institutional arrangements; the necessary opportunism that Oppositions display; and influences arising from elsewhere in the world, notably in Britain's case from continental Europe.

2.3.2 *The House of Lords*

There are two aspects to the House of Lords question that need to be considered. One is the specific representation of the Church of England through the bishops, and potentially the inclusion of representatives of other faith groups. The second is the more general question about how the House of Lords ought to be reformed so as to ensure it contributes effectively to the work of Parliament within the prevailing constitutional arrangements. We will examine the second broader question first.

Bicameralism was normal in pre-democratic times, with the 'upper' chamber representing aristocracy and church rather than people and territory as such. In the move to democracy most states underwent significant constitutional upheavals that led to the removal or entire replacement of their second chambers. England came nearest to this in the 17th century when the House of Lords was removed for a time. But the Cromwellian revolution was followed by a restoration of monarchy and Lords and then a 'glorious revolution' which saw the balance of power between parliament and the monarchy more decisively adjusted. The monarchy had been restored but never again would a monarch be able to act independently of Parliament. Rather, successive monarchs would be restrained ever more precisely to follow the wishes of parliament. Institutional continuity masked the extent to which relationships had altered, and there were good practical reasons for not attempting to define too quickly or precisely the new relationships that were still emerging. Britain's later gradual advance to democracy through franchise extension saw the junior position of the House of Lords confirmed, most notably by the 1911 Parliament Act. For the next fifty years the role of the Lords became progressively more marginal. Britain became a de facto unicameral system. The House of Lords remained essentially unreformed in its composition and therefore lacked the legitimacy necessary to play a truly effective parliamentary role.

This began to change with the arrival of life peers after 1958. The House gradually assumed a distinctive role, both in scrutinising legislation and selected government responsibilities, and in representing professional and other groups whose representation in the Commons was eroded by the rise of a professional political class. Through containing a large non-party element the House added something different to the parliamentary processes. But it remained a House still numerically dominated by hereditary peers, with the remainder all being appointed members (and all except the bishops appointed for life).

House of Lords reform was often spoken about but rarely was any serious attempt made by successive governments to initiate reform. The Conservatives under Mrs Thatcher took a generally negative view of constitutional reform, and in regard to the House of Lords frequently uttered the mantra, 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it', and in truth from the point of view of government and the Commons the House of Lords was a very convenient, generally docile and helpfully diligent institution. But of course, its membership was in principle objectionable to those committed to democracy.

Labour eventually devised a two-stage policy, first to remove all hereditary peers, then to seek a political consensus about further reform (because it was assumed that an all-appointed House could not be considered acceptable). Legislation in 1999 brought about the removal of all but ninety two hereditary peers, left temporarily in the House to give some continuity and as a guarantor of further reform.

However attempts at further reform have foundered (though it is reported recently to have re-emerged on the Prime Minister's agenda). Argument has particularly centred on composition, with some advocating an all-appointed House and others arguing that legitimacy can only be established through some form of election for at least part of the House. Both Opposition parties have come out officially in favour of a largely elected House (albeit one elected on quite different principles to the Commons). But within the major parties there have also been serious differences of view.

We believe it is important that reform of the second chamber is given serious attention. In practice it provides within the British body politic a significant balance to the House of Commons. An increasingly complex political agenda, with a House of Commons seemingly ever more dominated by professional career politicians in tightly disciplined competitive parties, and a media that shows very little serious interest in politics – all these factors underline the need for a second chamber that is able to act as a focus for a different kind of public debate to that encountered elsewhere. Democracy is in danger of degenerating into a market-driven exercise, orchestrated by party technicians and propagandists competing for the votes of an increasingly bored electorate. A second chamber can help to provide a corrective to this. Reform must seek to establish the chamber as a body that speaks with genuine authority based on understanding and experience, and with legitimacy derived from public support for the manner in which its members are appointed.

Where does this leave the role of bishops, or other faith representatives? In principle, they certainly have a contribution to make to such a second chamber. The Wakeham Commission recognised this and recommended that the number of Christian representatives from throughout the UK remain at twenty six, but with Church of England representatives reduced to sixteen, with five more from Christian denominations within England, and five from the Churches of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. To these would be added five representatives of other non-Christian faiths. Wakeham invited the Church of England to decide how its representatives might be appointed, suggesting that they need not be bishops, and recommended that all appointments should formally be made through the new Appointments Commission that also formed part of the Commission's recommendations. The non-Anglican faith representatives would have been chosen after consultation with appropriate ecumenical bodies. The Wakeham Commission set considerable store by the independence of this new Appointments Commission, which would be established by statute and be accountable to Parliament to which it would report. In its White Paper the government proposed cutting bishops to 16 and relying on new selection processes through the independent Appointments Commission (which it accepted in principle) to produce appointed members of the House who would represent other churches and faiths within the UK.

The Church of England has made clear that it does not wish to see itself as having a monopoly of faith representation in the second chamber. The fact that it does at present have this through ex officio membership of the House is a relic of history, in the same way as the continued presence of peers by succession. Faith representation that is exclusively from one church within one part of the UK may be anomalous, but there are great difficulties in providing any mechanism for including official representatives of other denominations (as the Wakeham Commission and the response to the Wakeham report demonstrated). For many, rejection of the Wakeham proposals was regrettable as they were keen to see how the recommendations would work in practice. But in the absence of any viable alternative means of providing faith representation present arrangements should not be seen as indefensible.

The presence of bishops in the House is in part a symbolic matter. It would be foolish for the Church of England itself to take any initiative to remove or limit the number of bishops. But if such moves are made elsewhere the question arises as to how seriously they are to be resisted. If a proposal to remove bishops is made in the context of a thoroughgoing reform of the House intended to enhance its significance and make an effective response to the decline of Parliament, then this should not be opposed. For example, if proposals to establish a House the majority of whose members were elected were to be carried through, it would be unwise for the Church of England to fight to retain specific Church representatives among the minority of the House that might continue to arrive there through appointment. If however modest reform is proposed (e.g., simply the removal of remaining hereditary peers) then it would certainly be appropriate to fight for the retention of bishops. The churches and the Christian communities within the UK should take seriously the need for religious representation in Parliament and throughout public life. But this does not necessarily depend on places being specifically reserved in Parliament for 'Faith Representatives'. Many Christians have found places in both Houses of Parliament through the normal electoral and selection processes. And of course others, including Roman Catholic bishops and Jewish Rabbis, have exerted great influence while not having places in Parliament at all.

Along with membership goes responsibility and the difficult question for the bishops is how they should make use of their membership. At present as a group they cannot be classified as active members of the House. Most attend infrequently, some never at all. The pressure of responsibilities within the church and within their dioceses makes any committed attendance difficult. It is unusual for bishops to offer significant leadership in the House. Frequently the bishops are themselves divided on issues.

It is possible that their presence in the House adds to the mission effort of the Church of England, but it is a very moot point. We are concerned that too great an importance is being invested in some quarters in this matter. Our conclusion is that no initiative should be taken by the churches to remove the bishops. To do this would send out quite the wrong signal to society generally because it would be understood as a diminution of Christian involvement in society. However, if a responsible initiative to remove bishops comes from elsewhere, and is made in the context of fundamental reform aimed at strengthening the parliamentary role of the second chamber, it should not be resisted. Meanwhile, continuing efforts should be made to assist the bishops in making a responsible contribution to the work of the House, and this should include ecumenical arrangements.

2.3.3   *The Judiciary*

For at least thirty years prior to 1997 there had been a sustained growth of judicial activism. This meant that by the 1990s the judiciary was playing a role unthinkable 30 years earlier. This was not specifically planned. It simply developed the outcome of various influences, the relative importance of which may be disputed. Among these were the weakening of Parliament as a means of exercising genuine constraint on administrative actions; the growth of administrative law and procedural changes of the 1970s; the influence of Europe, especially through the broad reception to EU law given in the European Communities Act 1972; and the growing attention to human rights. We do therefore now live in a society where the role of judges as lawmakers is much more explicitly recognised than it was 50 years ago. Every society has to strike a balance between attempting to make laws so detailed that judicial discretion is

virtually eliminated, and enacting laws so general that crucial interpretation is left to judges. Making laws clearer may be a noble aim. But equally it may be a chimera. The real question we must ask is: What balance should exist between political and judicial decision making? The 1998 Human Rights Act departs from British tradition in several ways, one of which is its more declaratory nature, which of course gives greater scope for judicial discretion.

This growth of judicial discretion has imposed some strains on constitutional arrangements. The way in which judges are appointed has come under greater scrutiny, with some adjustments being made by the Labour government. Ministerial responsibility for the administration of the law and the judicial system seemed unclear. In England and Wales, the role of the Lord Chancellor as both a judge and a senior member of the cabinet attracted attention as an apparent anomaly. The presence and participation of senior judges in the legislative activity of the House of Lords sometimes restricted those who could hear particular cases. Some of these concerns can be related to the general decline in trust that has enveloped so much of public life in recent years. Despite the high standards of probity generally prevailing within the UK, it has been considered necessary to adopt elaborate codes and establish procedures to ensure greater transparency and the avoidance of any appearance of conflicts of interest throughout public life.

It is necessary to see the Prime Minister's announcement made in June 2003 of the government's intention to create a new Supreme Court quite separate from the House of Lords and to abolish the office of Lord Chancellor against this general background, though no doubt there were other factors in his mind too. These changes have turned out to be much more complex and controversial than had been anticipated. A major concern is the extent to which the role of the judiciary will be adequately defended and understood at the highest levels within government. However anomalous the role of the Lord Chancellor might have been, in practice as a senior cabinet minister heading the judiciary, the Lord Chancellor was well placed to ensure the role of the judiciary was well understood. Some doubt if the new arrangements will be so effective. There are also concerns regarding maintaining the doctrine of separation of powers whereby the judiciary require to be free from political interference and for this to be evident.

The manner in which decisions were taken is a further matter of concern. A sudden announcement of a change without consultation with the judiciary, nor with the House of Lords (whose Speaker the Lord Chancellor is), and the pretence that the change could be implemented quickly, were all mistaken. The government's petulance when the House of Lords insisted on sending the Constitutional Reform Bill embodying these changes to a special select committee was also worrying. Constitutional change of this magnitude is not merely a matter for the Prime Minister of the day. Major decisions directly affecting our constitutional arrangements should not be treated as the property of any particular government.

The emphasis on ensuring a 'transparency of independence' in relation to the judiciary is also open to misunderstanding. If it is generally accepted that the judiciary has demonstrated a robust independence from government (and this has been more obvious recently than at any time in the last three hundred years), why is it necessary to bring about these changes in order to make the independence transparent? And would they in any case do this? A Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, probably an MP who is not a lawyer, very possibly a junior member of the cabinet who hopes that most of his political career lies ahead of him, does not look as well placed to defend the role of the judiciary as a Lord Chancellor placed outside the maelstrom of Commons-driven politics. And none of this does anything to reassure those who fear that the real threat to the UK's legal independence comes from the increasing possibility of domestic legal decisions being overturned in international courts.

The proposals to establish an independent appointments commission for judges may help to allay suspicions about the appointment process - if it is truly independent. The Labour had already established a monitoring mechanism. But the main concern about judicial appointments has related to gender and ethnic balance. It is far from clear that establishing an independent commission will alter this, though it is worth noting that Scotland has had a Judicial Appointments Board since 2002.

Though the judiciary itself is by no means united on the matter, it is worth reflecting on the fact that at least some senior judges, and many politicians, do see the presence of judges in the House of Lords as contributing to a mutual enrichment of understanding about each other's roles which it would be unfortunate to undermine.

To do so in the name of the separation of powers principle appears doctrinaire. The British constitution has not in the past been built on any principle of rigid institutional separation. On the contrary, the activities of law-making, law enforcing and taking executive decisions, have always been shared by all three branches of the state – the government, Parliament and the judiciary. Again, we would urge that great care be taken in constitutional reform lest the balance between institutions and functions that has gradually evolved in the past should be lost.

2.3.4 The Roles of the Sovereign

The monarch has no effective executive power in relation to politics. A constitutional monarch must accept the advice of ministers who in turn are responsible to Parliament for the advice they offer. There may still be room for some argument about whether or not a monarch must always accede to a Prime Minister's request to dissolve Parliament. But the discretion a monarch might have in certain highly unusual circumstances would inevitably be heavily constrained. Likewise, any remaining discretion in deciding who to ask to form a government when a Prime Minister has resigned has been almost totally removed during the reign of the present monarch, though it is still possible to imagine circumstances where the role of the monarch might be regarded as controversial by sections of the media, even though it would almost certainly be straightforward if a little complicated to the monarch's advisors.

This is not to say the monarch is without influence. Certainly the opportunity to talk privately with the Prime Minister regularly and at length, combined with access to a wide range of state papers give the monarch the opportunity to exert influence. The role of the monarch as 'Head of the Commonwealth' (an entirely non-statutory position) undoubtedly also provides opportunities for exerting influence based on wide experience and a personal knowledge of many leading statesmen.

It is sometimes argued that the monarch could assert the formal power still possessed by the Crown, for example to veto Bills hostile to the Christian faith presented to her by Parliament, or to dismiss public appointees who express such views. Some submissions to the Commission argued that the monarch should be encouraged to undertake such actions so as to keep faith with her Coronation Oath. Some would argue that such action might under God have surprising and perhaps welcome consequences. But the political reality is that such action could only lead to a constitutional crisis which would have been deliberately precipitated by the monarch, and the outcome of which would either lead to a climb-down by the monarch, or abdication, or even the end of the monarchy. Subjects and monarch alike may wish at times that we could engage in a dramatic gesture that would express more totally our Christian convictions. Some may be genuinely called by God to take such steps, but each must be persuaded fully in their own conscience about the right course of action. For many enduring the weariness of politics, living with the compromises inevitable in a fallen world, while seeking to influence the course of politics so that outcomes are better than they might otherwise be - for many this is seen as a more realistic path of discipleship.

The monarchy does, however, simply through its existence give shape to the constitution. This is most obvious in relation to the continued extensive use of Crown prerogative powers. These powers may be understood as historic powers of the Crown, which have never been dismantled, nor has their use been controlled by statute. They include the creation of peers; the award of honours; the making of many public appointments; many decisions about the organisation and management of central government, as well as the signing of Treaties or even the declaration of war. It is the Prime Minister that benefits most from this arrangement, which still "acts as a disguise" (the phrase used by Walter Bagehot in his seminal essay on the English Constitution, first published in 1867).

There is now a growing and lively debate about prerogative powers, but this is mainly focussed on the role of the Prime Minister. If prerogative powers were brought under direct

statutory or parliamentary control, there is no reason why this process should affect the position of the monarch.

Keeping the Head of State separate from the Head of Government is widely supported. The former can provide an emphasis on the continuity and the unity within the life of the nations within the UK. The monarch can act as a focal point for national life and the loyalties of the entire population. Most (though not all) democratic countries do have separate heads of state and government. Where a monarchy does not exist, the method used to provide a head of state can be contentious, and the outcome by no means always effective in terms of the above role. The monarchy provides a head of state in a manner likely to be as satisfactory as any other method.

The Sovereign's particular role in relation to the Church has adjusted in the past and can continue to do so. The next coronation service is likely to be very different from the last. We hope it will retain its fundamental character as an act of Christian worship, but it will clearly be more ecumenical and presumably more multi-faith in form. A new monarch may ask parliament to amend the Coronation Oath, the terms of which have been varied on several occasions in the past. The current heir to the throne has suggested that he would wish to be 'defender of faith' rather than 'Defender of the Faith'. Though in practice the distinction may not be too meaningful, under the Act of Settlement the Sovereign must be in communion with the Church of England, but need not be an actual member of the Church (some in the past have not been). It would of course be for parliament to decide on these matters, just as it is for parliament to decide on the succession to the throne.

The next coronation will very likely include contributions from various denominational and other faith communities. The Church should be relaxed about this, as it should be about the continued use of the term 'Supreme Governor' of the Church of England. Our hope is that the next monarch will be ready to give public expression to Christian faith, and continue to take a serious interest in the Church. But if the next monarch were to have little interest in Church matters, and no commitment to the Christian faith, or even hostility towards the faith, the Church arguably should simply get on with her business, without troubling the monarch about formal roles - or allowing the monarch to trouble the Church! The constitutional role of the Sovereign has not been and is not dependent upon personal behaviour. The Supreme Governor is sometimes mistakenly referred to as 'the Head of the Church of England'. Care should be taken to avoid exaggerating the role. Keeping it in proper perspective is an antidote to over-excitement should the Supreme Governor collide in some way with the teaching or practice of the Church. Some contributors recommended the possibility of actually separating the inauguration ceremony for the Head of State from that of the Supreme Governor of the Church of England – or at least definitively ruling it out. The former option should perhaps not be discarded too lightly.

2.3.5   *The Role of the Prime Minister*

The development of the office of Prime Minister is all of a piece with the remainder of the constitution. No one invented or ever satisfactorily defined the functions of the office. Rather, the role simply emerged at the interface of Parliament and Crown early in the 18th century, the term 'Prime Minister' originally being used in a satirical sense. The office has been subject to continuous development, but the main defining features of the office, as we know it today, had been settled early in the 20th century.

Periodically concern has been expressed at the extent of prime ministerial power, most notably in recent years during Thatcher's dominance in the 1980s and again under Blair. But the power of the office can quickly drain away, and its incumbent can be swiftly removed by action within Parliament (as in 1990). Nevertheless, a number of factors have accentuated concern about prime ministerial power. Party competition has become an exercise in marketing between the technicians of modern democracy, relying on their market research and their focus groups far more than on any ideological commitments. Victory in a general election tends to be widely understood as a personal mandate for a Prime Minister. MPs increasingly are seen as elected to support a particular prime minister with their role seen as much one of taking the 'good news' of what the government is doing to their constituents as that of bringing the

grievances or aspirations of their constituents to government. We probably now largely have a de facto presidential system but without the checks and balances that apply in a presidential system.

Some see this as a good thing, arguing that it provides for strong and decisive government and avoids the 'gridlock' that can characterise presidential systems. But a "preference for strong government over accountable government" (Hugo Young) does place considerable weight on qualities of trust and integrity, which at present appear to be eroding.

There are, however, other reasons for expressing concern about the office of Prime Minister. Among these is the weakening of civil society as bodies such as the churches, the universities and the trade unions experience greater difficulty in formulating and gaining a public hearing for their views, and the increased dominance of government. The government has become so great in size, scope and competence. Other institutions by comparison have become weaker, although the power of the media and well-funded lobby groups act as a counter – hence the continual battle for media exposure. Allegedly private institutions find it difficult to command attention as independent centres of authority. 'Governing' gives way to 'governance', where the government seeks to secure its objectives through varied means of influence rather than direct power. And within government the Prime Minister has assumed an even greater dominance. Is too much power and patronage now concentrated in the holder of this office, at least at times when a clear party majority prevails? Christians should not be complacent about the current condition of the constitution.

No religious or faith criteria are necessary as qualifications for the office of Prime Minister. The Prime Minister holds extensive powers of patronage and also plays a significant role in the appointment of various office holders in the Church of England (notably bishops) but does so through machinery that commands reasonably widespread, though certainly not unanimous, support within the church. There are undoubtedly many Christians who think that the Prime Minister should have no role whatsoever in the making of such appointments, which ought to be entirely a matter for the Church itself. Non-Anglican Prime Ministers have fulfilled this role (the first was Lloyd George). However, if the Prime Minister was a Roman Catholic or a practising Jew there are still statutory bars on him rendering advice to the Sovereign on ecclesiastical matters (though presumably some other cabinet minister could). An interesting illustration of the confidence Church leaders place in the present arrangements was given by the evidence bishops gave to the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the Commons on the re-location of the ecclesiastical patronage attaching to the office of the Lord Chancellor. They argued that this should be transferred to the Prime Minister rather than dispersed to bishops or other sources. MPs who heard this were clearly surprised at the supposedly self-interested concern of the Church of England to avoid what was described as possible 'disestablishment creep'.

2.3.6   The European Constitution

The new European Constitution could fairly be seen as primarily a codification of existing Treaty commitments rather than the invention of a new constitutional order. However, its progress now appears to have been derailed for the foreseeable future, though complaints are regularly made that many of its provisions are being quietly effected nonetheless. Some Christians expressed particular regret at the refusal to incorporate a declaration relating to the Christian heritage within Europe. Others remain more concerned at the expanding competence of the European Union (EU), that is the increased areas of public policy, which are now decided by EU institutions, along with its lack of democratic accountability and its generally secular tone.

It is important to recognise the achievements of the European Union (noting incidentally its Christian Democratic origins) especially in holding together the major powers within Europe rather than allowing them to drift towards hostility and war, as occurred with devastating effect three times in the century before the European Economic Community was founded, and acting as an effective bulwark against the Soviet Union. That the EU is now bringing together countries that have throughout most of the post war period been engaged in a cold war should be a further cause for thanks.

Some of the hostility towards the EU within Britain arises from unworthy xenophobism. While it is reasonable to argue that Britain has on the whole made a remarkably successful adjustment from great power status, this process (frequently referred to as 'decline') has undoubtedly left a legacy of anxiety and a sense of frustration in some quarters. Would that the world was different, more as it used to be, with Great Britain still fairly effortlessly a great power! This frustration can perhaps too readily become focussed on the European Union.

Given the geo-political factors of the European continent and a world where globalisation has become so powerful a force, it is hard to imagine Britain not being a leading participant in the European Union. But Britain can and should seek to shape the development of the European Union. In particular, the extent to which the powers of the EU government have grown disproportionately to the growth in accountability of that government is a matter of very real concern. The EU has a serious democratic and procedural deficit.

The UK has been reluctant to push for greater democratic accountability because to do so would be seen as acquiescing in the development of a 'federal' Europe, one where European institutions became more prominent than national institutions. The concern in the UK for our allegedly 'sovereign' Parliament has made the UK reluctant to support greater power and legitimacy for the EU parliament, not least because of its perceived lack of responsibility and accountability.

There are signs that this is changing, however. What is desirable is much more serious scrutiny of EU policies, both at the national and European levels of government. The new EU constitution offered to MPs an enhanced role in policing subsidiarity (the principle that decisions should be taken at the closest possible level to the people, for example in national governments rather than at EU level, or at regional or local level rather than at national level). Parliament needs to seize appropriate opportunities for greater genuine scrutiny within the Commons of EU policy, which has for long been inhibited by those who would use every opportunity for scrutiny to re-run basic arguments about EU membership.

Some EU directives and some decisions of the European Court of Justice have caused particular disquiet among Christians within the UK. It is important that such matters be vigorously contested, using means of accountability available at both national and European levels. There is no point in demonising the EU as if it was a conspiracy designed to subvert decent democratic and even Christian governments. There has been a recurring tendency for Britain to 'gold-plate' EU directives, and more assiduous scrutiny could curtail this.

The fact that the new EU constitution did not contain any declaration or acknowledgement of the Christian heritage in Europe understandably pained many Christians. We should certainly seek to draw attention to the Christian heritage that has done so much to shape the culture of this continent and the EU itself. And we would wish that influence to continue, guided in its expression by a declaration that provides an appropriately Christian based philosophical lens through which major policy issues can be viewed. But we should remember that Christian influence must be seen in deeds as well as expressed in words, and we have no right to advocate the latter without giving substance to the former. One should therefore be cautious about attributing too much significance either to the inclusion or the exclusion of such a declaration. Though many do not, some national constitutions do contain such a declaration, but the practical or even symbolic effect of their inclusion or exclusion is very dubious.

2.3.7   Devolution - National and Regional

It is worth remembering that the UK State has only had its present territorial form since 1921. Earlier adjustments took place in 1800 and 1707. Scotland has a distinctive political tradition and a clear separate sense of nationhood. Northern Ireland has a separate identity and is itself a deeply divided society with a substantial minority feeling an allegiance to a different and neighbouring state. Wales, as the remaining non-English part of the UK, has become over the centuries the part most closely integrated with England, though a significant cultural nationalism has found expression within Wales especially in the last half-century.

The constitutional arrangements linking these separate nations within the UK state have always been fluid. The Acts of Union negotiated between the English and Scottish parliaments

allowed the Scots to retain distinctive institutions in areas of civil life that were then of greatest significance, notably the Church, the Law and education. What has become a UK tradition of centralised government was not fully extended to Scotland until the 20th century, when it was fortified by the development of the modern interventionist state (with greatly expanded competence for welfare, publicly owned industries and economic management). Despite various strategies for accommodation (for example, encouragement rather than active discouragement of the Welsh language; devolved administration in Scotland), political pressure for some decisive constitutional adjustment grew.

These found partial fulfilment in 1998 with the creation of devolved bodies in Edinburgh and Cardiff. The Scottish Parliament has legislative power whereas the Welsh Assembly does not. New Labour gave a high priority to introducing these arrangements, but proceeded as is customary with British constitutional development in an ad hoc and pragmatic manner. Britain has thus moved from being a centralised unitary state to being something else. What that 'something else' is remains unclear. It is certainly not (yet) federalism, but neither is it the old style unitary state with which we were familiar. The proposals, emanating from the EU, and now pending and somewhat uncertain, to introduce regional assemblies in parts of England, will add further complexity to the devolutionary mosaic.

In England devolution has not been envisaged as altering the nature of the UK State. Adjustments at Westminster /Whitehall have been minimal. This gives rise to certain anomalies from an English perspective - not least the so-called 'West Lothian question' (the fact that MPs for Scottish constituencies may vote at Westminster on matters which directly affect England only). It is quite possible that an English backlash will develop. The Conservative Opposition, while committed to the continuation of devolution, has proposed that Scottish MPs should not be allowed to vote on exclusively English matters. If a UK government came to power which depended for its parliamentary majority on MPs from Scotland and/or Wales, this could lead to severe difficulties. The recently elected Labour government could well find itself in such a position sooner rather than later.

While devolution has so far been seen as a reasonable success with few serious teething problems, this probably has much to do with the 'governments' in London, Edinburgh and Cardiff where the Labour Party has tended to dominate, albeit in Scotland in coalition with the Liberal Democrats. The robustness of devolution arrangements will be seriously tested when different parties are in control at different centres.

The Churches in Scotland are generally supportive of devolution. The advent of a national parliament has created opportunities for contributing to the development of policies that otherwise would not have been implemented. In Wales, the National Assembly (NAW) has yet to win the degree of support accorded to the Scottish Parliament. Wales was less prepared for devolution (no preceding constitutional convention, as in Scotland), and of course the NAW has less power than the Scottish Parliament. Proposals to enlarge the powers of the NAW are being held in abeyance because the proponents of such a change fear that a referendum would not give the necessary support for change

We believe Christians should generally be supportive of the devolution arrangements that have been made. One reason for this is that democratically accountable devolution, as well as strong local democratic arrangements, can help to arrest and even reverse the centralisation and concentration of power, which seems to occur so readily in modern society. If decision-making power is genuinely returned to national and sub-national centres, this can and should energise communities to contribute to public life and political debate. Of course, there is also value in the Union of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in terms of national security and economic and financial well-being for all. Efforts should be made to refine and develop the soundness of the devolution models so far introduced. This should include greater adjustment at Westminster. It is right to see devolution as a 'process, not an event'.

The same general principles apply to the introduction of regional assemblies for England, but the process by which this takes place requires careful scrutiny. The case for devolution for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is quite different from any case that may be made out for devolution in any region of England. The effect of the introduction of any regional assemblies on existing local government needs careful assessment. It would be wrong

to introduce assemblies merely to try and balance the arrangements made for Scotland and Wales, or to create a drift to federalism without exploring the implications much more thoroughly. Initial attempts to introduce an assembly in the north east were decisively rejected by plebiscite and have more widely been regarded by the public as unpopular, associated with creeping EU control, and adding layers of unwanted costly bureaucracy.

Devolution to Northern Ireland is a different matter. The *constitutional* difficulty here is finding an appropriate formula for devolved government that provides sufficient satisfaction to two separately perceived communities. The majority (Unionist) community ran Northern Ireland for fifty years as the most devolved part of the UK. But the substantial Republican minority never became integrated within the system, and continued to feel a primary allegiance to the South. Political, social and economic effort has been made in the last thirty five years to develop the communities in such a way that an acceptable basis for devolved government can be found. So far this has had limited success.

2.3.8   *Education*

There are two main questions currently important in education as applied to the English situation that may be considered to have constitutional implications.

Firstly, to what extent should the government's current commitment to 'personalisation and choice' in education be supported? It is this that has driven the proliferation of varied forms of publicly funded schools. From the 1960s and 1970s when uniformity was imposed on state secondary education, to the deliberate invocation of market forces by successive governments in the 1980s and since, policy in relation to schools has undergone immense change. We now have proposals to promote increased independence and autonomy for individual state schools, and, in particular, for 'faith sponsors'. These will allow the development of distinctively Christian schools with the freedom to express Christian beliefs and values through the school ethos and the curriculum. This is not a new issue. The 1944 Act established a dual system that differentiated between what were County Schools (now Community Schools) and voluntary aided schools. However, the fear is that this may create Christian 'ghettos'. The strategy also raises the question of whether other religious communities should be supported in setting up their own faith-based schools. Not to do so would be interpreted as special pleading at best, and Christian imperialism at worst. At the time of writing, a lively debate has opened up about the wisdom of encouraging 'faith-based' schools, and the potential damage this might do to the growth of tolerance and integration within society. However, in this debate existing Church schools are often held up as examples of how tolerance and respect for diversity can be developed within a faith-based context. The whole argument relates to the more fundamental question of whether a multiculturalism that tolerates or even celebrates plurality is a goal society should aspire towards or a danger to be avoided. We return to this point below.

Secondly in relation to education, should the government's initiative to develop a National Religious Education syllabus be supported? This entails greater central control of what is taught and, probably, *how* it is taught. The Church of England supports this aspiration on the grounds that it will improve the quality of RE, which is certainly very variable at the moment. The opportunity is certainly there to develop a syllabus that is friendly towards the Christian gospel. But in so far as that is true, the obvious danger is that a nationally approved syllabus will end up being one that places Christianity on a level with a range of other faiths and ideologies, and thus seriously erodes the pre-eminence formerly given to the religious faith that has been so dominant and so formative of British national culture. There is a particular threat that a humanist or secular view of religion may become normative in the curriculum. The current opportunities for local Christians to be involved in syllabus development and delivery may also disappear.

Probably the policy that will be pursued will be a balanced economy with support being given to the development of a national approach to RE where Christian teaching is done well alongside the development of distinctively Christian schools where nurture of Christian faith can freely take place.

3.   RELIGION, NATION, STATE AND SOCIETY: PRECEDENTS AND PRESENT MODELS

Any serious discussion of faith and nation in Britain today must recognize that our current constitutional and civic arrangements have deep roots in the past. For Christians, these roots extend far back into the biblical world.

3.1   Israel, Nationhood and the State in the Old Testament

The evidence to the Commission dealing most fully with the biblical material accurately described the relation of the people of God to wider society as 'historically contingent' (Davie, M: 2). In the Old Testament (OT) there is a wide range of patterns of relationship, with Israel knowing in turn existence as a landless and then a favoured minority; as an oppressed and then a liberated people; as a distinct and prosperous nation-state and then a dispossessed and exiled group; as a nation in reconstruction and then a conquered and occupied land, before becoming finally a scattered Diaspora. The modern abstract concept of the 'state' is unknown in the Old Testament, and political power is always encountered in the form of specific and identifiable rulers who may be in turn favourable or hostile but are always understood to be under the sovereign rule of God. Rise and fall in the fortunes of Israel is intimately connected with Israel's obedience or lack of it to the covenant with God. If it is hard to discover any one of Israel's changing relationships that may be taken as normative, the diversity in the OT sheds light on the historical contingencies faced by the church across the world today. Particular OT accounts are illuminating: for instance, there is an internal OT debate about kingship with Israel's request for a king 'like the nations' being seen as a rejection of God and accompanied by a devastating critique of what kings do: they 'take' (1 Samuel 8). In the event kingship, despite the luminous reign of King David, proves to be a failure and provokes longing for the coming of the Messiah, the righteous king. Likewise, Jeremiah's advice to the exiles in Babylon has had particular resonance: 'But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare' (Jer. 29.7). If there is an aspect of Israel's existence that may be taken as normative throughout its varying history it is the call to live as a distinct people under God's rule. This is true of the period of her nationhood, when the king, far from being an arbitrary agent, is called to live under God's lordship and to sustain the covenant with God. It is also true of the times before Israel had a king and once the kingship had come to an end. In preserving this distinctness, the law of God governing Israel's life and the given practices of circumcision and Sabbath were primary agents. The practice of these enabled the people of Israel to endure the loss of land, temple and nationhood and to survive, even to prosper, in exile and Diaspora. Along with this, the sense of God's providence first protecting the nation and then preserving Israel in exile has been paramount, even finding expression in the advancement of faithful Jews to prominence within pagan contexts (Joseph, Daniel, Esther). Enduring principles may therefore be derived from the OT, which are widely applicable (Davie, M: 3).

3.2   Church and State in the New Testament

If the OT is characterised by historical contingency, then the New Testament (NT) might be said to represent profound ambiguity regarding the state. It is a central point of Christian confession that Christ was 'crucified under Pontius Pilate'. The ending of Jesus' life at the hands of the Romans suggests that in his proclamation of the kingdom of God some kind of threat to Roman power was discerned, despite his own claim that 'my kingdom is not from this world' (John 18.36). Readings of Jesus' ministry therefore range from the claim that he never intended to challenge the existing political authorities but saw loyalty to God as compatible with acceptance of Roman rule (Davie, M: 2), to the view that, if not directly, his proclamation of the kingdom was an inevitable challenge to all forms of idolatry, religious or

political.[35] Interpretation of the politics of Jesus at this point often centre on his saying, 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's' (Mk 12.17). Some see in this a balancing of responsibilities towards two legitimate authorities: God and Caesar (as M. Davie).[36] Others interpret it as heavily ironical, the point being that for those with eyes to see *everything is God's* and Caesar's putative claims can never abrogate those of the one from whom all authority comes (Jn 19.11).[37] If under the providence of God Caesar's authority is to be accepted, it is also always qualified by the greater authority of God. This is clearly seen in a further text, the impact of which throughout Christian history has been immense: 'We must obey God rather than men!' (Acts 5.29). Also susceptible to differing interpretations is the exhortation of the apostle Paul in Romans 13.1-4: 'Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed…For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad….for it is God's servant for your good.' On the face of it, this text is a straightforward legitimisation of government and has been regularly understood in this way. It provides the basis on which rulers might be seen as 'ordained ministers' in their sphere in parallel to the ordained ministers of the church (Birnie: 4-5). There is however an ironic context to the text in the simple fact that the very authorities which Paul here upholds ordered his own execution very shortly afterwards, calling into question the judgement that they were not a terror to good conduct. By contrast with Romans 13, Revelation 13 paints the picture of the demonic and blasphemous state which makes war on the people of God. The ambivalence of the NT may be seen in the tension between these two texts as they point to both the positive and the negative possibilities of the powers.[38]

The same tension has been evident in more recent political challenges faced by the Church. The Swiss theologian Karl Barth saw it as central to the crisis that confronted Christianity in Germany as Hitler rose to power in the 1930s. As a member of the dissident 'Confessing Church' and a drafter of the anti-Nazi Barmen Declaration of 1934, Barth argued that Romans 13 enjoined subordinate service rather than unqualified subjection, and that where the state has become tyrannical, it would be most faithfully served by opposition and prophetic critique.[39] Similarly, a group of South African Evangelicals set against Apartheid in the 1980s declared: 'Romans 13 does not call for blind obedience to all evil systems…[It] defines the nature of an ordained government that has to be obeyed. It says that governments are not a terror to the people but punish wrongdoers (Rom. 13.3-4). The South African regime as we are experiencing it is just the opposite of what Paul said.'[40]

While Christians in Britain today clearly enjoy great freedom compared with the two situations just mentioned, the interpretation and application of Romans 13, Revelation 13 and kindred texts may nonetheless become more acute as the forces of secularism and multiculturalism seek to marginalise Christian witness - and Evangelical witness in particular - from the sphere of public life. Many cases of discrimination against Christians are increasingly being documented today. Recent examples include legislative threats to the religious liberty of Christian organisations to employ workers consistent with their own theological and moral

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[35] E.g., John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Behold the Lamb: Our Victorious Lamb* (Grand Rapids: Eeerdmans, 1972); Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (London: SCM, 1983), 72-95; David Jensen, 'Christology and Triumphalism', in Serene Jones & Paul Lakeland (eds.), *Constructive Theology: A Contemporary Approach to Classical Themes* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 195-99).

[36] Also J.W. Gladwin, 'The State', in David J. Atkinson & David H. Field (eds.), *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 1995), 811.

[37] Richard Cassidy, *Jesus, Politics and Society* (Orbis, 1978), 58-9.

[38] For more on the exegesis and historical understanding of Romans 13, and its relation to Revelation 13, see David Hilborn, 'Church, Society and State: Romans 13 in Evangelical Practice', in David Hilborn (ed.), *Movement for Change: Evangelical Perspectives on Social Transformation* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 113-32.

[39] Karl Barth, 'The Christian Community and the Civil Community', in Clifford Green (ed.)., *Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom* (London: Collins, 1989), 271-76.

[40] Concerned Evangelicals, *Evangelical Witness in South Africa: A Critique of Evangelical Theology and Practice by South African Evangelicals Themselves* (London: Evangelical Alliance/Oxford: Regnum), 1986.

ethos; police targeting of Christians who articulate classical sexual mores, under the rubric of 'homophobia' and 'hate speech'; parliamentary restriction of terrestrial broadcasting rights to Christian media; and gratuitous abuse of evangelicals by various journalists.[41] The irony of such cases is that they demonstrate just how illiberal and intolerant certain liberal versions of 'tolerance' can become - most especially when defined according to secular pluralist precepts and legally enforced as such on religious bodies who do not themselves share that definition. When faced with this more intrusive and often legally bolstered brand of state control Evangelicals may well need increasingly to draw on the more radical readings of Romans 13 we have cited.

Just as any serious Evangelical treatment of modern-day faith and nation concerns must be rooted in the Bible and its historical context, it is also crucial to grasp the way in which the Church since the New Testament period has developed its life and witness in relation to the various civic and social settings in which it has found itself. Some readers may already be familiar with this history; others may be less interested in it than in more immediate, present-day concerns. Those who fall into these categories might wish to pass over sections 3.3 - 3.9 below, and move straight on to 3.10. Some may be familiar with the overall church-historical narrative in this area, but less specifically familiar with the story of Evangelical civic engagement: such readers would be advised to pick up the text from 3.9.

3.3 The Post-Apostolic Age

From the New Testament period until the Edict of Toleration in 311 AD, Christians were vulnerable to the vicissitudes of Roman imperial rule. Although they were not continuously persecuted, their refusal to honour Caesar above God, and their rejection of Roman pagan religion, made them vulnerable to less benign Emperors. Their oppression in this period extended from Nero's scapegoating of them for the fire of Rome in 64 AD, through Domitian's expulsion of them from the imperial capital in 95 and Marcus Aurelius' condoning of their public killing in the amphitheatres of southeastern Gaul in 177, to Decius' and Diocletian's systematic, empire-wide attempts to wipe then out in the latter half of the third century. This marginalised status ensured that the church existed in these early years of its life as a counter-culture, operating very much on the fringes of civic society.[42] Having said this, from time to time those Christians who were financially and socially able to do so did play their part as citizens, and did 'seek the welfare of the city', after the pattern of Jeremiah 29:4. Principally this involved acting as benefactors in building projects, and in relief work at times of crisis and upheaval.[43]

3.4 Constantine and the Rise of Christendom

The status of Christianity within the Roman Empire changed dramatically under the rule of Constantine. While historians continue to debate the true nature of Constantine's own conversion, it is clear that after his decisive victory at the Milvian Bridge in 312, he wielded his vastly increased political power in favour of the Church. Although Constantine did not establish Christianity officially as the imperial religion, he funded and enfranchised it so generously that by 380 AD, his successor Theodosius saw fit to declare it the official religion, and, ironically, to persecute those who did not conform to its creeds and canons. From this point on, the close

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[41] David Hilborn, 'Church, Society and State', 116. On journalistic abuse of evangelicals see, respectively, columns by: Mark Thomas, *New Statesman*, 17/1/05; John Patterson, *The Guardian*, 3/12/04; Martin Samuel, *The Times* 9/11/04; 'A Gay Vicar from the North of England', *Guardian* 24/6/03, and Andrew Brown, *Sunday Telegraph* 15/6/03, and 'A Gay Vicar from the North of England', *Guardian* 24/6/03.
[42] Robert G. Close, Richard V. Pierard & Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Two Kingdoms: The Church and Culture Through the Ages* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1993), 41-62.
[43] Bruce J. Nicholls, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Citizens and Benefactors* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

intertwining of church and state which later became known as 'Christendom' would dominate the socio-political landscape of Europe, and beyond. In various forms, this Christendom model would last for a millennium and a half. We are still living with its consequences, and its legacy is now intensely debated - not least by evangelicals.[44]

3.5   Medieval Models: East and West

Christendom was consolidated into a more uniform pattern during the medieval period, but its specific expressions still varied from region to region, and most especially, from East to West. While ecclesiastical polity and theology in the Latin-speaking west had a juridical cast, in the Greek-speaking east they were more diffused and speculative. At first, Rome functioned as the authoritative centre of church life, but in 330 Constantine moved the seat of empire eastwards to Byzantium, re-founding it as 'Constantinople'. The east's more pluralist outlook was manifested in the fact that four different Patriarchates developed in Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem, leaving Rome somewhat isolated. In reaction, Rome reasserted itself as the true 'spiritual heart' of empire, and amplified its claim to the 'primacy' of its own bishop as 'pontifex maximus', or 'pope'. However, this claim was severely tested when the city was captured by the German Goths in 410. In the wake of that disaster, the great North African theologian Augustine of Hippo wrote his masterpiece, *The City of God*. Although Augustine made a clear distinction between the City of Man as temporal and transitory and the City of God as spiritual and eternal, he equated the reign of Christ not simply with a perfect future kingdom, but with the ongoing life and witness of the church on earth, thus effectively justifying the Christendom compact. For all its eloquence, Augustine's apologetic could not prevent the capitulation of Rome to the Barbarians in 476. While this further shifted power to the East, the Roman Church still asserted its superiority. This fuelled increasing tensions, which resulted in a schism traditionally dated to 1054 and ascribed to a doctrinal dispute over the procession of the Holy Spirit - the so-called *filioque*. In fact, tensions between East and West had been escalating for some considerable time, and had at least as much to do ecclesiastical and political rivalries.

The later mediaeval period in the West saw various significant challenges to the civic and religious authority of Rome. Among the most noteworthy of these were those presented by the Waldensians, whose anti-clerical mindset, biblical translation, preaching and simplified services contrasted with the widespread corruption of the priesthood. Another was the ministry of John Wyclif in England, again focussed on Bible translation, proclamation and a rejection of liturgical 'superstition'. Wycliffe in turn inspired the Czech church leader Jan Hus, whose proto-evangelical witness also included an assertion of national and provincial church self-government against the governance of the Rome. In retrospect, however, these movements were but precursors of the decisive challenge to Rome's power which took shape in the Protestant Reformation – a challenge whose ramifications are still very evident in the social and constitutional fabric of Britain, and beyond.

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[44] Among those critical of the legacy see Alistair Kee, *Constantine Versus Christ: The Triumph of Ideology* (London: SCM Press, 1982); Nigel Goring Wright, *The Radical Evangelical* (London: SPCK, 1996), 103-119; *Disavowing Constantine* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000); Alan Kreider (ed.), *The Origins of Christendom in the West* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2001); John Howard Yoder, *The Christian Witness to the State* (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1964), *The Politics of Jesus: Behold the Man! Our Victorious Lamb* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Carlisle: Paternoster, 1972); James Wm. McLendon Jr., *Systematic Theology: Ethics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986); Stuart Murray, *Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004). Among those more favourably disposed to it, see Paul Avis, *Church, State and Establishment* (London: SPCK, 2001); Oliver O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996); Wesley Carr, 'Crown and People: Reflections on the Spiritual Dimensions of Establishment', Lecture given at Westminster Abbey, 16 September 2002. Text available online at http://www.westminster-abbey.org/event/lecture/archives/020917_jubilee.htm.

3.6   The Magisterial Reformation

The Protestant Reformation brought about immense shifts in the practices and beliefs of the Western church. It marked the point at which pre-Reformation concerns with that church's corruption threatened decisively to rupture Christendom. The religious commitments of the Reformers cannot be dealt with in isolation from the growing aspirations towards greater freedom and national autonomy which were characteristic of this period, and for which the pertinent theological debates became something of a vehicle. In such a climate the mainstream Reformers were unable to accomplish their work without alliances with the ruling powers in their own areas. For this reason the mainstream strand of the Reformation is sometimes called 'magisterial', in recognition of its reliance upon the magistracy. For theological and pragmatic reasons therefore, the magisterial Reformers maintained in principle, though in modified form, the alliance of church and ruler which had characterised mediaeval Christendom.

3.6.1   *Luther*

In Rome's concept of *corpus christianum* the papacy was understood as having authority in both spiritual and temporal contexts. As part of a much broader reaction against the church's corruption under this model, Martin Luther (1483-1546) developed a doctrine of 'Two Kingdoms', in which the defining concern of the Church was identified as the Word of God, with temporal power devolved to magistrates charged with the maintenance of the social order, and more specifically, with the protection of the church's distinct calling and mission. Within this paradigm, it did not behove the clergy to interfere in matters of government any more than it did the rulers to intervene in theological affairs. No doubt there must be some truth in this duality according to the stewardship which is exercised in each sphere. Yet Lutheranism has frequently been charged with too compliant an attitude to social injustice because of a failure to integrate the 'two kingdoms' more coherently - not least as expressed through the German church which, with some notable exceptions, acquiesced to Nazism in the 1930s.[45]

3.6.2   *Calvin*

John Calvin (1509-1564) followed Luther in developing a clear distinction between the spiritual sphere in which the church operated and the civil sphere in which rulers and magistrates fulfilled their responsibilities. As with Luther, he was persuaded that the state was divinely sanctioned and that its ministers were ordained by God. One significant difference between Luther and Calvin, however, lies in the social contexts from which they emerged. Luther's was a semi-feudal society in which the princes exercised personal rule over their localities and subjects. Calvin's was the city-state of Geneva, in which the emergence of an early democracy can be discerned. Church and state in this context were mutually influential, the state having the responsibility to establish true religion and the church influencing and shaping the nature of the civil order and its practice. In the Calvinist tradition the concept of 'covenant' – the agreement between citizens and their rulers, and so the beginnings of ideas of social contract – was to prove influential. Calvin could therefore even envisage *in extremis* the just removal of tyrants from their positions.[46] In general the Calvinist tradition has consistently demonstrated a high level of commitment to shaping the civil order.

3.6.3   *Zwingli*

As befits one who began his career as a chaplain to Swiss mercenaries and ended it fighting in a war to defend Swiss Protestantism, Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) took an aggressively positive view of the relation between church and civil community. Believing that the church would always be a mixed society in this age, he was able to be comprehensive in his view of its membership. The same logic allowed him to see Christian magistrates, guided by the prophetic ministry of the preacher, as the appropriate agents for reforming the external form of

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[45] Among the exceptions were those Lutherans who signed the Barmen Declaration of 1934, and the martyred theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

[46] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, IV.20.30, ed. John McNeill (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, [1559] 1960), 1517.

the church. Like Calvin he functioned within the environment of a Swiss city-state and although he never held or looked for political office he exercised great political influence within and beyond it.

3.7 The Radical Reformation

In the ferment released by the Reformation a host of movements arose on its left-wing which sought to re-model relations between Church and State far more dramatically than the magisterial Reformers, who were regarded in this respect as 'half-way men'. These movements were bewilderingly diverse, ranging from some which advocated to others which foreshadowed what we now know as liberal and pluralist democracy.[47]

3.7.1 Anabaptism

As a primary vehicle of radical Reformation ferment, Anabaptism cannot be reduced to a uniformly violent movement on the one hand or a uniformly peaceful one on the other: there is no doubt that it contained both elements. Luther's fear of disorder resulting from the upheavals of the Reform movement were amply justified by the violence of the German Peasants' War of 1525, which was inspired by radical and apocalyptic religious ideas as much as by the brutal conditions in which the peasants lived. In 1535 the attempt to establish Munster as the theocratic New Jerusalem provided further evidence of the potential dangers of radical reform. Many Anabaptists were part of these uprisings. Others, especially the strand of Anabaptism which emerged from 1525 in Zwingli's Zurich, adopted a commitment to non-violence. In due course this strand attracted many post-revolutionary Anabaptists who had by then become disillusioned with violence - especially thanks to the energetic labours of the Dutch leader Menno Simons. Out of this movement came calls for a cessation of state-sponsored religious persecution and advocacy for religious toleration[48] These and other key Anabaptist principles were enshrined in the Schleitheim Confession of 1527, which articulated a clear dualism between Church and State. The task of 'wielding the sword' was declared to lie 'outside the perfection of Christ', both because it involved the use of coercion and violence which were forbidden to disciples of Christ and because, in context, an Anabaptist serving as a magistrate might end up persecuting religious dissenters of the same faith. Among those descendants of the Anabaptists committed to pacifism, this led to a refusal to serve in public office, even though the magistrate was considered necessary for the preservation of sinful society. Others took more positive positions towards the social order from the beginning and individuals were often greatly valued for their contribution to the civil sphere.

3.7.2 Quietism

By no means all manifestations of the so-called radical reformation prioritised active political engagement. Quietism emerged from this context as a term used to describe a form of mystical spirituality, but in time came to denote more general acquiescence to or compliance with the social and political order. It is not surprising that at times of persecution or threat the churches might resolve to keep their heads down and avoid confrontation. But when evangelical Christians in particular have confined their focus to personal salvation and holiness, this has characteristically given rise to a loss of concern for those legitimate dimensions of mission which entail social action and change. This represents not only a narrowing of the range of gospel imperatives but also the possibility of collusion with unjust social structures.[49]

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[47] For more detail on this range of radical Reformation movements see George Hunston Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2000); Meic Pearse, *The Great Restoration: The Religious Radicals of the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998).

[48] Balthasar Hubmaier, 'On Heretics and Those Who Burn Them' (1524), *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, H. Wayne Pipkin and John H. Yoder, (eds.), (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1989), 58-66.

[49] For examples of this see David W. Smith, *Transforming the World? The Social Impact of British Evangelicalism* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998), 75-102. Also: David Hilborn, 'Church, Society and State: Romans 13 in Evangelical Practice', in David Hilborn (ed.), *Movement for Change: Evangelical Perspectives on Social Transformation* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2004), 113-132.

3.8 The Effect and Subsequent Modification of Reformation Influence in British Constitutional Arrangements

3.8.1 *England*

The influence of the Continental Reformation on church and state in England was first felt decisively in King Henry VIII's breach with Rome. In 1521 Henry's *Defence of the Seven Sacraments* offered a firm rebuttal of Luther's teachings, earning him the pope's blessing and the title 'Defender of the Faith'—a designation retained to this day in the Coronation Oath. Indeed, it was partly Henry's concern about Protestant influence which drove his desire to divorce Catherine of Aragon. Specifically, he feared that her failure to bear him a son might prompt a civil war when he died. Bolstered by Thomas Cranmer's theological justification of the divorce, between 1532 and 1534 a series of bills passed which precipitated Henry's excommunication from the Roman church. Most starkly, the Act in Restraint of Appeals (1533) declared England a sovereign 'Empire' and Henry the 'Supreme Head' of its Church, over against the pope. Although Henry maintained an essentially Catholic spirituality and theology, the considerable funds realised by his dissolution of the monasteries meant that when he died in 1547, the English Church had significantly consolidated its independence from Rome.

With the accession of the nine-year-old Edward VI in 1547, this independence took a distinctly Protestant turn. Cranmer and the Council of Regency inculcated Lutheran, Calvinist and Zwinglian ideas through the English Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552, the Ordinal of 1550 and the Forty-Two Articles of 1533. These massive doctrinal changes were enshrined in the Acts of Uniformity of 1549 and 1552, and Protestantism was thereby established by law as the religion of England. When Edward died in July 1553, his Catholic half-sister Mary forcefully re-imposed Roman faith and order. Protestant leaders were either executed, or fled to exile on the Continent. By 1555 all the reforms enacted by Henry and Edward had been repealed, save for the dissolution of the monasteries. Constitutionally, England in effect returned to the position which had prevailed until 1529.

Mary's death in late 1558 brought her own half-sister Elizabeth to the throne. Elizabeth carefully returned England to Protestantism, though in a somewhat milder form than had prevailed under Edward. A new Act of Supremacy in 1559 rejected the jurisdiction of the pope, repealed Mary's heresy laws, and restored the Crown's authority to conduct church visitations and nominate bishops. The royal title was altered from Henry's 'Supreme Head' to 'Supreme Governor', as it remains to this day. An Oath of Supremacy was enjoined on all officers of church and state, and the 'chief government' of the monarch over all Estates of the realm, both 'Ecclesiastical' and 'Civil', was reasserted.

Under Elizabeth, a limited degree of toleration was afforded various more radical English reformation movements which had previously suffered severe persecution from both Catholic and Protestant monarchs. Whereas the Puritans sought to reform the Church of England along Continental Protestant lines from within, the Independents shared the Anabaptists' commitment to a separation of church and state, and to religious liberty—at least for Protestants. Prominent among these were the Congregationalists and Baptists. In these churches a different way of being together as Christians was developed which rejected hierarchical approaches to the church and the consequent imposition and administration of 'sacred power' from above. This constituted a disavowal of monarchical approaches to church government through popes or bishops—a disavowal which in turn had significant implications for the nature of civil society. This approach held that the sovereign should not interfere with people's conscientious convictions, but should be confined to the administration of temporal affairs. Over the next century or so, debate about the extent to which such Independent churches should be allowed to operate continued, but they came tumultuously to a head with the English Civil War of 1642-8.

Whatever its economic and social causes, the Civil War was also impregnated with religious and theological concerns. For many on the side of Parliament the struggle against the King concerned freedom to worship God according to conscience. Although for some of them this meant replacing one established religion (the Church of England) with another

(Presbyterianism), for the more radical it meant the freedom for all to worship God according to their own consciences. For the time being, Roman Catholicism was excluded from this vision precisely because the papacy was a temporal power as well as a spiritual one, and as such refused to grant freedom to what it regarded as fundamental error. In this situation, it represented a real threat to the British state as then constituted. In time the radical Independents were to combine with other Dissenters to constitute Nonconformity. Nonconformists were closer to Calvin than to the Anabaptists, in that for all that they shared the Anabaptist commitment to religious liberty they tended towards a positive view of civil government, and retained a basically Augustinian view of the relationship between religion and the state. In their version of the Two Kingdoms argument they could conceive that when acting to preserve the civil order Christian magistrates might be agents of God's judgement without compromise to their faith. Particularly in the America, this conviction impelled the foundation and civic development of some of the earliest states.[50]

Other movements emerged at the time of the English Civil War which constituted a radical edge to the radical end of Protestantism. Of these the Levellers were the most radical of all in calling for social transformation on egalitarian lines, for the redistribution of wealth, and for the enacting of consistent democratic principles based upon universal male suffrage. This was a movement ahead of its time, whose demands then seemed outrageously disruptive to established society. Quakers, or the Society of Friends, emerged in the same period and espoused a radically individualist approach to authority based upon belief in the inner light of God which indwelt all people. Quakers pioneered a strongly non-hierarchical approach to church government and offered a running critique of authoritarian systems in both church and society. They went on to exercise an influence in British society out of all proportion to their numerical strength, above all in industry, manufacturing and commerce and, despite their clear espousal of pacifism, in national and local politics.

The Civil War and the Commonwealth saw an unprecedented assertion of parliamentary power, and although the Restoration of 1660 ushered in the Catholic-leaning Charles II, the Glorious Revolution twenty eight years on introduced an unequivocally Protestant constitutional monarchy now considerably restrained by parliament. In 1828, the scope of the Oath of Supremacy was qualified, as the so-called Test Act was repealed and Dissenters were permitted to hold public office. The following year, the Catholic Emancipation Act extended similar rights to Roman Catholics. Gladstone's Liberal party abolished compulsory church rates and Anglican religious tests at Oxford and Cambridge, while the Education Act of 1870 allowed state aid to non-Anglican schools. Over the course of the century other Nonconformist disabilities were removed. In 1919, an Enabling Act set up the Church Assembly, a forerunner of General Synod. This became the main shaper of ecclesiastical legislation, with Parliament and the Crown intended to give assent largely as a matter of course. The revised arrangement was shaken somewhat by Parliament's refusal to endorse the revised Prayer Book of 1927 - thanks mainly to the opposition of Evangelical MPs, who detected an Anglo-Catholic bias. Since then, however, both Crown and Parliament have been generally reluctant to interfere with the workings of the Synod. Each, though, does remain active in the nomination process for bishops, with the Prime Minister being offered two ranked names for consideration by the Crown Appointments Commission, and usually consenting to the first. This, and other legacies of the Elizabethan Settlement such as the presence of bishops in the House of Lords, are much disputed today. It remains to be seen whether the 21st century will witness further gradualist reforms along the lines of those made over the past 320 years or so, or whether it will mark a decisive disestablishment of the Church of England.

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[50] Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (London: SPCK, 1992), 35-53.

3.8.2 Scotland [51]

The effect of the Continental Reformation in Scotland was more thoroughgoing than in England. While precise constitutional arrangements were at times hotly disputed, there was consistent widespread resistance to the monarch's being designated Supreme Head or Supreme Governor of the church. The leading Scottish reformer John Knox emphasised instead the Calvinistic version of Luther's 'two kingdoms' model, with its much sharper distinction between church and state power, and its avowal of Presbyterian rather than Episcopal church government within a society infused more generally by Presbyterian morality and values.

Knox's successor, Andrew Melville, refined the position articulated by Calvin and Knox. His stance was exemplified in a famous encounter with King James VI of Scotland.[52] Melville is said to have grasped James' sleeve, called him 'God's sillie vassal' and told him that there were two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland, in one of which (Christ's kingdom) James was 'not a king, nor a Lord, nor a head but a member'![53] Melville's attitude to the monarch, and his views on church and state, led to much conflict, and he was finally imprisoned in the Tower of London for five years. It nevertheless emerged as the recognised legal position in Scotland, being known as the 'establishment principle'.

When the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland adopted the *Westminster Confession of Faith* in 1647, it made specific mention, in the Adopting Act, of the second article of chapter xxxi (on Synods and Councils), which gave magistrates the right to call synods. The Assembly argued that 'the Assembly understandeth some parts of the second article of the thirty-one chapter only of kirks not settled, or constituted in point of government'.[54] That is to say, while it could understand why countries which did not have an established Reformed church might require such an article, it was not necessary in Scotland!

It was not until the re-establishment of Presbyterianism in Scotland in 1690, after years of resistance to the imposition of episcopacy, that an Act of Parliament was passed affirming the decision to adopt the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. This was the *Act Ratifying the Confession of Faith, and Settling the Presbyterian Church Government*. Interestingly, although that Act guaranteed the continuing establishment of the Church of Scotland, some have interpreted it as being 'Erastian', namely, that the Church's right to independence and spiritual freedom from the State was granted by the State, rather than being an inherent right.[55]

During the political, theological and ecclesiastical debates surrounding the Disruption in the 19th century, the whole question of establishment became a crucial issue.[56] On the one hand, the Free Church of Scotland which was formed in 1843 out of the Disruption continued to hold to the establishment principle, even while leaving the establishment for reasons of spiritual freedom. On the other hand, when the Free Church wanted to join with the United Presbyterians at the turn of the century, this principle became something of a stumbling block. Later still, during the first thirty years of the 20th century, a time of unprecedented reunion of the various churches, this debate over the establishment principle was crucial to the successful completion of the negotiations for union.[57] Finally, however, the 1921 settlement of the Church of Scotland's constitution made possible the negotiation of the 1929 union with the United Free Church. The settlement was expressed in the Articles Declaratory prepared by the Established

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[51] This section draws substantially on Andrew McGowan's paper 'Church and State: The Contribution of Church History to Evangelical Models for Public Theology', delivered at the conference of the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians, Woelmersen, Germany, August 2004. See also Frank Lyall, *Of Presbyters and Kings: Church and State in the Law of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1980).

[52] J.H.S. Burleigh *A Church History of Scotland* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960) 204-205.

[53] *Ibid*, 204.

[54] J. Ligon Duncan III 'Owning The Confession: Subscription in the Scottish Presbyterian Tradition' in David W. Hall (ed.), *The Practice of Confessional Subscription* (Lanham, ML: University Press of America, 1995) 81.

[55] Marjorie MacLean, *The Crown Rights of the Redeemer: A Reformed Approach to Sovereignty for the National Church in the 21st Century* (PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2004) 107.

[56] Ibid, chapter 3.

[57] Ibid, chapters 3 and 4. See also D.M. Murray *Freedom to Reform: The 'Articles Declaratory' of the Church of Scotland 1921* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993); D.M. Murray *Rebuilding the Kirk: Presbyterian Reunion in Scotland 1909-1929* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 2000).

Church between 1914 and 1919 in a number of drafts and it was effected by the very brief Church of Scotland Act 1921 to which the Articles were appended.[58] As Marjorie MacLean has demonstrated, this placed the Church of Scotland 'in a new constitutional situation, by recovering the Melvillian version of the theory of separate kingdoms, expressing it in the modern state-like language of spheres and realms, and leaving the legal implications of it to unfold in due course. The chief of those implications was the recognition that the Act represented the first breach in the sovereignty of the United Kingdom parliament.'

One aspect of this 'two kingdoms' arrangement is that there is no appeal to the civil courts from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, which is regarded as the supreme court of the Church. Several years ago, there was a striking example of the effect of this in the notable case of a Church of Scotland minister who was removed from his position. Believing that the Church had acted wrongly, the minister sought a judicial review of the decision in the civil courts.[59] This was turned down on the grounds of the Church of Scotland's status in relation to the State. As MacLean notes, 'since the 1921 Act recognised the pre-existing powers of the Church as inherent and uncreated by Parliament or any human authority, the Court of Session disclaimed jurisdiction.'[60]

This leaves the Church of Scotland in a unique position in terms of modern church/state relations. It has a more independent identity than the Church of England. Yet it does not itself now seek to control the state, nor to have any constitutional authority beyond the sphere of its own life and ministry, as the Roman Catholic Church has sometimes attempted. At the same time, is not separated from the state, as are Presbyterians in the USA and elsewhere. In short, the Church of Scotland's constitutional position affords it autonomy over its own doctrine, worship, government and discipline, together with the protection of the state, yet without potential or actual state interference. As predicated on the 'two kingdoms' doctrine, this means that both church and state are understood to have been established by God, to be answerable to God, and to owe duties and responsibilities to each other.

Today, the Scottish establishment principle is maintained by a careful balance of measures, such as the appointment of a 'Lord High Commissioner' by the Queen to the General Assembly who addresses the Assembly on behalf of the Sovereign. The General Assembly welcomes the Lord High Commissioner and his guests (usually including several cabinet ministers and Scottish Executive ministers). It also instructs a committee to write a 'loyal letter' to the monarch, conveying the greetings and best wishes of the Assembly. Yet at the same time, it affirms its independence from monarchical or state intervention.[61]

3.8.3 Wales

Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries allowed the Welsh gentry to expand their estates. Acquiring land had been complicated for them by various medieval property statutes, so many Welsh nobles actively sought at this time to become 'English', and to be governed by English law. This suited Henry, who was keen to effect administrative uniformity throughout his kingdom as a bulwark against his enemies on the Continent. Two Acts of Union in 1536 and 1542 met these aspirations by formally incorporating Wales into England. Wales was given representation in Parliament, the Welsh were granted equal rights with the English, and what remained of Welsh law was abolished. In addition, English was made the sole official language throughout Wales—a measure reinforced by the imposition of the Prayer Book. With a few isolated exceptions, there was little objection to any of this from Welsh clergy, who were largely poor and uneducated, and thus unable to follow the nuances of constitutional change.

Like Henry himself, many of the gentry who gained from the dissolution of the monasteries remained Catholics. Under Edward and Elizabeth, however, they met with significant persecution. One poet's response was to label the new order 'ffydd Saeson' - 'The

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[58] Ibid, 104.
[59] Logan v. Presbytery of Dumbarton (1995 SLT 1228).
[60] MacLean, 123.
[61] The Lord High Commissioner sits in a gallery overlooking the Assembly Hall, but this has no access from the Hall. In a sense, he 'listens in' through an open window.

faith of the Saxons', and there was a strong feeling in some areas that the Welsh were being pressed to abandon their former faith under English duress. Most Welsh people, however, seemed to have accepted these changes, and once the Bible was translated into Welsh during Elizabeth's reign, Wales began to take on a clearly Protestant identity.

Just as in England, there were considerable numbers in the post-Reformation period who felt that reform had not gone far enough in the established church, and who separated from it as Dissenters. Following their ascendancy in the time of Cromwell, and their subsequent decline under Charles II, these more radical Welsh Protestants won a degree of freedom with the passing of the Toleration Act in 1689, and began to build the chapels which would become so synonymous with Welsh culture in the subsequent three centuries. Much of the growth of Dissent in Wales during this time was made possible by the steady rise in literacy, which had in turn been advanced by the 1650 Act for the Better Propagation and Preaching of the Gospel.

Another significant fillip to Welsh Nonconformity was provided by the revival led from the 1730s by Howell Harris and Daniel Rowland. Harris remained personally committed to the Church of England, yet pursued innovations in evangelism and church organisation which were bound to cause friction. Indeed, he and Rowland pioneered a strain of Calvinistic Methodism which soon developed its own character distinct from the established church. As the industrial age dawned, large numbers of people flocked to the valleys of south Wales in search of work, creating new communities in the process. While fresh pits were sunk, new chapels sprang up at a faster rate than Anglican churches. Just as what was now known as Nonconformity pursued more democratic models of church governance, the 1884 Reform Act gave most working class men the vote (women had to wait until 1918). The profile of Welsh Nonconformity was raised even further by the dramatic South Wales revival of 1904-6, led by Evan Roberts. The Nonconformists could now establish themselves on the civic and political stage, and one campaign in particular would highlight their enhanced public role.

The fact that Anglicans still enjoyed legal privileges over the nonconformist majority struck many in the latter group, and some in the former, as deeply unfair. These objections led to calls for the separation and disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Wales, and these came to a head over the issue of tithes. A tithe was a traditional payment which entitled the Church to a tenth of people's annual income, whether or not they attended services. With Wales by now a predominantly chapel-going nation, conflict was predictable, and occurred all over the country. Dubbed 'The Tithe Wars', the disturbances which ensued saw enraged Denbighshire farm workers in running battles with the local police. An Anti-Tithe League was formed to campaign across the country, and in south Caernarfonshire its secretary was a young solicitor who would later become Prime Minister - David Lloyd George. Following his election to Parliament, Lloyd George formed part of a group of young Liberal MPs representing the distinctive values of Welsh Nonconformity.

Initial hopes for disestablishment foundered with the defeat of the Liberals in the 1895 election, and by the time they were returned to power other issues had overtaken it. Nonetheless, the disestablishment debate was revived after the First World War, and in 1920 the Church in Wales was instituted apart from the Church of England, maintaining the parish system but gaining its own Archbishop, rites and canons, free from state approval.

3.8.4 *Ireland*

On breaking with Rome, Henry VIII sought to extend his political and ecclesiastical 'Empire', and to regularise religion, language, law and culture within it. If this proved relatively easy in Wales, it turned out to be harder and less successful in Ireland. The reasons for this failure were historical and geo-political.

In 1169, the Anglo-Irish invasion had created an English colony called The Pale, extending forty miles inland from the coast between Dublin and Dundalk. Since 1175, English monarchs had been designated 'Lord of Ireland' and had been supported by an 'Irish Parliament', but in fact their power was confined to The Pale and a few other English-speaking royalist strongholds. Beyond the Pale lay two effectively independent states—one Anglo-Irish and the other Gaelic. Bishoprics in the Pale tended to be occupied by Englishmen, but came more directly under the auspices of Rome than their counterparts across the Irish Sea. Beyond

the Pale, bishops were largely native Irishmen, many of whom spoke English only as a second language, and who bore loyalty to the pope rather than the Sovereign.

The 1534 Act of Supremacy had already designated Henry Supreme Head of the church in all Ireland when, in 1541, he was also declared 'King of Ireland'. Criticism of Henry's rule or ecclesiology was deemed treason; appeals to Rome were outlawed; the Irish language was proscribed, and some 130 monasteries both within and beyond the Pale were suppressed. Henry's Irish reforms were spearheaded by a special commission led by the Archbishop of Dublin, George Brown (d. 1556). A newly-formed Church of Ireland sanctioned the destruction of many images and shrines, and resentment at this was not helped by Browne and others' insistence on using English in Irish-speaking congregations—a policy which stunted evangelism and teaching of the Protestant faith. Furthermore, though Henry had refused papal authority, the pope continued to appoint Irish bishops regardless, thus creating confusion and uncertainty among the people.

Under Edward and Elizabeth, the Prayer Book was enforced, but many who publicly endorsed it still privately maintained their Catholic faith. Towards the end of Elizabeth's reign in 1601 the Battle of Kinsale effectively sealed the Tudor conquest of Ireland, but by now the English church was so disconnected from the people that the spiritual battle had mostly been lost. Further power was gained through the extension of English and Scottish plantations into confiscated Irish land, but this also destroyed the trust needed to foster a missionary church.

Later conflicts stoked the tensions, from James I's insistence that all Catholic priests should leave and all Irish people should join the Church of Ireland in 1605, through Cromwell's bloody massacre at Drogheda, to William's victory at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690.

The large majority of the Irish population continued to resent English rule and Anglican polity, and by 1833 the London Whig government moved to abolish ten Irish bishoprics—a decision which triggered the birth of the Oxford Movement. In 1869, the Church of Ireland was disestablished, although it had always struggled to make establishment work. The legacy of this imperial, political and religious struggle is seen to some extent in the modern partition of Ireland into the British-linked majority Protestant northern Province of Ulster, and the largely Catholic southern republic of Eire. This partition dates from 1921. From the beginning of the 'Troubles' in 1969 until the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and the establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly shortly afterwards, it bore out a long, sad history of religious, ethnic and socio-political strife. The hope is that this sorrowful chapter in the history of church-state relations may now be giving way to a happier narrative.

3.9   Historic Evangelical Engagements with 'Faith and Nation' Issues

As we saw in 1.2.1.5, the origins of Evangelicalism are disputed. Without doubt, it took its core, distinctive theological emphases – on the supremacy of Scripture, on justification by faith through grace, and on the cross of Christ – from the Protestant Reformers.[62] Even so, the emergence of British Evangelicalism as a distinct, self-conscious movement engaged in social and political transformation can be traced most readily to the great revivals of the 18th century. Since this report has been developed from an explicitly Evangelical perspective at the request of an Evangelical body, we shall devote particular attention to the rise of Evangelicalism from this period, focussing on the diverse approaches represented within it and their relevance to the interactions of Church, State and society today.

3.9.1   Revival

Evangelicals have significantly engaged with faith and nation issues since they began to coalesce as a distinct, transdenominational movement in the 1730s. The decisive catalyst for this movement was the outbreak of revival which took place in various parts of Britain during this period, especially as led by Howell Harris in Brecon, Daniel Rowland in Camarthen, William McCulloch in Cambuslang, Scotland, and most famously of all, by the Church of

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[62] Alister McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994), 14-18.

England clerics John Wesley (1703-91) and George Whitefield (1714-70).[63]. Revival has been well summarised as 'the work of the Holy Spirit in restoring the people of God to a more vital spiritual life, witness, and work by prayer and the Word after repentance in crisis for their spiritual decline.'[64] Yet the development of revival in Britain also features a clear social dimension - one that paved the way for the plethora of full-blown relief projects for which Evangelicals would become renowned in the Victorian age.

Wesley's family background and early ministerial formation had been in the High Church tradition. His politics were Tory, and his theological instincts quietist. Despite all this, his quest for a more dynamic spirituality led him to his famous conversion experience at Aldersgate Street on 24 May 1738, when he felt his heart 'strangely warmed' as he listened to a reading from the Preface to Luther's commentary on Romans, and moved on to embrace a radical vision for evangelism alongside his Oxford contemporary George Whitefield.

Like Wesley, Whitefield had had begun to focus on the necessity of new birth, and in so doing began to upset traditional clergy, many of whom closed their pulpits to him. Undeterred, he partnered Wesley in preaching to thousands in fields and civic squares, reaching many working class people who had been alienated from established church life. In doing so, the two men radically challenged the parish system, and the authority of those priests on whose territory they were perceived to be encroaching. They also showed up the social structure of the national church, still suffused as it was with a strongly aristocratic sensibility. Indeed, Whitefield urged the initially more reticent Wesley 'to be more vile and proclaim in the highways the glad tidings of salvation'. In time each realised that their itinerant evangelism represented a potent political act - the embrace of a 'vagabond life' which stood as a rebuke to a national church which had in many quarters become complacent and overly wedded to the ruling class. [65]

Both before and after Wesley's death, his rigorously organised Methodist network of classes, preachers and evangelists reshaped not only the British church, but British society as a whole. The spirituality, pedagogy and missiology which it inculcated were reflected in the fact that certain Dissenting denominations increased their membership two, and sometimes three-fold in the latter half of the 18th century, and even more so up to around 1850.[66]

Putting into practice his conviction that 'reading Christians will be knowing Christians', Wesley enfranchised thousands who could not afford higher learning by making a wide range of spiritual classics available cheaply through his societies.[67] He also established a college at Kingswood which attained the very finest educational standards.[68] Indeed, by bringing such benefits to the lower classes, some have gone so far as to suggest that Wesley helped spare England the kind of bloody revolution experienced by France in 1789. This thesis, which has been advanced by Élie Halévy, G.M. Trevelyan, E.P Thompson and others, has been widely challenged in more recent times—not least by John Kent.[69] Yet beyond such speculation, J. Wesley Bready's account of the 'deep savagery' in much social life during this era — from mass poverty, human trafficking, child labour and prostitution to bribery and corruption — remains valid. So, too, does his proposal that Wesley and the Evangelical Revival pioneered remedies for it which would profoundly change the 'faith and nation' relationship in

[63] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London: Unwin & Hyman, 1989), 1-12.

[64] E.E. Cairns, *An Endless Line of Splendor: Revivals and their Leaders from the Great Awakening to the Present* (Cambridge: Tyndale House, 1986), 22.

[65] Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield: The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the 18th Century Revival Vol. 1* (London: Banner of Truth, 1970), 274.

[66] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 21.

[67] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 68.

[68] H. D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (Epworth Press, 1989), 356.

[69] Élie Halévy, *The Birth of Methodism in England* [trans. Bernard Semmel], (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1971); G.M. Trevelyan, *English Social History* (London: Longmans Green, 1942), 477; E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Gollancz, 1963); John Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); 'Have We been Here Before? A Historian Looks at the Toronto Blessing', in Stanley E. Porter & Philip J. Richter (eds.), *The Toronto Blessing - Or Is It?* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1995), 90-91.

Britain over the next decades—so profoundly, in fact, that a century on from Wesley's death, some three-quarters of the total number of voluntary charitable organisations operating in Britain would be discernibly Evangelical in character and control.[70]

Perhaps the greatest testament to this link between the Evangelical Revival and the subsequent flowering of Evangelical social reform can be seen in the history of the anti-slavery movement.

3.9.2 19th Century Social Reform

3.9.2.1 Anti-Slavery

Three days before he died in 1791, Wesley wrote to the Yorkshire MP William Wilberforce (1759-1833). Reiterating a conviction he had held for some time, Wesley commended Wilberforce's 'glorious enterprise' of seeking to abolish slavery. Wilberforce had an evangelical conversion aged twelve, but in 1785 underwent a dramatic 'conviction of sin', after which he set himself to suppress the slave trade and reform manners. The former would come to dominate his parliamentary career.

Wilberforce's friend John Newton had been a slave-trader before turning to Christ and becoming the leading Evangelical Anglican clergyman in London. But many wealthy merchants and shipping companies stood to lose large profits if slaveholding were banned, and so strongly opposed reform. In 1785 the moderate Churchman Thomas Clarkson (1760-1846) published *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*, and caught the attention of a group of more overtly Evangelical social campaigners in London - the so-called 'Clapham Sect'. Named after the parish church where they worshipped, this remarkable group of activists included Wilberforce, Grenville Sharp, Henry Thornton, Charles Grant, James Stephen, Zachary Macaulay and Lord Teignmouth, as well the Vicar, John Venn. In 1787, Sharp joined Clarkson to form the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. They were in fact outnumbered on the Society's committee by Quakers, but since Quakers were barred from becoming MPs, Wilberforce emerged as the Society's chief advocate on the floor of the House.

Numerous parliamentary setbacks were mitigated by the passing in 1807 of a bill banning the slave trade on British ships. Later, prompted by Elizabeth Hayrick's radical 1824 pamphlet *Immediate not Gradual Abolition*, and by other female abolitionists like Sarah Wedgewood and Elizabeth Pease, the Abolition of Slavery Act was duly passed as Wilberforce lay on his death-bed, and by 1838 all slaves across British colonies were freed.

Similar tenacity and missionary zeal would characterise Evangelical social and parliamentary campaigning on a range of other concerns.

3.9.2.2 Educational Reform

While the Clapham Sect was in the forefront of abolition, it distinguished itself in other areas, too - not least in education. Indeed, John Venn was the first Vicar to introduce parish schools.[71] Based on a similar worldview were the Ragged Schools for street children. Modelled by the London City Mission and co-ordinated from 1844 by the great Evangelical philanthropist Lord Shaftesbury, the Ragged School Union targeted the most deprived youngsters and offered them basic literacy and job training. By 1867, it had established over 600 such schools in the capital alone.[72] Even more numerous were the elementary schools, half of which were being sponsored by religious bodies in the mid-19th century, with Evangelicals playing a disproportionately large role.[73]

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[70] J. Wesley Bready, *England: Before and After Wesley* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1939), 11, 14, 126, 405; K. Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action: An Appraisal of their Social Work in the Victorian Era* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1962), 14.

[71] J. Venn, 'Charity Schools', *Christian Observer,* September 1804, p.542, cit. M. Hennell, *John Venn and the Clapham Sect* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1958), 137.

[72] *Report and Tables on Education in England and Wales* (1853-54), cxxiii.

[73] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 124.

In these schools, the curriculum featured a range of specifically Christian tracts and devotional material, as well as manuals in maths and English. Also, from the 1780s large numbers of children were encouraged to attend 'Sunday Schools'. Hitherto, young people had largely been drilled in their particular catechism and tested on it in Sunday services. Now, much broader programmes involving not only religious education but also literacy and basic numeracy were emerging for use on Sunday afternoons. These were soon so well attended that they became 'the major distinctive contribution of evangelicals to popular education'.[74] By 1881 a staggering 5.7 million, or 19% of the total population, were attending them.[75]

One of the most energetic Sunday School pioneers was the Evangelical Anglican playwright Hannah Moore (1745-1833). A close friend of Wilberforce, Moore's philosophy was clear and conservative: 'My object is not to teach dogmas and opinions', she stressed, 'but I form the lower classes in the habits of industry and virtue'.[76] This was very much of a piece with Wilberforce's mission to re-establish manners at the heart of family, social and civic life. A similar vision drove the Scottish reformers David Stowe and William Collins to establish church day schools for the Glasgow working class children in the 1820s, and, as part of the Glasgow Educational Society, to found a teacher training college in 1836 which would stand as a model for evangelicals across Britain.[77] Likewise, from the 1870s Christian Brethren leader George Müller funded almost 80 elementary schools in Britain and 30 abroad. While Independents and Congregationalists had famously established Dissenting Academies in the previous century – from Rotherham to Birmingham, from Brecon in Wales to Glasgow in Scotland – and while various denominational and evangelical 'public schools' has sprung up in the same period, the later Victorian era saw a significant growth of new evangelical higher educational institutions, such as St David's College, Lampeter, Lord Shaftesbury's Litton Hall, Wycliffe Hall in Oxford and Ridley Hall in Cambridge.[78]

While child education moved gradually from the voluntary to the statutory sphere, Evangelicals still contributed positively to adult learning—notably in the workplace. J.J. Colman, the Nonconformist mustard producer, ran a school for his workers in Norwich, and church-run factory night schools attracted considerable support: in 1870 some 8,131 adults attended them in the Diocese of Ripon alone.[79] Such ventures reflected a more general Evangelical commitment to improving conditions of employment as the industrial age took hold.

3.9.2.3 Employment Reform and Workplace Ministries

For all his advocacy of Ragged Schools, some of the greatest achievements of the renowned Anglican Evangelical campaigner Anthony Ashley Copper, Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury (1801-85) were in employment reform. From the early 1830s, Shaftesbury began to champion political causes associated with Evangelicals, particularly Sabbatarianism. However, he is best remembered for steering through a series of landmark Factory Acts between 1833 and 1847. These banned children under thirteen from factory labour and limited the working hours of women and young people. Later, Shaftesbury secured the appointment of a Royal Commission on mining conditions—a Commission whose report so horrified the country that he was soon able to see a Mines and Collieries Act onto the statute book, thus preventing women and children under ten from working underground. A succession of Chimney Sweeps Acts followed, while the Common Lodging-Houses Act (1851) enshrined the registration and inspection of housing for the poor.[80]

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[74] Edward Royle, 'Evangelicals and Education', in John Wolffe (ed.), *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal* (London: SPCK, 1995), 120.

[75] Royle, 'Evangelicals and Education', 121 n10.

[76] More, Martha, *Mendip Annals* (London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1859), 6.

[77] Edward Royle, 'Evangelicals and Education', 123. in Wolffe, *Evangelical Faith.*

[78] Edward Royle, Evangelicals and Education', in Wolffe, *Evangelical Faith*, 128-31.

[79] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 124.

[80] G. Battiscombe, *Shaftesbury: A Biography of the Seventh Earl* (London: Constable, 1974).

Like Wilberforce, Shaftesbury recognised the value of voluntary mission work alongside parliamentary lobbying. As a Tory, he favoured the sort of care which would 'help the poor help themselves' over undue state control. This notion became especially important for him after the Reform Act of 1867 broadened the British political franchise to the working classes. Thus he involved himself closely in the work of London City Mission among the urban poor, in the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes, the Aboriginal Protection Society, support for the mentally ill in asylums, and numerous other charitable bodies. Reflecting on this aspect of his ministry, he professed himself 'satisfied that most of the great philanthropic movements have sprung from [the Evangelicals]'.

3.9.2.4 Poverty Relief and Temperance

Much Evangelical discourse on poverty relief was provoked by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. This Act sought to divert the main responsibility for aid from churches into government-funded workhouses for the so-called 'deserving poor', and even harsher 'houses of correction' for to 'undeserving poor'. While accepting the moral distinction between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poverty, many evangelicals were sceptical about this new emphasis on state welfare. One such was John Bird Sumner, who would become Archbishop of Canterbury between 1848 and 1862. Indeed, Sumner suggested that independent face-to-face charitable relief was far more likely to elicit gratitude and responsibility in the recipient than 'faceless' government provision.[81] From the perspective of our present-day welfare state, these sentiments may seem at once hard and patronising, but they were reiterated by many other prominent Evangelicals, including the Scottish divine Thomas Chalmers and the sponsors of the Mendicity Society, which sought to remove beggars from the streets by offering structured financial support linked to a programme of 'self-help'.[82] Chalmers, in fact, sought quite explicitly to counter centralised state welfare through a model of 'one-to-one' poverty relief based on the rural Scottish parish matrix of regular visitation, day and Sabbath schools, doorstep collections and private gifts with which he had been familiar in his youth. However, when he attempted to transplant this model to the industrialised, urban contexts of Glasgow and Edinburgh in which he later ministered, the results were at best mixed.[83]

A more progressive and successful approach to poverty relief was pioneered by the Edinburgh Kirk minister Thomas Guthrie. In contrast to Chalmers, Guthrie realised that the newly-expanded cities spurred by the Industrial Revolution demanded a fresh programme of mission to the poor. Opposed to the 'deserving'/'undeserving' duality, Guthrie insisted that industrialization had imposed a systemic burden on the working classes which only systemic national and corporate action could alleviate. Hence, rather than focussing on paternalistic, parochial relief, he called for co-ordinated ecumenical, city-wide projects to address the problem, and prophetically challenged an economy which 'offers up our children in sacrifice to the Moloch of money and builds fortunes in many instances on the ruins of public morality and domestic happiness'.[84]

Another important manifestation of poverty relief emerged in the many Evangelical societies devoted to 'temperance'. The earliest of these began in the late 1820s in the North and the Midlands, and quite explicitly proceeded by a method of 'suasion' in which material support in other areas was made conditional upon 'signing the pledge' not to touch alcohol for a fixed period. Granted, as the movement gathered pace and developed through larger bodies like The United Kingdom Alliance (1853), the National Temperance League (1856) and the child-oriented Band of Hope (1847), it targeted middle class as well as working class communities. Even here, however, the link between poverty and drink, solvency and abstinence, was maintained.

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[81] Brian Dickey, 'Going About Doing Good: Evangelicals and Poverty, c1815-1870', in Wolffe, *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal*, 43-4.
[82] Dickey, 'Going About Doing Good', 47-8.
[83] Dickey, 'Going about Doing Good', 45-6.
[84] Cit. David W. Smith, *Transforming the World? The Social Impact of British Evangelicalism* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998), 44-6.

It is not hard to detect in these varied 19th century programmes a foreshadowing of the tension which exists in current political philosophy and theology, between 'conservative' emphases on free markets, benevolence and individual responsibility, and 'socialist' models of state organisation and statutory welfare. Indeed, as Brian Dickey points out, whereas the tendency of Victorian Evangelicals to voluntarism was dismissed by mid-20th century statist historians like R.H. Tawney as sentimental, individualistic and lacking theoretical coherence, by the 1990s 'many had come to believe that neither state action, nor voluntary associationism nor face-to-face solutions would alone be enough.' Rather, 'all and more must be integrated into a viable social policy for Britain in the 21st century'. Hence, as Dickey goes on the attest, the basic, 'integrated' model of philanthropy and legislative progress exemplified in the work of Wilberforce and Shaftesbury, and by others such as the Bute family in Cardiff and the Fitzwilliams in Leeds, may once more be coming into its own.[85]

3.9.2.5 Role of the Evangelical Alliance

The Evangelical Alliance was founded in 1846. Its inaugural meeting comprised over 1000 representatives from several different Protestant traditions. Most were British, but 16% had come from America and continental Europe, and the meeting sought to establish a truly international body which would 'manifest and promote the unity of Christ's people' across the world. Although this seemed eminently achievable when a Basis of Faith was agreed early on, the idea of an organic, global network soon foundered. Inspired by the achievements of Wilberforce, several British representatives backed a proposal to bar slaveholders from membership. A large number of those from the United States objected that this would push the Alliance beyond its spiritual remit. After a heated debate, it was decided to continue the movement not with a heavily centralised structure, but as a loose network of autonomous national and regional Alliances.

The so-called 'British Organisation' of the Alliance was duly formed in Manchester later the same year. Staring with around 3,000 individual members, it would go on to double its membership over the next decade. Early on there was uncertainty about its public role, and the great Scottish secessionist Thomas Chalmers warned that unless this was resolved, the Alliance could become a 'Do Nothing Society'. From 1850 however, the British Organisation combined regularly with sympathetic parliamentarians to petition governments around the world on issues of religious liberty, championing the rights not only of Evangelicals, but of Nestorians, Catholics and Jews also. High profile campaigns in Turkey, Russia, Italy, Spain and elsewhere consolidated the reputation of the Alliance, and earned the respect of politicians and civic leaders.

At one point in the 1880s, the Alliance's Executive Council included six peers, seven MPs, the Lord Mayor of London and a High Court Judge. Such political clout helped the Alliance achieve a great deal socially at home, as well as abroad, and it was active in supporting various moral campaigns, ranging from poverty relief to Sabbath observance.[86]

As the new century dawned, the Alliance's journal *Evangelical Christendom* continued to carry a good deal of 'foreign intelligence' on the persecution of Evangelicals, but the British Organisation itself became relatively less active in this area. This was due to a number factors. First, the rise of the ecumenical movement prompted the Alliance to concentrate more on the issue of Christian unity, and under the long Secretaryship of Henry Martyn Gooch (1904-1949), it responded by positioning itself as a broad Protestant movement set against both theological fundamentalism and liberalism.[87] Second, while the Alliance remained committed to corporate

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[85] Dickey, 'Going About Doing Good', 48-9; 54-5. On the same point, Dickey cites the work of F.K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in 19th century England* (Oxford University Press, 1980); *The Voluntary Impulse: Philanthropy in Modern Britain* (London: Faber, 1988).

[86] For further details see Ian Randall and David Hilborn, *One Body in Christ: The History and Significance of the Evangelical Alliance* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001), 71-102, 112.

[87] Ian Randall, 'Schism and Unity: 1905-1966', in Steve Brady & Harold Rowdon (eds.), *For Such a Time as This: Perspectives on Evangelicalism, Past, Present and Future* (Milton Keynes: Scripture Union/London: Evangelical Alliance, 1996), 164.

action and prayer on international issues, the rise of premillennialism from 1880 blunted the edge of its political engagement.[88] Third, Gooch's stress on the Protestant nature of the Alliance meant that its anti-Catholic identity, which had been strong at the outset but which had been mitigated by more religious liberties work in the Victorian age, once again became more distinctive. This all reflected a wider playing down of socio-political involvement among Evangelicals during this period – a trend which David Moberg has dubbed 'the great reversal'.[89]

Although the Alliance supported Karl Barth and the German Confessing Church in their struggle against the Nazis in the 1930s,[90] it would only be after the Second World War that its former focus on religious liberties would be recovered. This would occur, however, not through the old model of a London-based Executive leading other international committees in petitioning various repressive regimes, but through a new global body—the World Evangelical Fellowship.[91] When WEF was formed at Woudschoten, Holland in 1951, it immediately embarked on a religious liberties agenda.[92] Today, the Religious Liberties Commission of the re-named World Evangelical Alliance has an office at the United Nations, and is active in the many areas of the world which still stifle religious freedom—from Iran and Pakistan to Nigeria and China.[93] The social and political commitments made in London in 1846, and applied so effectively through the first fifty years of the Alliance's life, live on at the global level.

3.9.2.6 Kuyper and the Neo-Calvinist Worldview

In her study of Victorian Evangelical activism, Doreen Rosman points out that the British Evangelical charities and para-church agencies in this period 'proved to be essentially pragmatic'. As she writes, they 'sought and acquired influential patronage, mobilized mass support by constructing a network of local auxiliaries, and co-operated with any who shared their aims *regardless of belief*'.[94] Likewise, David Bebbington observes that the activism of these bodies often meant that systematic theological thought came to be regarded as a 'dispensable luxury'.[95]

If there is an honourable exception to this trend, it derives not from Britain, but from the Netherlands, in the form of Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920). Almost uniquely among Evangelicals in the period we have been examining, Kuyper produced a thoroughgoing, and firmly Evangelical account of the relationship between sacred and secular, faith and nation, state and church - one which maintains significant influence today.[96]

Kuyper was the third son of a minister in the Dutch State church at Maassluis. In 1855 he entered the University of Leiden and studied under the leading liberal theologian J.H. Scholten. In the process, he abandoned his earlier orthodox faith and embraced a modernist approach. Kuyper went on to be ordained, but in his first pastorate at Beesd was challenged by a group of 'stubborn, old-fashioned Calvinists', who in time prompted him to recover a solidly Reformed outlook. Kuyper moved on to higher profile congregations in Utrecht and Amsterdam, and from there embraced a political career, entering the Dutch Parliament in 1874. This he combined with editorships of two newspapers and the founding, in 1880, of the Free University of Amsterdam, which was dedicated to producing scholars in a range of disciplines,

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[88] Ian Randall, 'Schism and Unity: 1905-1966', in Steve Brady & Harold Rowdon (eds.), *For Such a Time as This: Perspectives on Evangelicalism, Past, Present and Future* (Milton Keynes: Scripture Union/London: Evangelical Alliance, 1996), 168.

[89] David Moberg, *The Great Reversal: Evangelism versus Social Concern* (London: Scripture Union, 1973).

[90] See, for example, *Evangelical Christendom,* January-February 1930, 35.

[91] W. Harold Fuller, *People of the Mandate: The Story of the World Evangelical Fellowship* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996), 114-15.

[92] David M. Howard, *The Dream That Would Not Die: The Birth and Growth of the World Evangelical Fellowship, 1846-96* (Wheaton, Ill.: World Evangelical Fellowship, 1986).

[93] Fuller, W. Harold, *People of the Mandate: The Story of the World Evangelical Fellowship*, 103-17.

[94] Doreen Rosman, *Evangelicals and Culture* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 23. Editor's emphasis.

[95] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London: Unwin & Hyman, 1989), 12.

[96] See for instance Peter Hesalm, *Creating a Christian Worldview: Abraham Kuyper's Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998).

yet all infused with the Calvinist perspective. In 1901 Kuyper was elected Prime Minister and served as leader of the Anti-Revolutionary party until 1905.

In addition to his journalism and political writings, Kuyper produced several theological books. The most important of these are his 3-volume *Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology* (1894) and his collected *Lectures on Calvinism,* which he delivered at Princeton in 1898 as part of a highly successful American tour. In particular, Lecture 3, on 'Calvinism and Politics', addresses the form and function of the state.

In keeping with much of his other work, Kuyper begins this lecture by asserting the *comprehensive scope* of Calvinism. For Kuyper, Calvinism is not 'an exclusively ecclesiastical movement', but a 'fundamental conception' which reaches 'down to the very root of our human life.' Where Christ is concerned, there can be no separation between 'sacred' and 'profane', precisely because, as Kuyper insists, everything belongs to him and is subject to his divine rule. As Kuyper famously sums it up: 'There is not a single inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry: "Mine!"'.[97] Lest this sound overbearing, Kuyper insists that the very fact of God's intimate relationship with every part of his creation disposes him to enter 'into immediate fellowship with the creature, as God the Holy Spirit. Hence, 'God is not to be identified with the world and therefore with humanity, as in pantheism, nor as isolated from humanity, as in Islam. God is transcendent, yet he communicates directly with his people, and in fact lives in them through the Holy Spirit.'[98] In consequence of all this, and contrary to popular perception, the key 'dominating principle' of Calvinism is not justification by faith through grace, but rather 'the sovereignty of the Triune God over the whole cosmos in all its spheres and kingdoms, visible and invisible.'[99]

Kuyper's reference to the different 'spheres' of God's rule here becomes highly significant in his system. First and foremost, 'everything that is, exists for God' and the 'whole creation must give glory to him'. Thus 'Wherever man may stand, whatever he may do, to whatever he may apply his hand, in agriculture, in commerce, and in industry, constantly standing before the face of his God, he is employed in the service of his God'.[100] The so-called secular workplace, the public square, the sports field—none need be less 'holy' or 'sanctified' than the chancel. Yet this primordial, universal sovereignty, 'irradiates in mankind a threefold *deduced* supremacy, viz. 1. The sovereignty of the *State*; 2. The sovereignty of *Society*; and 3. The sovereignty of the *Church*.[101]

In the case of Kuyper's first 'deduced supremacy' - the supremacy of state - he recognises that this has been instituted only since the Fall. On the one hand, human pride led to Babel and the diffusion of language, and with it, the diffusion of nationalities, tribal identities, tongues and cultures which distinguishes different states from one another. Yet given the fact of the Fall, any attempt to reintegrate states into 'one world empire' would be disastrous - producing tyranny, despotism and idolatry. So Kuyper acknowledges that the state has two distinct 'sides' - one 'shady' and the other 'light'. In its shadiness, it is subject to 'all manner of despotic ambitions'. Yet in its lighter guise, it offers a bulwark against the 'hell on earth' of anarchic disorder.[102] In this conception, we see that 'sin alone has necessitated the institution of governments', since without it God would simply rule humanity in a direct and unmediated way.[103] Yet even mediating rulers are subject to God's authority, and must recognize this fact overtly if they are not to risk idolatry. Indeed, Kuyper exemplifies this point by contrasting the Godly discourse of the American settlement with the humanistic, contractual language of the French *Declaration*, the latter of which asserts 'an original sovereignty' whose root goes 'no deeper than the human will', and is thus 'perfectly identical with atheism'.[104]

[97] James Bratt (ed.), *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 488.

[98] Kuyper, *Lectures, Lectures on Calvinism* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1931), 29

[99] Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures,* 79.

[100] Kuyper, *Lectures, 49.*

[101] Kuyper, *Lectures*, 79

[102] Kuyper, *Lectures*, 81.

[103] Kuyper, *Lectures,* 82.

[104] Kuyper, *Lectures,* 87- 88.

As far as the second sphere of deduced supremacy is concerned - the sphere of Society - Kuyper suggests that this stands in antithesis to the State. Whereas government is a 'mechanical device' to restrain sin, society, through its constituent smaller spheres of family, business, art and so forth, does 'not derive authority from the superiority of the state, but obeys 'a higher authority' within its 'own bosom'. As a result of this Kuyper argues that tension is bound to occur between different social arenas and the government of the day. Indeed, in his terms, 'the government is always inclined with its mechanical authority to invade social life, to subject it and mechanically to arrange it'. Even so, Kuyper holds that from time to time different social spheres will attempt to throw off all restraints of civic order. Hence people will be continually faced with the twin threats of statism and anarchy. Yet Kuyper asserts that Calvinism manages to avoid such polarities, by insisting on the sovereignty of God and a plurality of social spheres 'under the law', as administered by the government.[105]

Thirdly and finally, Kuyper turns his attention to the sphere of the Church. While acknowledging the pain and scandal of a divided *ecclesia*, he sees it implicit within Calvin's teaching about liberty of conscience that the healthiest situation for both Christian communities and civic authorities is that of a 'free church in a free land'[106]. While acknowledging that unity between churches has appeal, he argues that the government must refrain from seeking to coerce this, on the grounds that it 'lacks the data of judgment' to do so, and would thereby be encroaching on the sovereignty of the Church. Kuyper concludes from this that while despotic church polities are plainly to be avoided, allowances must be made for historic and cultural differences between denominations, and in saying this is willing, like Calvin, to accept Roman Catholics as allies against ungodliness.[107] This last point would become highly significant for one of Kuyper's most renowned followers, Francis Schaeffer, and his conception of 'co-belligerence' with non-evangelicals (see section 4.4.7 below).

3.10   A Summary of Current 20th and 21st Century Public Issues

3.10.1 Introduction

The 20th and early 21st centuries have seen a number issues which are of importance for Christians gaining wider domestic and European significance. These include the development of the welfare state, as well as its partial dismantling, and the continuing commitment towards the establishment since the 1960s of an equality paradigm that overarches all main areas of public life, such as employment, education, access to goods and services, (including education and housing) advertising policy. It is a paradigm that covers equality not only in relation to race and gender, but also in relation to ethnicity, religion and disability, with age now also on the horizon. In its extension to the more recent concept of social inclusion, it covers unemployment, homelessness and poor housing, relationships between local and national government, taxation, public services and welfare, urban regeneration schemes, rising crime and social dislocation, and issues relating to policing.

There has also been an increasing awareness of differential treatment between, as well as within, communities, the neglect of the idea of community and latterly the growing importance of community policy in urban areas, together with an increasing appreciation of the plight of many rural communities.

The latter part of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century saw the rise of the Christian socialist movement accompanied by a corresponding decrease in the evangelical Christian profile and missionary zeal as the influence of Marxism, socialism and statism made a major impact on Christian social thought and ushered in a period commonly referred to in terms of the 'social gospel'. This period was characterised by evangelical introspection and a waning of evangelical influence and energy which was not really regained until the last few decades of the 20th century. Interestingly, towards the close of the 20th century evangelicals have again

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[105] Kuyper, *Lectures,* 90-99.

[106] The masthead of the newspaper *De Heraut (The Herald),* of which Kuyper became editor in 1871.

[107] Kuyper, *Lectures,* 99

increasingly become involved in the call for social justice in urban priority areas, and they have also became important participants in the inner city debates concerning policing, crime, environment and poverty.

Other areas of concern where evangelicals have remained publicly engaged are education and access to education, issues of sexual morality, as well as the differential social impact of urbanisation and globalisation. Whilst these areas are important for Christians, they have also been the site of many domestic and European legal and political battles. Christians have made contributions to many of these areas and the Evangelical Alliance has sought to maintain support for such efforts. A selection of these areas are discussed in more detail below.

3.10.2 *Welfare State*

It is significant that the invention of the term 'welfare state' is credited to William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury between 1942 and his premature death 1944. Temple attended university with the great Christian socialist economist R.H. Tawney, and was deeply influenced by Tawney's plan for a system which would make adequate provision for the poorer members of Britain's then increasingly urbanised, industrial society. Along with William H. Beveridge, J.H. Oldham, John Maynard Keynes, Tom Johnston in Scotland, and others, Tawney proposed a scheme of universal contributions funded by a national insurance mechanism, which would enable every person's basic educational, health and pension needs to be met free at the point of delivery. Although some policies along these lines had been initiated by the Liberal government of 1906, it took the acute economic depression of the 1930s to reinforce the attractiveness of an integrated, collective solution to the problems of poverty, disease and illiteracy which prevailed in Britain's major cities, and which threatened other communities, too.

For Temple, these principles of universal provision for universal benefit resonated deeply with Christ's law of 'bearing one another's burdens' (Gal. 6.2). He took it as a basic theological imperative that any civilised society, and especially one as steeped in the Christian tradition as Britain, should maintain a minimum standard of living, housing, learning and medical care for all its citizens. In his 1942 book *Christianity and Social Order*, Temple argued that this imperative related to that dignity of every person which derives from their having been made in the image of God, and from the fact that Christ died for all people 'absolutely independent' of their 'usefulness to society'. The State, he wrote, 'exists for the citizen, not the citizen for the State.' Universal welfare provision was an expression of gospel ethics for Temple because it could enhance people's freedom to fulfil their potential in 'social fellowship' with others, as well as offering a check on the sinful, selfish abuse of freedom to which they were prone as fallen individuals. However, Temple did not view this 'Welfare State' as wholly usurping smaller-scale charitable provision. More localised works of 'self-sacrificial service' had long been led by church organisations and mission agencies, he observed, and would continue to be necessary if people were not to slough off all personal and communal responsibility onto government.

In expounding the Welfare State in this fashion, Temple very deliberately sought a 'middle way' between communism, which he saw as overly centralised and forcible in its redistribution of wealth, and an unbridled capitalism which makes no provision for those unable to participate in or benefit from the market, and which leaves all social care to private philanthropy. Aware of the appeals made by 'Christian communists' to texts such as Acts 4.32-5.11 on the one hand, and by 'Christian capitalists' to Jesus' focus on a spiritual rather than earthly kingdom on the other (John 18.36), Temple's central Anglican faith impelled him to steer a course between these two ideological poles. His 'six point plan' for delivering on these broader convictions duly urged new legislation to secure decent housing, education, pay, union representation, holiday time and free expression for all.

It is important to realise that these proposals were made in the darkest days of the Second World War - a time when the need to organise social services on a national scale was clear, obvious and urgent. In the same year that Temple published *Christianity and Social Order*, Beveridge delivered on behalf of the coalition government a report which echoed many of Temple's concerns, and which changed the cultural and political landscape of Britain

immeasurably. The Beveridge Report, officially entitled *Social Insurance and the Allied Services*, was enthusiastically implemented by 1945 Labour government, which used its large majority to ensure that by the early 1950s most of its key provisions were in place - from the National Health Service (NHS) to a wide-scale council house building programme, from state pensions to universal secondary education. Although Labour lost power in 1951, this grand new social system expanded through the 1950s and 1960s, its evident necessity and appropriateness doing much to define the 'consensus politics' of that era.

By the 1970s, however, an expanding and ageing population, rising costs of maintaining public services, and growing expectations of what government should deliver, combined to create growing concern about the capacity of the Welfare State to address social needs in the way that Beveridge had envisaged. Certainly, it had not eradicated poverty, many 'high rise' council blocks had been condemned, and even then it was clear that if demographic trends and life expectancy continued as they had in preceding years, state pensions would come under severe pressure by the turn of the century. The election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 could be seen in some ways as a reaction to this. Her government pursued a new approach based not on the socialist paradigm but on 'monetarism' and 'free market economics', which maintained core social services while cutting income tax and reforming national insurance to encourage a greater degree of privatisation in the public sector. 'Internal markets' and 'GP fundholding' were created in the NHS, free dental care was minimised, limited commercial funding of state education was allowed, council house tenants were allowed to buy their own homes, and utilities like gas and electricity, which had been nationalised in the 1940s, were privatised in the 1980s.

Defending this approach in her famous 'Sermon on the Mound' to the Church of Scotland Assembly in May 1988, Mrs Thatcher appealed to the parables of the Good Samaritan and the talents to stress the importance of personal responsibility and entrepreneurialism. One of her chief advisers on this speech, and in social policy generally, was Brian Griffiths - a committed evangelical Christian who published several lengthy theological defences of this new Conservative worldview.

Although the Conservatives lost power to Labour in 1997, Tony Blair's government committed itself to building on, rather than dismantling, the Thatcher inheritance. Its emphasis on a 'public-private partnership' reflects the shifting realities of universal social provision since the war, and may even be seen as not so far removed from Temple's 'middle way' between centralised welfare and more personal and local responsibility. Welfare provision remains a live debate regarding the extent to which the state should itself deliver services and the extent to which it should organise and regulate others to do it.

3.10.3 *Sexual Morality*

There have been dramatic changes in acceptable sexual mores over the past hundred years or so. The 20th century began with strong public rejection of sex outside marriage, and with moral and religious distaste for contraception, yet ended with the increasing acceptability of same-sex unions, backed by new laws based on marriage legislation. For many faith groups, sexuality is a major area of ethical regulation and prohibition. However mainstream society, particularly in Europe, increasingly shuns the sexual rules of religious groups, labelling them restrictive and primitive. The description 'traditional' has become a term of abuse in this context, with religious groups who comment negatively on changing sexual mores being cast as anti-human rights.

Two main issues for evangelicals in this regard, as well as for other religious groups, relate to the increasing relaxation of the legal regulation of homosexuality and legislation in relation to gender reassignment. Both of these areas are highly problematic to most evangelicals and religious groups. The advent of the Civil Partnerships Act throughout the UK, which legalises same-sex relationships, has been greeted with dismay by many Christians, and is resulting in major stresses within the Church of England as well as the suspension or dismissal of Christian registrars who are unable to carry out same-sex ceremonies on conscience grounds. Religious groups not only have difficulties because they feel unable to condone such practices, but also because such groups may, in keeping with their ethos and beliefs, wish to keep those

who practise homosexuality, or have engaged in gender reassignment or undergone sex-change surgery, out of active participation as unpaid or paid leaders and/or employees of local churches and religious organisations. Such groups usually do not bar such people from attending religious meetings but may bar them from membership. In the face of the law's enforcement of the right of people not to be excluded, religious groups increasingly find that their convictions are being ignored by the law, or forced to feel exclusionist by requiring special conscience let-out clauses in legislation. The privileging of human rights seems to suggest that the corporate rights of religious people whose convictions define such behaviour as unacceptable are seen as secondary, if not inadmissible, compared to those individual rights apparently accepted by the majority of society. The right to equal treatment in practice seems to mean the right to treatment according to the norms of the majority who tend to favour individual choice and therefore the claims of vocal minorities. This can frequently result in overriding the wishes of other minorities who could thereby be said to lose their rights.

The Gender Recognition Act offers a good example of the issues raised here inasmuch as it creates a new criminal offence to ensure that the true biological identity of a person who has obtained a new gender certificate is not disclosed to a third party (apart from some limited exceptions). Insofar as the legislation utilises a standard legal mechanism – to create at law the fiction of a biological man (or woman) becoming a 'legal' woman (or man) – it elevates secrecy, misrepresentation and deception to a level of acceptability. The exceptions for certain ministers of religion are unclear and it is envisaged that evangelicals may be placed in difficult situations when they know the true biological identity of a person. If they remain silent their convictions could be undermined and the actions of another compromised. If they speak, they break the law.

There is therefore a most unwelcome potential under the Act for the criminalisation of law-abiding people who do not accept that gender can be self-determined, that legal fictions such a 'legal women' can be created, and who believe that it is not bigoted or wrong to hold that marriage is uniquely between a biological man and a biological woman.

The Evangelical Alliance has been especially concerned that religious bodies should not be potentially criminalised where their freedom to regulate their own procedures in accordance with their ethos and beliefs, or to disclose privileged pastoral information where appropriate, may be threatened. Such cases have already occurred in UK courts. The Alliance also wishes to protect the rights of religious bodies to continue to be free to be selective in the area of training and ordination, and to employ committed Christians in significant functions within their organisations. But equally vital are the rights of individual Christians who work in various roles within society to a right of conscientious objection to requirements imposed upon them by the state. For example, the fact that Christian registrars may now have to resign in order to avoid conducting so-called 'marriages' or partnerships between people of the same sex, or that Christian social workers may likewise have to resign if they wish to avoid placing babies for adoption with homosexual or lesbian couples, indicates how far Parliament has gone in eroding a right to conscientious objection hitherto frequently granted to public servants, and indeed to others fulfilling state requirements – for example, medical staff in relation to abortion.

3.10.4 *Equal Opportunities*

Equality, its appropriate definition, and its attainment, has always been considered a foundational concept for the liberal state. In theory, the government is as committed to diversity as it is to equality, though the former often tends in practice to be overlooked. It has been at the heart of government policy in the 1990s and the 2000s, with reports and consultations on equality in relation to discrimination. Christians have been actively involved in campaigns for equality, supporting affirming legislation and criticising legislation that appears to lessen equality.

In the UK, the dominant model used to frame law is that of formal equality – 'treat like alike', thus treat all persons in the same way. But the law does not confer upon groups of people identified by legislation the right to be treated equally in all circumstances, only in some. Significantly, the law does not 'walk the extra mile' that the Christian is called to walk; it does not extend respect and equal treatment to all in all circumstances.

The practical aspects of equality are of great importance and the government and courts are usually taken up with finding the 'correct' balance between competing human rights. With particular regard to religious discrimination, this implies freedom of discrimination in relation to employment opportunities, regardless of whether the person projects a particular religious identity through belief, behaviour, dress or the wearing of other symbols connected to religious belief.

The implementation of the notion of a positive duty to promote equality marks an important turn from reactive legislation to proactive legislation; in current usage, 'equality' has been mainstreamed. All activity at the political, legal and social policy end of the spectrum of action is considered in relation to whether it enhances equality. The imposition of positive duties changes the landscape of discrimination law. The focus is no longer on the perpetrating individual, or indeed the aggrieved on a case by case analysis, but on organisations which are now under a duty to promote equality. The duty is proportionate to the resources genuinely at the disposal of the body, but all policies must be screened for their disparate impact and/or their ability to promote equality. These bodies must take the initiative in assessing how their policies and programmes could affect discrete groups. Furthermore, their responses must be monitored and evaluated.

The Evangelical Alliance has been engaged in campaigns to ensure society is free of racial hatred, but has raised concerns at the type of anti-hate legislation proposed. Indeed, the Alliance campaigned before any attempts to legislate to outlaw hatred. There is a long tradition from the Council of Jerusalem onwards of Christians involved in the struggle for racial justice. In the 19th century in the UK this was seen in the campaigns against slavery. In the 20th century as well as the 21st the evangelical tradition continues to work towards equality in a range of areas and specifically in relation to racial justice and can be found particularly active in the areas of immigration and refugees and asylum seekers. The Evangelical Alliance's submission in response to the government white paper, *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* broadly welcomed government proposals to reform asylum and immigration law in the UK, and in particular measures to protect those fleeing persecution and with regard to those seeking work in the UK.

Touching upon the issue of asylum, the Evangelical Alliance reiterated that it was acutely aware of the continuing debate in the UK about whether Britain should be seen as a sanctuary or a 'soft touch'. But they reminded the government that Britain does have a responsibility to those fleeing persecution. They also suggested that government should consider joined up policies, in terms of aid and development packages for countries that are experiencing economic migration to the UK. By giving micro-loans to those at risk of leaving, perhaps the UK can actually make it easier for potential economic migrants to stay in their own communities, which some may well prefer to do.

The government's commitment to work internationally to ensure co-operation was warmly welcomed. It is important that asylum seekers are dealt with quickly and efficiently, but, while the system must be workable compassion for the individual must not be lost. Therefore it is vital that any list of 'safe countries', whether official or unofficial, is flexible enough to change if and when it is necessary. With regard to categorisation of 'safe' and unsafe' countries, in some so-called 'safe' countries there can still be widespread persecution of minority groups. The UK government must be open and welcoming to such groups, even if good relations exist with the government of the nation concerned.

Concerns remain, however, that freedom of speech and freedom to proselytise could be struck down by those allowed to allege that speaking about Christianity denies other religions and can therefore be classified as hatred. The Evangelical Alliance has also been involved in wide-ranging consultation in relation to the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights. It fears not only the provisions relating to religion will be marginalised, but that the religion strand of the new single equality body will be subsumed under a dominant secular worldview. There can in fact be a difficult line to be drawn in this area since legislation can make it very difficult for evangelicals to maintain both the law and the integrity of their faith position.

3.10.5 *Discrimination*

Of immediate concern is the published intention of the government to review and consolidate all matters relating to discrimination in the forthcoming Discrimination Law Review when all types of discrimination will be forced into an all-embracing legal framework. Religious bodies will need to be fully participative in this review to ensure their particular perspectives are taken on board, along with others.

This proposed re-consideration of anti-discriminatory legal regulation will be designed to bring various equality and diversity models more into keeping with the all-embracing concept of human rights. Whilst at first sight it looks as if there is now sweeping protection, there is in fact complexity, and partial coverage depending on the area of discrimination into which a matter falls. For example, sex, race and disability discrimination currently covers employment, education, housing and the provision of services, whilst religious discrimination and sexual orientation regulations are confined to employment. The Race Relations Act did not extend to Christians or Muslims, but did cover Jews and Sikhs, so that, for example, Yarmulke-wearing Jews, and Turban-wearing Sikhs enjoyed protection not afforded to Muslims wearing the hijab. To claim discrimination, Muslims needed to show they were attacked on grounds of race or ethnicity, which was difficult. Discrimination against Muslims, Sikhs and Jews had to be addressed through anti-racism legislation as there was no religious protection until limited protection within the workplace became enshrined in 2003. Yet religious discrimination should not be left politically reliant on squeezing into the constructed category of race, and this area is currently being addressed through the Racial and Religious Hatred Act and the Equalities Act. Sexual orientation discrimination is also being addressed through the Equalities Bill. However, detailed legal discrimination issues have been remitted to the Discrimination Law Review due for public consultations beginning in Spring 2006, with the eventual consequential prospect of a new, single Equality Act by the end of the present Parliament.

This represents a good example of the context within which the Christian faith has to find a way of disengaging from purely nationalist or racial and cultural affiliations. Christianity has its cultural variants, which are a mix of history, developments in particular nation states, and doctrinal differences and preferences. But the Christian message is not tied to one culture. Whilst Christians are called to be good citizens, they also retain their ultimate responsibility to God. As religion in the 21st century seems in danger of becoming inevitably linked to nationalism, culture, and particular political ideologies, there is a need for wisdom among Christian leaders and people as to how they live in, and engage with, the state. Christianity in the UK may be culturally different to Christianity in other nation states. In addition, many groups of Christians who have immigrated to the UK will seek to keep alive their own cultural variants of religion which may engage differently with the state.

3.10.6 *Sabbatariansim*

One important evangelical political initiative of recent times has been the *Keep Sunday Special* campaign. Whilst changes to Sunday trading laws in England and Wales were aimed at non-Christians and the retail sector, it was interesting that rights language was used, and now continues to be used, by both sides. Thus *Keep Sunday Special* literature promotes the right to attend Sunday church and the right to keep the Sabbath; secularizing reformers champion the right to open businesses on Sundays, and the right to expect employees to attend work.

Changes in Sunday trading laws were in line with majority opinion in England and Wales. But what is interesting and cautionary about these changes is the speed with which protections afforded initially to minorities (including employees in certain sectors) have been eroded. Christians have made common cause with others, for example, trades unions, in co-belligerent attempts to gain recognition of workers' rights. Recently this has been promoted in terms of *Keeping Time for Children* as evangelical campaigners seek to link employees' rights with the importance of preserving family life by way of a statutory right to a day off at the weekend.

3.10.7 Debt Relief

In Kuala Lumpur, on May 9th 2001, organisations representing 160 million Christians from over 100 denominations and groups fully supported the church-based, grassroots campaign to cancel unsustainable Third World debt through their delegates to the World Evangelical Fellowship's 11th General Assembly. They demanded that the leaders of the world's most industrialized nations due to meet at the G7 summit to be held in Genoa, Italy, in July 2001 fulfil the Jubilee 2000 vision by taking the necessary steps to 'break the chains of debt and give a new start to the world's poorest nations.' A new deal on debt was advocated as a matter of urgency.

Although this is a secular campaign, it is rooted in the teaching of the Bible, and has been taken up with great enthusiasm across a wide spectrum of churches. It is the churches that have provided the backbone for the campaign, forcing the issue on to the politicians' agenda and providing most of the people turning up to lobby G8 meetings, reminiscent of the great church-based campaigns for reform which arose in the 19th century. The recent 'Make Poverty History' and 'Micah' campaigns have proved hugely influential, and were fully supported by evangelical Christians and others who targeted the G8 meeting in Gleneagles in the summer of 2005 to galvanize massive popular support for delivery of the Millennium Development Goals.

3.10.8 Blasphemy and Religious Liberty

Blasphemy laws in theory protect the Christian religion in England from denigration. It was initially developed as a political device to ensure stability during the 17th century Commonwealth. Initially blasphemy was seen as a matter for the church alone, but following restoration of the monarchy in 1660 the courts assumed the role of custodian of the morality of the king's subjects. Because of the Church of England's then dominant and recently-reasserted position at the heart of public life, the legislation related specifically to violation of Anglican formularies.

The law of blasphemy implied that the ideology of egalitarianism struck at the central root of Christianity. Between 1797 and 1821 there was a steady stream of prosecutions of writers who criticised what they saw as the social role of religion in keeping people in their place. In the closing years of the 18th century the government was not as dependent upon religious legitimation for its power. The right to govern was now embedded in the franchise, and blasphemy was not seen as such an important issue. But the courts continued to state that the Christian religion had to be respected and that the law must be able to protect the young and intellectually weak.

It was ultimately Enlightenment rationalism which forced reform of the use of blasphemy to persecute those who disseminated new ideas. There was suspicion of any attempt by law to challenge new scientific or historical theories through the use of the blasphemy laws. An attack on the Christian religion was once regarded as an attack on the fabric of society, but this is now no longer the case. The parameters of the offence changed so that it highlighted the making of statements criticising the essential doctrines of Christianity in such a manner as to threaten the well-being of members of the public. By the 1930s it became clear that the developing law in relation to obscenity and indecency could adequately deal with such matters without recourse to the religiously-based action of blasphemy.

The last major use of the blasphemy laws was in 1977, in a common law case brought by Mary Whitehouse against *Gay News* for its publication a poem portraying the body of the crucified Christ as an object of gay sexual fantasy. It was the first successful blasphemy case in fifty-five years and the law has remained virtually unused since.

In a pluralist society, many have argued that the blasphemy laws should either be extended to all religions or abolished on the grounds that otherwise they represent blatant institutionalised religious discrimination. As long as blasphemy remains part of the common law, there is a source of discrimination. But again and again attempts to abolish it have failed. The House of Lords discussed the possibility in 1978 and concluded that, since Christianity is so much an entrenched part of English society, the offence cannot be abolished. The latest failed attempt to abolish the blasphemy laws occurred again in the House of Lords in 2005 during debate on the Racial and Religious Hatred Bill. However, to abolish an unnecessary protection is of course not to abolish Christianity.

The Law Commission considered the abolition or retention of blasphemy and published their report in 1981, concluding that on balance abolition without replacement was preferable.

However, the Commission did not really deal with the problem that expression of opinion about certain religions may sometimes provoke public disorder – as indeed subsequently occurred with the rioting and book-burning provoked by Salman Rushdie's novel *Satanic Verses* in 1989.

At the instigation of the Home Secretary, and following a private member's Religious Offences Bill introduced by Lord Avebury in 2002, the Select Committee on Religious Offences in England and Wales was set up to examine whether the existing blasphemy laws should be amended or abolished, and whether a new offence of incitement to religious hatred should be introduced. It reported in April 2003 affirming the importance of religious belief in the UK and the need to protect faith in law. It failed, however, to reach any consensus on whether to achieve this by repealing the law on blasphemy, by extending it into a new statutory offence, or by leaving things as they are. Under pressure from the Muslim community, the Home Office responded by declaring its intention to introduce a new offence of incitement to religious hatred when the time was right. Originally attempted and abandoned in the Anti-Terrorism Bill following 9/11, this was included again in the 2005 Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill, but the relevant provisions were dropped from the Bill immediately before the May 2005 general election following difficulties encountered by the government in the House of Lords. A new Racial and Religious Hatred Bill specifically dealing with the question of incitement to religious hatred was introduced immediately after the election, and although it ended up on the statute book, it was seriously amended by both Houses of Parliament so that its scope was much reduced from the Government's original intention.

The common law of blasphemy is today mainly perceived as an historical and unworkable anachronism. Whether it is acceptable to maintain its largely symbolic protection for only the Christian faith in a multi-faith society in 21st century Britain is seriously open to question. Its ability to survive, especially given the presence of a new offence of incitement to religious hatred and indications from the Church of England that it would not stand in the way of repeal, seems questionable. It is unlikely that the laws of blasphemy will ever be successfully used again and it would seem little more than a symbolic gesture to stand in the way of repeal, should a future government decide to go down that path. For Christians in particular it raises the question of whether in principle it is appropriate in current circumstances to insist on the protection of faith by the law. Since statutory measures designed to protect religious human rights and to outlaw incitement to religious hatred are imminent, it seems preferable to seek appropriate levels of protection by the state for religion from such sources, while remaining alert to the dangers presented by anti-discrimination legislation.

3.10.9 *Legal Regulation of Religious Liberty*

In the UK, religious liberty means that people are free to associate with whom they choose, to engage in public worship, and in the wider expression of their religious belief. This expression includes the freedom to conduct one's life in accordance with one's faith, which suggests a freedom to act, and therefore to practise one's religion and to seek to persuade others. The introduction of the human rights paradigm through the European Convention on Human Rights and its UK codification in the Human Rights Act has ensured that religious freedom is a fundamental human right entrenched in the statute law. That is not to suggest that Christians would accept that religious freedom necessarily has to be defended solely in terms of contemporary secular human rights discourse.

But it is a fact that religious freedom in today's context inevitably forms part of a wider set of generic human rights. It is very different to notions of religious toleration and its history is not to be identified with violent struggles for toleration characteristic of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.

Religious issues have arisen as conflicts between the state and individuals, or individuals and individuals, or individuals and groups. Increasingly the rights of individuals are being pitted against the rights of religious conscience in a de facto rights 'hierarchy'. An obvious example is in the area of same-sex orientation and transsexual rights. Official statements of politicians, government representatives and the judiciary often demonstrate that the idea of religion is often viewed in simplistic terms – as a personal private preference of individuals, a preference which is of no concern to the state if it remains (as perhaps it should) at the level of

thought and the 'acceptable' expression of that thought. Hostility towards public expression of so-called 'intolerant' religious views has become a feature of some contemporary public life and attempts are often made to justify such hostility by the vague idea that apparent intolerance itself merits an intolerant response.

Increasingly, UK law has chosen to assume that religion is a private matter for individual conscience - an ideological commitment that is purely intellectual and which floats free from deeply embedded aspects of personal and cultural or communal identity. In assuming this, it espouses the rhetoric of equality and neutrality on an ill-judged assumption that legal order and balance can be achieved by an imposition of the secular. But secularist policies, far from being 'neutral', as is often claimed, merely replicate discriminatory attitudes towards religion - particularly those manifestations of religion which interweave it with identity. Some critics, as well as secularists themselves, have begun to endow secularism with the status of a worldview or a de facto religious belief in itself.

The UK has a long history of freedom of speech, closely allied to the notion of freedom of conscience - a notion which has been related particularly to the sphere of religion. The state maintains that there is a balance to be struck between protecting the right of people to speak out on matters of religion, and protecting people of religious faith from offensive attitudes, actions or comments concerning their core beliefs. In seeking this balance, it is especially concerned to protect people of faith from increasing manifestations of hate-speech and incitement to hate others whose beliefs are not shared or approved. In a plural society what is considered to be 'offensive' varies according to faith groups, and even within faith groups. Recent research by the British Board of Film Censors indicates that parents are far less concerned about the use of sexual/swear words in film and more concerned about the use of racially or religiously offensive terms. Many faith groups as well as others in society are concerned by the latest proposals to introduce into criminal law offences against incitement to religious hatred, even though at first sight Christians and others ought to welcome legislation that would effectively outlaw hatred. But the government's real focus has been on protecting public order than the views of religions themselves, and the ability of any government to introduce fair and effective legislation in this area whilst simultaneously preserving fundamental civil liberties such as freedom of speech is questionable. Achieving the right balance presents a formidable challenge, and real uncertainties remain as to how far religion should be legally protected from criticism and to what extent censorship is valid. The recent events surrounding the Danish cartoons has shown just how fraught this area can be to regulate in practice. Evangelical Christians have generally tended to emphasise the relative importance of religious liberty and freedom of speech rather than dwell on perceived offence or hurt feelings.

Submissions to the Commission tended to conflate issues of toleration with issues of religious liberty. They ranged from those convinced that religious liberty is not threatened (Tudor-Griffiths, Chisnal and Turner) to those who considered there remains a real potential threat to religious liberty. Rivers put this latter view most succinctly by stating that, although he did not think that there was an obvious overt threat to religious liberty, Christian capital was increasingly being eroded, and this itself could ultimately threaten religious liberty itself. He argued that it is particularly "important that faith communities insist on their moral right to organise themselves in accordance with their own ethic". He stressed that, in preserving liberty we must seek to preserve not only our right to freedom of thought but to freedom of expression and action as well. Hunter and Beckett were concerned that religious liberty could be under threat because Christians were viewed as dogmatic and unwilling to be drawn into dialogue. Summerton took up the theme of subtlety and discussed the way in which government appeared to be harnessing the resources of faith groups and thereby neutralising or compromising their impact. He also warned against the potential problems of sacred-secular co-operation. A third view emerged amongst submissions that considered religious liberty to be seriously under threat and pointed to the erosion of Christian culture. These considered that a lack of comprehension regarding any faith perspective was a chief reason for such erosion, both domestically, and throughout the European Union as a whole. Bunting was of the opinion that the media played up hostile stories that presented a negative view of Christianity. The submission by Diamond, who specialises in legal cases concerning religious liberty, suggests that rising 'political correctness' has manifested itself in a rejection of the Judeo-Christian tradition. The cases he refers to

involved Sunday working, transsexuality, the role of Christian Unions in Universities, corporal punishment, and the curtailing of Christians' freedom to speak out against certain practices. He argues that these cases, taken together, represent an undermining of religious liberty.

As religious liberty has moved both internationally and domestically from being a matter of toleration to a legal right, the potential for conflict between religion and state, and between religions themselves, has increased. Judges in UK courts can be seen as either moving towards a limited notion of religious freedom rights, best described as the toleration model, or towards the much broader notion encapsulated in the human rights model. Either way, it is clear that they, and all who have a stake in the development of religious liberty issues in Britain, will have to refine their understanding of how the 'faith and nation' interface is conceived, not only in Christianity but in those other major world religions now represented in growing proportions within the British population. More and more, Christians are likely to find themselves operating alongside representatives of such religions in the civic sphere - not least because government is now committed to viewing 'faith' in generic terms, and to making policy with respect to a range of 'faith communities' or 'inter-faith groups', rather than with particular isolated religious groups in mind.

It is crucial, therefore, in light of the foregoing, that evangelical Christians continue to challenge threats to fundamental freedoms wherever they occur and to be aware of the subtle ways in which the law may be used to undermine historic freedoms. One of the most fundamental freedoms for Christians is liberty to proclaim the gospel, and for this reason groups like the Evangelical Alliance have placed strong emphasis on defending freedom of speech for all. What Christians cannot expect in a rapidly changing context is a general assumption of continued privilege for Christianity. It is therefore inconsistent, for example, to claim protection from the blasphemy laws whilst simultaneously demanding the right to be able to speak out freely. One lesson to be learned by religious groups is that, to change public attitudes, serious and professional work must be done to persuade, rather than to insist on special privileged rights based on outdated paradigms. This may, on occasion, necessarily involve strategic association with others whose views may otherwise be alien. Christianity now has to face the reality that it must make its case along with others in the public market square. This is not an impossible task but it is a major challenge and requires a new mindset, a new way of working, and significant investment in appropriate tools and resources.

Although this report is focussed on Judaeo-Christian approaches to the public square, and on evangelical Christian responses in particular, we shall now briefly consider these non-Christian traditions. Those seeking further detail in this area are encouraged to consult the relevant section of the Bibliography.

3.11 Approaches of Other Major Faiths

3.11.1 Introduction[108]

Although the focus of this report is on the Judaeo-Christian tradition, we cannot ignore other major religions and their approaches to 'faith and nation' issues, which are influenced by their origins and international as well as domestic networks. These contribute to the increasingly plural society of modern-day Britain. More and more, Evangelicals are likely to find themselves operating alongside representatives of such religions in the civic sphere[109] - not least because both national and local government is now committed to viewing religions, which they label 'faiths', in generic terms, and to making policy with respect to a range of 'faith communities' rather than to particular faith communities in isolation.

Government interest has been born of the acknowledgment that faith communities can provide an important understanding of how to create community and neighbourliness in an increasingly segmented society, as well as delivery of public services. But also it is now driven by the need to deal with increasing outbreaks of inter-religious violence, and the use of religion to justify acts of terrorism. In the 21st century a number of countries have been scarred by inter-religious conflict and acts of terrorism committed in the name of religion, and Britain is no exception. While no faith escapes the tarnishing effects of individual or communal acts of violence perpetrated in its name, the al Q'aeda-linked attacks on New York, Bali, Madrid, London and elsewhere have ensured that most attention has focussed most recently in this regard on militant Islamism. .

Four major non-Judeo-Christian religions are briefly discussed here, namely the world religious traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism.[110] All are well established in Britain and present diverse paradigms of the interaction between sacred and secular, religious and political life. Discussion is necessarily generalised for reasons of space, but it is important to beware of essentialised, monolithic approaches to these religious traditions. Indeed, they are as diverse as the range of denominations and movements that would be subsumed under a generalised description of Christianity. The origins and international context of the relevant faith group is examined to aid our understanding of the religion and its attitudes to questions of 'faith and nation' in Britain.

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[108] We are particularly indebted to Harmander Singh, (Policy Officer (Faith) London borough of Tower Hamlets and Principle Advisor to Sikhs in England) for his contributions to the introductory section.
In its fifty-ninth Plenary Session on 11 November 2004, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution promoting inter-religious dialogue calling on the interfaith community and the relevant UN bodies to work together closely for inter-faith understanding. The Assembly invited the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Assembly at its sixtieth session. In the UK specifically, at the national level, the important work of the Inter Faith Network and the Inner Cities Religious Council is complemented by the various national individual faith institutions and the Faith Based Regeneration Network (FbRN). These have all contributed to raising the profile and development of faith related issues. The establishment of the Faith Communities Unit (FCU) in the Home Office has done much to help policy makers appreciate the value of the work of faith communities. At a Regional level, in London there is the London Boroughs' Faith Network with membership comprising local authority officers, faith representatives on respective Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and faith practitioners. London Borough of Tower Hamlets has a dedicated website, an interfaith forum, LSPs, and other Partnerships. The combined effects of Policing, Anti-Terrorism measures, Disaster Planning and National Contingency obligations on local authorities have brought into sharp focus the need by local authorities to take on board the previously unheeded calls for sensitivity in service planning and delivery. There is also the London Civic Forum which has, as one of its eight strands, a Faith College that provides information and advice to the London Assembly and the Mayor.
[110] Placed in chronological order.

3.11.2 Hinduism[111]

The Hindu religion is a wide and flexible gathering of traditions, and it is unwise to isolate any one doctrine on the idea of the nation and/or state. Its history is tied intimately to the geography of South Asia, with narratives embedded in a landscape filled with sacred meaning. The ancient word for this land is Bharata, which is recognized in the modern constitution of India, although the Indian Republic does not profess any state religion. From the earliest literary sources of Indian history - the Veda texts (1600-1000 bce) - there is an awareness of the land in which the people live, but this is confined to parts of northern South Asia. Later sacred texts refer to wider ranges of the subcontinent, until the diffuse conception of holy Bharata stretches from areas now in Tibet across to northern Afghanistan, and from the western reaches of modern Pakistan to the borders of Myanmar, with the peninsula of modern South India incorporated by about the 1st century.

This land is sacred because various of its elements are identified with the immanent presence of the divine. But whilst there is a clear connection between land and religion in Hinduism, the land is not necessarily a political entity. Although historical emperors sought to strengthen their legitimacy by associating their conquests with places mentioned in sacred texts, the idea of India grew with the ebb and tide of empires. But the apolitical nature of the idea of Bharata is evident from the fact that the culture of Hindus extended easily across specific and shifting kingdoms; in that sense, the idea of India is more like the idea of Europe - a common cultural domain rather than a politically unified state. India as a political entity is relatively new.

Hinduism has mainly thought of India as the sacred land and the land of social action, and has encompassed many groups of people without creating any racial or ethnic idea of the nation. But in the past 100 years some Hindus have argued that Hinduism should more closely identify with the political idea of India. That India should be seen as a Hindu nation-state including and accepting others only if they accept the primacy of their identity as Indian citizens over their global identities as Christians or Muslims. Some argue that Muslims and Christians need to acknowledge the sacred notion of India; others are prepared to accommodate diversity within a naturally dominant Hindu culture. Against this Hindu nationalism, many - usually called 'secularists' - have argued that India should be construed as a state neutral towards all religions since Hinduism is only historically but not politically characteristic of the nation. Other secularists reject all appeal to religious values and simply deny the need to accommodate Hindu sentiments. Such opposing ideas relating to nationalism have occasioned violent exchanges involving religious groups known for their commitment to peace.

Hindus in Britain today are divided into two broad views. One view is that, since Britain is historically Christian, it should retain some measure of its political identity as Christian too, but should make space for and give freedom to other religions. The other view is that the historical dominance of Christianity is irrelevant to contemporary Britain, where the population is both multicultural and secular. According to this view, only a country without an explicit national religion can most effectively guarantee the equality of those from all religions or none.

Currently there are many organizations that have sought to express the views of Hindus in Britain and to deal coherently with governmental, media and other institutions. However, the diversity and range of Hinduism, even in the relatively small population in Britain, is such that these organizations can at best be only partly representative. Hinduism should be seen in a much more organic way, with a plurality of legitimate and relevant associations, groups and individuals all able and willing to work for the continuing integration of Hindus into the fabric of British society. Some Hindus are even beginning to make sacred association with places in Britain where there are significant new temples, but mostly they continue to keep their religious references with India. But since these references are sacred and not political in any contemporary sense, they see no tension between their ancestral connections and their present

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lives. In short, Hindus in Britain overwhelmingly accept that they are British first and Hindus next, but are divided on what kind of polity Britain should best be.

3.11.3 Buddhism[112]

In the 2,500 years since the death of its founder (Gautama Buddha 563–483 BC), Buddhism has spread throughout much of the world. Southwards to Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Indo-China and other South East Asian countries; northwards into the Himalayan kingdoms (Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal), Tibet, Mongolia and other parts of Central Asia, and also into China, Korea and Japan.. By the 19th century it was also popular in Europe and the Americas, and in the early 20th century had begun to attract the attention of some Western scholars and, a little later, colonial officers, who found themselves posted to Buddhist countries Under the influence of Muslims in 11th century, Buddhism was severely curtailed in its native India and then in the 20th century under communism it was curtailed in various other south Asian countries such as China, Vietnam, and Tibet. Today in Asia it is thriving in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Korea and Japan. Despite these facts Buddhism is not a proselytising religion in the sense that its adherents have to go out and seek converts.

Buddhists can follow one of three main traditions, Theravada (or Southern tradition), the Mahayana (Northern tradition), and those who adhere to the Vajrayana (Tibetan tradition). Modern scholars tend to divide the schools according to the language used. Mahayana schools are therefore Sanskrit based schools, and Theravada are Pali based. The different traditions give varying emphasis to different aspects of the teaching and practices.

With particular regard to Britain, Allan Bennett was the first Englishman to ordain as a monk in 1901, and he led the first mission from Burma to England in 1908. In 1924 Christmas Humphreys founded the Buddhist Lodge in London, which became The Buddhist Society in 1943. In 1926, Anagarika Dharmapala established the first Buddhist monastic institution in the West with monks from Sri Lanka. This now operates as the London Buddhist Vihara. Later in the 20th century, British soldiers were sent to fight wars in Asia and then Westerners began to travel there as tourists. At the same time, immigrants from countries like Sri Lanka continued to practise their religion after arriving in this country, and refugees from Tibet provided a further stimulus. All this has resulted during the last 30 or 40 years in a growing interest in Buddhism and a growth in the number of centres all over the country. Support comes from two sources: native-born Buddhists, who are mostly from immigrant families, and Westerners who have become adherents as adults.

There is no hierarchical organisation in Buddhism so its expansion has not been carefully planned. It has developed organically out of the interest shown by lay people to found their own groups, some of which have invited monks to come and live in this country. The Buddha directed his teaching generally to individual matters of personal development. He did talk occasionally about good forms of government and nation, but he seems to have taken the view that if each and every individual assumes responsibility for his own actions, then society and the nation must develop happily. Therefore, the Buddhist faith has no political agenda, although this does not preclude its followers from engaging in political activities (except for monks whose monastic rules forbid any political involvement). The only body which has any semblance of a national institution is the Network of Buddhist Organisations, which was established in order to co-ordinate better the response of Buddhists to all manner of social and political issues, and to encourage closer co-operation between the different groups in this country. However, membership is voluntary and it is constituted as a council of equals. Contemporary Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, China and Japan maintains temporal power through close associations between its own monastic teaching and ruling networks, or *sangha*, and political leaders. In the case of a significant Sri Lankan Buddhist movement, this has extended to campaigning for the creation of a 'Buddhist State' along the lines of those which existed in 10th century Goreo Korea and 11th century Xi Xia. However, the impact of this more politicised form of Buddhism is negligible in Britain. Here, Buddhists are more likely

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[112] We are particularly indebted to Dr. Richard Jones of the London Buddhist Vihara for his contribution to the research for this section.

to stress that throughout his ministry, the Buddha his followers to live in harmony with the followers of the many other faiths which were prominent during his time.

3.11.4 Islam[113]

The rise of Islam begins with the birth of the prophet Muhammad (circa 570– 632 AD), who was born in the city of Mecca. Whilst those who follow the religion of Islam believe in a chain of prophets starting with Adam and including a large number of Judeo-Christian prophets, they believe that God's last message to humanity was revealed to Muhammad through the mediation of the angel Gabriel, starting in 610, lasting for twenty three years, and recorded in the chief Islamic holy text, the Qu'ran.

Today there are in the region of one billion people united by their common Islamic faith. Of these around 18% live in the Arab world, yet large areas of Asia and Africa are Muslim, and Muslims make up important minorities in the former Soviet Union, China, North and South America, and Europe. The Arabic word 'Muslim' literally means 'someone who submits to the will of God', and it is a faith that is intended for the world. Thus Muslims are not bound to any one race, ethnic group or nationality.

The Muslim scriptures contained in the Qu'ran do not present a systematic political theory, but they do clearly affirm the public character of the Islamic faith. The socio-political community which Muhammad established in Medina in the early 7th century (1st century in the Islamic calendar) is viewed as a paradigm of what a genuinely Islamic state and civic culture should look like. This model civic community, or *ummah*, is contrasted with the lesser, more parochial networks of tribe, clan, family or business, but it is still classically collegial and corporate. It is to be organised in accordance with the 'Five Pillars' of faith: profession, regular worship, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage, all of which are cast as shared rather than individualistic endeavours.

Beyond these basic principles, several models of faith-state relationship have emerged in the centuries since the Islamic empire was governed by a single ruling authority, or Caliphate. These different models persist in the outlook of contemporary Muslims. A few, often on the 'radical' end of the spectrum in the Sunni tradition, look for the return of a faith-based political system, or indeed of an international Caliphate. Within the Shi'a tradition, some (particularly with personal ties to Iran or Iraq) believe that spiritual values and religious principles should be preserved in government. Most Muslims from both traditions, however, support the existence in Britain of secular government that accurately represents the diversity of religions in Britain; although like many Christians they would prefer to see religious and moral values and constraints reflected in the legal system.

With regard to Britain we can find references to Islamic scholars in the Prologue to Chaucer's Canterbury Tales (1386). The first recorded Englishman to become a Muslim was one John Nelson, who converted to Islam at some point in the 16th century. In the 18th and 19th centuries there were converts to Islam amongst the English upper classes. The first large contingent of Muslims to come to Britain arrived in the beginning of the 18th century to work as sailors for the East India Company. The first Muslim communities were therefore found in ports around the UK. The seamen required cooks who arrived from what we now know as Bangladesh, from 1873. The first mosque in Britain is recorded as having been at 2 Glyn Rhondda Street, Cardiff, in 1860.

Nearly all British Muslims today trace their roots to those who immigrated to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s (from India and Pakistan) and the 1970s (Africa - mostly from Kenya and then Uganda),[114] or to their descendants. Today there are between 1 and 2 million British Muslims (2% - 4% of the population), and over half were born in Britain. Most British Muslims belong to the Sunni tradition of Islam.

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[113] We are particularly indebted to Dr Barbara Zollner, Director of the Islamic Studies Programme at Birkbeck College University of London for her contribution to the research for this section.

[114] African states had begun to pursue policies of africanisation making life highly problematic for Asians already living there.

Islam characteristically presents itself as a religion of peace, and resembles Christianity in advocating religious faith as the true basis of core social values like justice and equality. Hence the widespread shock and dismay expressed in the UK Islamic community that the terrorist suicide bombers carrying out the attacks in London on 7 July 2005 were British Muslims. This fact resulted in some commentators asking whether being 'British' is actually compatible with being 'Muslim'. It is fair to note, however, that most British Muslims are moderate and law-abiding, and regard Islamic terrorists as unrepresentative extremists.

There is also an ongoing discussion within the Muslim community about the relationship between state law and so-called shari'a rules. Shari'a, which literally translates as 'path', is seen by Muslims as a code of rightful ethical and moral conduct. As with certain other faith traditions, there are differences of opinion and belief as to whether this code is flexible and hence adaptable to changing circumstances and environments, or whether it constitutes a fixed system of rules. Accordingly, there is a wide spectrum of opinion, ranging from progressive Muslims committed to open interpretation, to more conservative Muslims inclined to treat Shari'a as a settled divine canon objectively deduced from the revelatory text of the Qu'ran and the practice of Muhammad. The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) and the Shari'a Council of Britain have asserted on numerous occasions that shari'a rules may contradict or even overrule state law. The view that a 'divine code of law' must be implemented as state law constitutes the basis of a radical Islamist agenda. Although this latter position is perceived to be, and actually is, threatening within a democratic environment, it is a view advanced mainly by extremists and is seriously questioned by more moderate proponents of political Islam.

Within the Islamic community there are also of course secular Muslims. Many of these identify with Islam on the basis of having been born into a Muslim family, but do not necessarily practise their religion, except perhaps on specific occasions. In addition, there is a growing number of progressive and liberal Muslims who question orthodox interpretations of the Qur'an in the light of modern knowledge. Whilst most British Muslims remain firmly rooted in conservative readings of their faith, this should not be taken to mean that they thereby reject the concept of British nationhood, or the democratic principles associated with it.

3.11.5 Sikhism[115]

Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak, who was born in the Punjab (1469-1539AD[116]). Nine gurus succeeded him. Nanak retained the central theme in all Indian religions (that the highest achievement is to escape from the cycle of death and rebirth) but rejected two essential characteristics of Hinduism - the caste system and polytheism, preferring the concept of monotheism. He taught that there is one God who is unknowable, but manifested in all creation.[117] Guru Nanak taught that different religions can be metaphorically described as different paths to the same place, and he absolutely condemned religious conflict, ritualism and caste prejudices. The Khalsa was founded by Guru Gobind Singh the 10th and last guru on 13th April 1699 to combat tyranny and injustice. Male and female initiates to the order append 'Singh' and 'Kaur' to their given names respectively. There are five obligatory symbols to be worn by initiates: kacha (a special undergarment), kara (a steel bangle), kirpan (a small sword), kesh (long unshorn hair, and consequently the wearing of the turban) and kangha (a comb). These practices remain compulsory for those Sikhs who choose to be initiated into the Khalsa. These Sikhs are known as Amritdharis. Those who do not seek initiation are known as Sehajdharis.

Sikhism exhorts its followers to live an active life in society and to make a contribution to its development. Indeed a Sikh must set an example to others; he should become a better worker, a better public servant, and is not to shun material gain or the comfort of life. Sikhism therefore places a great deal of importance on social obligation because working to

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[115] We are particularly indebted to Mr Harmandar Singh for his contribution to the research to this section.
[116] His dates coincide with Martin Luther (1483-1546) and John Calvin (1509-1564).
[117] Nanak's influences used both the mystical and anti-doctrinaire traditions in Hinduism and Islam. The mystical strand within Hinduism is the bhakti movement, and within Islam it is Sufism.

improve society is a major aspect of the Guru's teaching. Sikhism lays stress on one's duties as a citizen, rendering service to the community as a whole.

Sikhs have resided in the U.K in small numbers for centuries. Some communities settled here between the 1920s and 1940s; other individuals such as Maharajah Duleep Singh famously arrived here from India in the 19th century in the aftermath of the Anglo-Sikh Wars. But it was the post-war immigration of the 1950s and 1960s that saw significant numbers of Sikhs move to the UK. Most of Britain's Sikhs have their origins either from the Punjab in Northwest India in the 1950s and 1960s, or from East Africa slightly later. Therefore the community retains strong emotional and economic links to the Punjab and its socio-political situation. Today, the British Sikh population numbers somewhere between the 365,000 or so reported in 2001 census, to the 700,000 widely quoted by the Sikh community itself. The organisation Sikhs in England (SIE) bases its work on a figure of 520,000, which is a calculated estimate from various sources.

Some of the second generation, and a much larger proportion of third generation Sikhs in the UK, have started implementing significant community development programmes. This has led to their greater integration, not only in the statutory and voluntary sectors, but also the commercial sector. They are therefore more noticeably active now in inter-faith and multi-faith contexts.

Interestingly, the Sikh community has been able to establish its own identity in English law and under the Race Relations Act of 1976. Thanks to an amendment to that Act, they are considered to be both a religious group and simultaneously an ethnic category. This has enabled joint initiatives with other faiths on community programmes which harness the best energies from all stakeholders.

Incidents abroad, either in the Punjab or elsewhere, often pose serious challenges to the harmony between the communities. Indeed, statistics produced since the July 2005 terrorist attacks in London show that Sikhs, along with Hindus, are proportionately more likely to be attacked than Muslims.

Sikhs in England (SIE), was launched as a not-for-profit, internet-based social policy association/think-tank in 1996.[118] It does not operate any formal structures but does rely on a bank of regular advisors in a number of specialist policy areas. Its aim is to challenge the barriers that hinder Sikhs from practising Sikhism while making Sikhs more engaged with civic governance. By providing a conduit for two-way information exchange, SIE offers non-Sikhs an opportunity to engage with the Sikh community, and in turn helps the Sikh community to engage constructively in the public square. Characteristically, British Sikhs regard it their duty to contribute as best they can to the civic life of each society in which they find themselves, and thus to fulfil the exhortation of their founder.

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[118] www.sikhs.org.uk

4. MODELS FOR SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Biblical and Theological Models

4.1.1 Divine Creation and Sovereignty

Christian responsibility for the world is rooted in God's creation of the world. The opening chapters of Genesis confirm that God made everything and, having done so, pronounced it all 'very good' (Gen 1.1; 1.31-2.1). Although this created order has since been radically corrupted by sin, the biblical narrative attests that God has not forsaken it. Indeed, he is actively involved throughout as its sustainer, ruler, redeemer and judge (Ps. 24; Isa. 40.28; Acts 17.24-31; Col. 1:17; 1 Tim. 4.4; Heb. 1:3). While God in time called certain individuals, and one particular people, Israel, to be custodians of his blessings and bearers his promises, they were to do so ultimately not for their own benefit, but on behalf of the world as a whole (Gen 12.1-3; Isa. 52.7-11). As such, God's sovereignty extends not only to the religious dimensions of life, but to every aspect of existence. Indeed, part of his continuing mandate for human beings is that they should exercise dominion over the whole earth, filling and subduing it in the process (Gen 1:26; 28). This in turn rules out any hard dualism of 'sacred' and 'secular': as John Stott notes, 'everything is 'sacred' in the sense that it belongs to God, and nothing is 'secular' in the sense that God is excluded from it.'[119] Hence the people of God are commissioned to represent and bear witness to God in social, civic and political arenas, as well as to assemble together for prayer and worship in 'churches' and 'congregations'.[120]

Similarly, deducing Christian civic obligations from creation should act as a check against undue 'spiritualizing' of the church's missionary task. The God who formed the world from a void and the land from the sea; who made Adam from dust and woman from Adam's side to be 'flesh of Adam's flesh' and 'one flesh' with him: this God is deeply concerned with the physical dimensions of life, and thus, with politics and governance, with nations and states. As Peter Scott has observed, 'lack of attention paid to the theme of creation leads to a political theology that is insufficiently *materialist*. Matter matters to Christianity: how bodies, human and nonhuman, exist in relation to each other in a range of technological, economic-ecological, social, political, and cultural realms is – or should be – central to a present-day Christian political theology.'[121] Furthermore, this insight should prevent overly sectarian and parochial programmes of Christian engagement, since creation is, *ipso facto*, universal. In Oliver O'Donovan's terms, just as morality is 'man's participation in the created order', so it must thereby relate to the 'totality of things'.[122] Narrow national self-interest, party political chauvinism and denominational arrogance deny human beings' God-given authority over creation. Rather, the comprehensiveness of this authority should inform Christian support for international law, global relief work and essential human rights.[123]

4.1.2 Trinity and Society

Just as Christian engagement with the world is fundamentally related to Divine creation and sovereignty, it is vital to understand this relationship in Trinitarian terms. The one true God who brings the universe into being does so not only in the person of the Father, but also in the person of the Son, Jesus Christ, 'through whom all things were made', and in the person of the Holy Spirit, the breath of life (John 1.3; Col. 1.15-17; Gen. 2.7). Together with the Father, both Jesus and the Spirit thereby exercise lordship over the cosmos. Christ is the 'firstborn over all

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[119] John Stott, *New Issues Facing Christians Today* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1999), 19.

[120] For more on the political implications of this anti-dualistic paradigm, see Philip Wogaman, *Christian Perspectives on Politics* (Louisville: Westminster, John Knox Press, 2000), 169-70.

[121] Peter Scott, 'Creation', in Peter Scott & William T. Cavanaugh (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 333.

[122] Oliver O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order* (Leicester: IVP, 1994), 77.

[123] Daniel Hardy, 'Creation', in P.B. Clarke & A. Linzey (eds.), *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society* (London: Routledge, 1996), 189-96.

creation', and in time his rule as 'king of kings' will be recognised by all creatures 'in heaven, on earth and under the earth' (Phil. 2.10; Rev. 5.13). In government and education, art and culture, science and technology, domestic and working life, Jesus' authority is comprehensive, if not yet always recognised as such. As exercised in conjunction with the Spirit who is also Lord, this authority is realised not through oppression and coercion, but through authentic freedom—the glorious liberty promised for all time to the cosmos in general, and to the children of God in particular (2 Cor. 17-18; Rom. 8.19-23).

This Trinitarian lordship is thus deeply political. Its redemptive power challenges other, sinful structures of dominion. As Craig Bartholomew points out, the Hebrew term Yahweh, which is translated by the Greek *kyrios* or 'Lord' some 6000 times in the Septuagint, crucially identifies Israel's God as the one who rescues his people from slavery under Pharaoh's despotic rule. Similarly, for citizens of the Roman Empire the church's confession of Jesus as Lord and God would have had an unmistakably polemical thrust. In that context, 'there was only one who could be called *kyrios*, namely Caesar. No citizen of the Empire would embark on a business initiative or set up a school without asking about Caesar's regulations for that part of his Empire. The mark of the Spirit, however, is that one recognises that there is only one way above the Caesars of this world, who is truly *kyrios*.'[124] In more recent times, Tim Chester has identified re-emphasis on this motif of Trinitarian lordship as a key factor in the recovery of evangelical social concern from the late 1960s onwards.[125]

To confess the cosmic lordship of the one God who is Father, Son and Spirit is also to acknowledge that true dominion is not monolithic and undifferentiated, but complex and communal. No doubt analogies between the 'society' of persons in the Godhead and human society as a network of persons-in-relation can too readily neglect the radical otherness of God, and may assume too much about his inner life.[126] Yet at its best, recent theological reflection on these social and relational dimensions of the Trinity, and on their implications for Christian community and civic witness, has helpfully informed Christian mission, and not least evangelical mission in the public square.[127]

Beyond its implicit presence in Scripture, the development of social Trinitarian theology can be traced back to the Cappadocian Fathers of the early Eastern Church.[128] Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa developed a communitarian model of divine being where the one God is identified in terms of Father, Son and Spirit, and in which the different personal relations are construed in terms of their relations to one another. Each cannot be understood autonomously from the other two. Rather, they are perceived *perichoretically*, that is, in terms of mutual interdependence and interpenetration.[129]

This approach contrasted in key respects with that of the towering figure of western Trinitarian theology, Augustine of Hippo (354-430). In distinction from the Cappadocians, Augustine developed a 'psychological' model which prioritized divine Oneness on analogy with the human mind, so casting God principally in terms of a singular, individual substance with a rational nature.[130] Much later, the logic of this model would be influentially extrapolated by the French philosopher and mathematician René Descartes (1596-1650). Descartes located

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[124] Craig Bartholomew, 'A Christian World-View and the Futures of Evangelicalism', in Craig Bartholomew, Robin Parry and Andrew West (eds.), *The Futures of Evangelicalism: Issues and Prospects* (Leicester: IVP, 2003), 198-99.

[125] Tim Chester, *Awakening to a World of Need: The Recovery of Evangelical Social Concern* (Leicester: IVP, 1993).

[126] For critique along these lines, see Kathryn Tanner, 'Trinity', in Peter Scott & William T. Cavanaugh (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 321-32.

[127] We are indebted to Graham McFarlane for allowing us to draw on material for the remainder of this section from his essay 'God, Self and Society: Variations on a Trinitarian Theme', originally published in David Hilborn (ed.), *Movement for Change: Evangelical Perspectives on Social Transformation* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2004), 56-69.

[128] R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark,1988), 676-790.

[129] What the Latin West understands as *circumincessio*.

[130] See Ralph Del Colle, 'The Triune God', in Colin E. Gunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 132-133.

certainty about knowledge in the human mind: "I think, therefore I am". In the process he helped catalyze that modern Enlightenment, or 'Age of Reason', which did so much to establish individual autonomy and the 'secular state' apart from the influence of the Church.[131]

Modern-day attempts to develop the Cappadocian emphasis on social Trinitarianism as an alternative to this western paradigm owe much to the German theologian Jürgen Moltmann. For Moltmann, the Trinity establishes a direct point of contact with human reality: as the Father embraces history through the Son's passion on the cross, so the Spirit is now released upon the world, uniting history with the very being of God himself. In this, mandates for both social intercourse and human freedom are established. Here, too, lies the mandate for social re-formation: the freedom won by Christ on the cross and expressed through the lordship of God has to be worked out in the liberation of all men and women. Set free from any hierarchical framework that legitimates only those in power, the Trinity validates a social politic that impacts every level of society.[132] Moltmann is not an evangelical, and at times comes close universalism, both in terms of universal salvation and panentheism. However, the basic Trinitarian thrust of his political theology has been developed in a more evangelical direction by a number of scholars[133] - not least by his former pupil, Miroslav Volf.

As a Croatian formed in the Pentecostal tradition, Volf powerfully expounds Moltmann's social Trinitarianism from his own war-scarred Balkan context. In two major works, *Exclusion and Embrace* [134] and *After Our Likeness*,[135] he relates Trinitarian theology specifically to human personhood and human suffering. In *Exclusion and Embrace* Moltmann's seminal study *The Crucified God* informs Volf's vision of God taking on the full implications of our sin by readjusting himself to our situation and making space for us, in a manner similar to our embracing of others.[136] Within the constraints of political reality, the biblical notion of judgement is then presented in terms of exclusion – that process by which boundaries are crossed and consequences are realized. In *After our Likeness* Volf explores what it means to be a community of the embraced and embracing in the Church. This he does through the concept of the *ecclesial self* or *catholic personality*, in which person and community are seen as profoundly co-inherent, on analogy with God's Triune being.[137]

One of the recognisably evangelical strengths of Volf's work is its profound appreciation of sin, and of sin's detrimental effect on humans' attempts to emulate God's triune life in the life of their own communities. However, whereas he presents the solution to this in terms of divine accommodation to, or 'embrace' of, human sinfulness in the incarnate Christ who 'became sin' for us on Calvary,[138] the doctrine of the 'social' Trinity is also patient of development in somewhat different direction: that of *participation* in the triune life of God, through God's renewing us 'in Christ', and in the power of the Spirit (1 Cor 3.16; Phil. 2.1; Eph. 1.13; 3.16). As Kathryn Tanner points out, the fact that God became human in Jesus, and that the glorified Jesus bears perfected human nature in the life of the Trinity, means that human relations 'need not somehow become more human in and of themselves and thereby approximate the Trinity. Human relations, which remain fully human, only image the Trinity as they are joined up with its own life.' Of course, this process of 'participation in the divine nature' (2 Pet. 1.4) should not be read as confusing God's creatures with God himself, as if humans could ever fully realise the communal life of God by 'becoming God'. Rather, it is God's prerogative and God's initiative to draw us to himself, that we might be transformed

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[131] For more on this connection, see Colin Gunton, *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2003), 100-117.

[132] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God* (London: SCM, 1981).

[133] E.g., Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* (Edinburgh: Continuum/T&T Clark, 1995); Stanley Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1994);

[134] Miroslav Volf, Exclusion & Embrace: a Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996).

[135] Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

[136] Volf, *Exclusion & Embrace*, 29.

[137] Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 3.

[138] Volf, 'The Trinity is our Social Program', 406; also, Miroslav Volf, 'The Final Reconciliation', *Modern Theology* 16:1 (January 2000), 100 (91-113).

'from one degree of glory to another' not into gods, but into the image of God in which we were made (2 Cor. 3.18). This suggests another key paradigm for Christian civic engagement.

4.1.3   The Image of God in Humanity

Closely allied to Trinitarian models of public theology are those shaped by the biblical doctrine of humans made in the image of God. Indeed, this doctrine, as established in Genesis 1.26-7 and reiterated in Psalm 8.5-8 and James 3.9 as well as 2 Corinthians 3.18, is foundational for Christian social and political thought. As Matthis de Blois attests, it compels us to recognize 'the dignity and respect of each and every individual human being as such… irrespective of any additional quality such as nationality, intelligence, age or social status.'[139] Moroever, the fact that God's image and likeness is expressed in both male and female, and that they are made for mutual relationship, enshrines the principles of social solidarity and co-operation in pursuit of moral goals. In John Stott's terms, this male-female mutuality undergirds 'all those human freedoms which we call the sanctity of sex, marriage and the family, the right to peaceful assembly, and the right to receive respect, whatever our age, sex, race or rank.'[140] Furthermore, as the American evangelical activist and theologian Ron Sider has stressed, it also mandates the conviction that human life begins at the moment of conception, and thus validates traditional evangelical opposition to abortion and euthanasia.[141]

According to another American evangelical scholar, Stanley Grenz, this formative social doctrine of the *imago Dei* must also be understood eschatologically - that is, in relation to the future purposes of God. Hence 'the creation of humankind in the divine image ... can mean nothing less than that humans express the relational dynamic of the God whose representation we are called to be'.[142] This communitarian vision is in turn extended to all human social groups.[143] Grenz relates this aspect of the *imago dei* closely to Miroslav Volf's vision of the 'ecclesial self'.[144] Here, the relational self, as one created in the image of the Triune God, finds true identity in a social rather than an individual context. This social identity is seen by Grenz as operating on two levels: firstly in the sense that people discover their true humanity in relation to the Christian narrative itself, and secondly in the sense that they understand themselves as those whose own story must be interpreted through dialogue with both Christ himself with others in the Church.[145] Once again here, a consciously social Trinitarian doctrine seeks to subvert the modern view of the person as an individual agent free from external contingencies.

4.1.4   Marriage and Family

Just as our creation as men and women in God's image has profoundly social implications, so the most basic expression of human sociality in Scripture is through marriage and family life. Thus the history of humanity begins with marriage and children (Gen. 1.28). Thus, too, when sin corrupts human beings, it is inextricably linked to marital and family discord - between Adam and Eve (Gen. 3.8-19), and between the brothers Cain and Abel (Gen. 4.1-16). Then again, salvation from the punishment of the flood comes through the family of Noah, and redemption from the disaster of Babel is promised through Abraham's descendants (Gen. 12.3, 17.3-14).

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[139] Matthis be Blois, 'The Foundation of Human Rights: A Christian Perspective', in Paul R. Beaumont (ed.), *Christian Perspectives on Human Rights and Legal Philosophy* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998), 7-29.

[140] John Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today* (Basingstoke: Marshalls, 1984), 144-5.

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[142] Stanley J. Grenz & John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 201.

[143] Grenz & Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 229.

[144] Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self,* 305, 312ff.

[145] Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self,* 329.

Yet 'family' in the Old Testament is defined by more than blood-ties. Foreigners are incorporated into the 'family' of Israel (Deut. 21.10), and the alien, the fatherless and the widow are to benefit from the family's estate (Deut. 24.19). Indeed, the family is God's basic building block of society, whether that society is nomadic, tribal, or urban. At its best, the family prevents autocracy and dictatorship (1 Sa. 8.10-18); but at its worst, its dysfunction can threaten the very fabric of society and nation (1 Kings 14.30).

As far as the New Testament is concerned, it is significant that Jesus himself was born into a family and lived a family life. Although he warned soberly against making family an idol (Luke 14.25-6), he gladly embraced the hospitality of families and enjoyed the company of children (Mark 1.31; Matt. 19.14). By routinely calling God 'Abba' ('dear Father'), he modelled devotional life on the pattern of family relationships. Paul develops this idea when regularly refers to fellow believers as 'brothers' and 'sisters', and when he describes the Church as God's 'household' (1 Pet. 2.5). The New Covenant thus both reinforces and extends the role of family. At times Evangelicals have failed to grasp the radical implications of all this, and have too readily equated the biblical picture with narrowly defined cultural norms (e.g., the modern, western nuclear family). This can be detrimental to mission in a society now characterised, for good or ill, by a much wider variety of paradigms (single parent, adoptive, extended, tri-generational, etc.).

In keeping with the concept of the 'social Trinitarianism' mentioned in above, it could be said that the Trinity is the true 'First Family'. Father and Son co-operate to effect reconciliation with a broken world. At Calvary, their relationship is severely strained, only to be restored by the Spirit, which Christ gives back to the Father at the point of death, and which in turn raises him from the grave (Luke 23.46; Rom. 8.11). As believers are 'raised up' with Christ, so they are incorporated into his family by adoption (Eph. 1.5; Rom.8.23). The criterion of membership is now faith rather than ancestry (John 1.12-13), but this is in no way to deny that physical families remain crucial for the proper functioning of Christian communities (Acts 16.33-4; Rom. 16.3ff.).

God's plan of future redemption also clearly includes the family. Indeed, as with the *imago Dei,* family has a strong eschatological dimension: the final tribulation sets 'brother against brother', but God's resolution of history brings with it reconciled families and healed social relationships. As with other such visions of eschatological fulfilment, this should inspire the Church in its support for family life now, as well as in its hope for the future (Mark 13.12, cf. Rev 21). As Rodney Clapp has put it, 'Christian family, of all places, is where we put our lives back together, where we live not so much in the public or private world as in God's one good and redeemed world.'[146]

4.1.5 *State, Government and Nationhood*[147]

The philosopher Peter Goodrich defines the State as 'the political organization of a body of people for the maintenance of order within its territory by coercion, or, more loosely, the body of people so organized or its territory.'[148] The organizational principle which drives this definition goes hand in hand with what we have come to call 'government', while the territorial principle relates to the concept 'nationhood'. Although the Bible does not present anything quite as compressed as this definition, a number of texts point to the role of the nation in the providence of God (e.g. Judg. 9; 1 Sam. 7.7-12; 1 Kgs. 12; 21; Lk. 4.6-7; Mk. 1.13ff; Tit. 3.1; 1 Tim. 2.1-2). While it is far from easy to construct a definitive civic theology from such texts, it does appear that once Israel is constituted as a civic entity, some fairly consistent principles for governance emerge. Such principles include the fair distribution of wealth (Lev. 19.9-10; 23.22; 25.1ff; Deut. 24.19-22; Prov. 31.8-9; cf. Amos 5.11ff; Isa. 58.6-14), the

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[146] Rodney Clapp, *Families at the Crossroads* (Downers Grove, Ill./Leicester: IVP, 1993), 169.

[147] This section draws on material supplied by David Hilborn, and available more fully in 'Church, Society and State: Romans 13 in Evangelical Practice', in David Hilborn (ed.), *Movement for Change: Evangelical Perspectives on Social Transformation* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 113-132.

[148] Peter Goodrich, 'state, the', in Ted Hoderich (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 850.

restraint and just punishment of crime (Ex. 21.12-36; Num. 35.16-34; Deut. 19.1-13; Jos. 20.1-9; cf. Ezk. 18.10ff.) and the protection of aliens (Ex. 12.48-9, 22.21, 23.9; Lev. 19.33-4; Deut. 1.16; 24.14, 17; cf. Ezk. 22.29; Mal. 3.5).

Written against the backdrop of a hostile Roman Empire, the New Testament more consistently addresses the dilemmas faced by believers whose whole value-system may diverge radically from that of their political rulers. Jesus' stark contrast between prevailing Gentile government and the government of God's kingdom in Matthew 20.20-5, coupled with his qualified acknowledgement of Caesar in Mark 12.13ff, suggest at the very least a cautious and critical view of human governmental authority.

Given the 'hermeneutic of suspicion' implicit in such texts, it must be conceded that Paul and Peter appear somewhat conservative by comparison (1 Tim. 2.1-4; Titus 3.1; 1 Pet. 2.13-17). The emphasis here is on respect for law and order, constructive citizenship, and prayerful support of civic and political leaders. Paul might have suffered under Rome (2 Cor. 11.23), but he also took pride in his Roman identity, and was not averse to presenting it as a key credential (Acts 16.35-40; 22.22-9). Nowhere, however, is this apparent conservatism more apparent than in Romans 13.1-7. Here, Paul counsels that 'submission' to the governing authorities on the basis that that they have 'been instituted by God' and act as God's servant in executing 'wrath on the wrongdoer' and extracting due taxes from their citizens. Reacting to this text, J.C. O'Neill charged that its seven verses 'have caused more unhappiness and misery in the Christian East and West than any other seven verses in the New Testament'. [149] James Kallas is less dismissive, but still regards them as an interpolation.[150] Yet after careful consideration, Ernst Käsemann concludes that there is 'no reason to dispute the authenticity of the text'.[151] Käsemann's grounds for this judgment resemble those given by the majority of other commentators who reckon that Paul's words can be fitted logically into the context of the letter.

Firstly, there is the obvious point that Rome was the capital city of the empire, and that Paul would probably have felt a special obligation to comment on the church-state dynamic when addressing the Christians there.[152] Secondly, it is likely that Paul discusses civil government here precisely to qualify the prohibition on private vengeance expressed in preceding chapter (12.17-21). This is to say, while *individuals* should not 'repay evil for evil', *governments* have been authorised by God to prosecute and punish of crime.[153] Thirdly, Marcus Borg, Everett Harrison and Leon Morris all seriously entertain the idea that Paul is here trying to restrain the radical theocratic tendencies of certain Jews within the Roman congregation. One strand of Israelite tradition had undoubtedly refused to acknowledge *any* pagan ruler (Deut 17.15). Jewish Christians in Rome might have cited recent oppression by the Emperor Claudius as reason enough to adopt such a stance (cf. Acts 18.2). It might even be that a militant group had adopted a strategy similar to that of the Palestinian Zealots, and that Paul is seeking to dissuade them from outright revolutionary action against the authorities.[154] It would seem that he does this mainly from a conviction that such action would detract from the church's evangelistic imperative (11.14ff.; cf. 1 Tim 2.1ff.). Fourthly, given Paul's earlier attack on antinomianism (7.7-25 cf. 14.13), and his commitment to structure and stability in the church (1 Cor. 11.3ff), it is not entirely surprising that he might want to extend his defence of 'good order' into the more general realm of governmental authority.[155] Fifthly, it is conceivable that Paul is providing an extended commentary on Jesus' saying '"Render unto Caesar that which is

[149] J.C. O' Neill, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1975), 209.

[150] James Kallas, 'Romans 13:1-7: An Interpolation', *New Testament Studies* XI (1964-5), 365-74.

[151] Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans.* London: SCM, 1980, 351.

[152] Käsemann, 350; C.E.B Cranfield, *A Shorter Commentary on Romans* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1976), 322; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 457-58.

[153] On this point see Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 457.

[154] Marcus Borg, 'A New Context for Romans XIII', *New Testament Studies*, XIX (1972-3), 205-18; Everett Harrison, *Expositors' Bible Commentary: Romans* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 136. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 458.

[155] Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, 357.

Caesar's"' (Mk. 12.17). The common background of debt and tax would seem to support this (vv. 6-7).[156]

All but the most quietistic scholars agree that 'submission' in this passage must mean more than mere uncritical 'subjection' or 'obedience'. A form of this same verb is used in 1 Corinthians 16.16 and Ephesians 5.21, where it denotes the reciprocal accountability of believers to one another in a Christian fellowship. Obedience, by contrast, cannot be reciprocal! C.E.B Cranfield thus broadly represents the mainstream when he states that 'Paul is enjoining … no uncritical obedience to whatever command the civil authority may decide to give, but the recognition that one has been placed below the authority of God'. Cranfield goes on to stress that 'the Christian's "subjection" to the authorities is limited to respecting them, obeying them in so far as such obedience does not conflict with God's laws, and seriously and responsibly disobeying them when it does'.[157] This is, of course, extrapolating somewhat from the text itself. Still, most serious critics echo Martin Luther and the Augsburg Confession (1530) in citing Acts 5.29 as corroboration for such a view: 'We must obey God rather than persons!'[158] Many also point to the idolatrous rule of the Beast and the Whore of Babylon in Revelation 13 and 17 as clear examples that not all earthly governments and kingdoms should be obeyed.[159] Quite *when*, *how* or *in what respects* a civil authority might be deemed to have forfeited God's mandate remains, of course, a moot point, as does the related issue of when or whether proactive civil disobedience might be warranted for a Christian. These more practical questions are explored further in 4.4.6 below.

4.1.6   *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*

The tensions arising from Romans 13 are sharply focussed in Jesus' words to Pilate at his trial: 'My kingdom is not from this world' (Jn 18.36), and 'You would have no power over me unless it had been given to you from above.' (Jn. 19.11). This contrast between earthly realms and the realm of God occurs often in the Bible, and bears significantly on civic theology.

In his incarnate life and ministry Jesus demonstrated God's concern for the just ordering of human community and civil society. In bringing good news to the poor, healing the sick and ministering to the outcast, he showed that godly use of power is measured by its respect and compassion for the least well off. As such, he challenged those in authority to live according to God's righteous purposes. While individuals were called to follow him, and while he commended personal responsibility and domestic stewardship, he also held political rulers like Pilate, and the states and empires they represented, to sober account for their actions (Luke 4.16-20; Mt. 25.14-30; Jn. 18.28-19:16; 1 Tim. 6.17-19). As he did so, Jesus most often expressed the moral standards required of such rulers and institutions in terms of the kingdom, or reign, of God. In using this image, he was drawing on a rich vein of scriptural imagery.

The Hebrew term *mal ᵉkût* is typically used in the Old Testament to denote the 'reign' or 'rule' of a particular monarch (1 Chron. 26.31; Dan 1.1). As such, it is most often associated with notions of political power, might and authority. In some cases, these are exercised benignly for the overall good of the king's subjects, as in the tenures of Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jotham and Hezekiah; in other instances, they are abused to the detriment of the nation, as with Rehoboam, Ahaz, Manasseh and Ahab. The same mixed picture is seen in the reigns of Gentile kings, too: in the responsible God-fearing monarchy of Cyrus on the one hand, and in the

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[156] Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, 352; Cranfield, *A Shorter Commentary on Romans*, 324.

[157] Cranfield, *A Shorter Commentary on Romans*, 321.

[158] E.g. Harrison, *Expositors' Bible Commentary: Romans*, 136; Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 462.

[159] E.g. Karl Barth, 'The Christian Community and the Civil Community', in Clifford Green (ed.), *Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom* (London: Collins, 1989), 276; David Sceats, 'State', in Sinclair B. Ferguson & David F. Wright (eds.), *New Dictionary of Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 1988), 659. But see also John Howard Yoder, who from his pacifist perspective maintains that nothing in either Romans 13 or Revelation 13 mandates the concept of just rebellion against the state: *The Politics of Jesus: Behold the Man! Our Victorious Lamb* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 193-211.

tyrannical *mal ᵉkût* of Nebuchadnezzar, or of Belshazzar, on the other. However, it is made clear time and again that whether they are good, bad or indifferent, all human reigns are subject to the greater reign of God. Thus Nebuchadnezzar is warned starkly that 'the Most High has sovereignty over the kingdom of mortals and gives it to whom he will' (Dan. 4.32); but the same divine superintendence applies as much to Hezekiah, who declares: 'O LORD the God of Israel, who are enthroned above the cherubim, you are God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth.' (2 Kings 19.15).

In the prophecies of Isaiah, this radical distinction between the rule of God and the rule of human monarchies is maintained (Isa. 40.23). Here, however, the heavenly kingdom is foreseen as achieving vivid earthly expression in a future reign of unprecedented peace, justice and glory - the reign of God's anointed, the coming Messiah. This special redeemer-king will 'bring good news to the oppressed, bind up the broken hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners'. In doing so, he will declare the year of the LORD's favour and deliver judgement on wrong (61.1-2).

The actual phrase 'Kingdom of God' is associated with the New rather than the Old Testament. Indeed, together with its Matthean equivalent 'kingdom of heaven', it occurs over a hundred times in the gospels, and very little elsewhere in the canon. Yet Isaiah's messianic oracles in particular demonstrate its clear conceptual basis in the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus, at the outset of his ministry Jesus identifies his own life and calling with Isaiah 61, as it becomes his manifesto for action - his charter of gospel ministry (Luke 4. 16-19). Just as Jesus' own incarnate life brings the realm of God into the midst of human society, so he assures his followers that the kingdom of God has come among them (Matt. 12.28; Luke 17.21). Just as his ministry manifests the kingdom, so he sees that same kingdom mission continuing through his disciples, and so instructs them to pray 'Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven' (Matt. 5.10). As Craig Bartholomew's has stressed, 'we know that heaven is the place where God's will is done perfectly and here we are given a vision of a world which mirrors that perfection, a world in which God is acknowledged in every area of life as he made it … It is hard to see how Christians can take the Lord's prayer seriously and neglect a Christian world-view and its implications.'[160]

While these aspects of the kingdom are relatively uncontentious, there has been considerable disagreement among Christians about the extent to which kingdom life can be manifested in the present age, marred as it is by human sin. Linked to this has been divergence on the appropriate means and instruments by which that same kingdom can be brought to bear this side of the Last Day.

Historically, Evangelicals have seen the fullness of kingdom life deferred until 'age to come'. While acknowledging that the kingdom is to some extent made real through present-day evangelism and social action, they have typically pointed to the 'not yet' implicit in Jesus' promise that he will return in glory, and *only then* grant the righteous their kingdom inheritance (Matt. 13.36-43; 25.31-46). Likewise, they have tended to stress that it is only in the great future conflict between good and evil that the rival kingdom of darkness ruled by Satan will be destroyed (Rev. 20:10).[161] The most extreme form of this 'futurist' evangelical understanding comes in the theological system of Dispensationalism, which denies *all* contemporary application of Jesus' kingdom message, telescoping it completely to the end-times.[162]

In the last century or so, such evangelical caution about overly immanent or 'realised' models of the kingdom has contrasted with liberal theology, and with the so-called Social Gospel. Pioneered by Albrecht Ritschl and Walter Rauschenbusch, this latter movement sought

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[160] Craig Bartholomew, 'A Christian World-View', in Craig Bartholomew, Robin Parry & Andrew West (eds.), *The Futures of Evangelicalism: Issues and Prospects* (Leicester: IVP, 2003), 201.

[161] J.B. Green, 'Kingdom of God', in David J. Atkinson & David J. Field (eds.) , *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 1995), 529-32; Rachel Tingle, 'Evangelical Social Action Today: Road to recovery or Road to Ruin?', in Melvyn Tinker (ed.), *The Anglican Evangelical Crisis: A Radical Agenda for a Bible-based Church* (Fearn: Christian Focus, 1995), 186-202.

[162] C. Blaising, 'Dispensation, Dispensationalism', in Walter A. Elwell (ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology (2ⁿᵈ Edn.)* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001), 343-45.

to collapse what Joel Green has called the 'temporal dialectic' of the kingdom into an entirely contingent realm of poverty-relief, community work and political campaigning.[163] For Ritschl, the kingdom thus became the 'organisation of humanity through action inspired by love'.[164] For Rauschenbusch, kingdom ministry was to be conceived not as 'the old evangel of the saved soul', but as a 'new evangel' concerned with 'transforming the life of the earth into the harmony of heaven' by 'regenerating all human relationships'.[165] Rauschenbusch even went so far as to suggest that the imperatives of this social gospel should drive and, if necessary, modify, systematic theology and doctrine. By the Sixties and Seventies, these emphases were becoming dominant in mainline denominations, and in ecumenical bodies like the World Council of Churches - bodies from which Evangelicals increasingly distanced themselves..

Though clearly unacceptable to Evangelicals when pressed to such worldly conclusions, the emphases of liberalism and the Social Gospel on practical action nonetheless galvanized many to reconsider how their more transcendent understanding of the kingdom could be applied in a biblically orthodox way to current social problems. This, the impact of two World Wars, and the often appalling deprivation encountered on the mission field, led many Evangelicals to reassess their position. In 1947, the leading American Evangelical scholar and statesman Carl Henry suggested in his pivotal book *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* that conservative criticism of the Social Gospel had at times spawned undue neglect of 'kingdom now' witness. Evangelicalism, he wrote, should both 'reawaken the relevance of its redemptive message to the global predicament' and 'discard elements of its message which cut the nerve of world compassion as contradictory to the inherent genius of Christianity'.[166] Henry's analysis spurred a more socially-conscious 'Neo-Evangelical' movement which spread from America to Britain and across the world, thanks not least to support from the international ministries of Billy Graham and John Stott. This culminated in the groundbreaking International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne in 1974 - a meeting which can fairly be said to have changed the orientation of evangelical kingdom theology in a profound way. As paragraph 5 of the Lausanne Covenant expressed it, 'When people receive Christ they are born again into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead.'[167]

While the legacy of Lausanne remains immense,[168] one should not suppose that it entirely resolved debate on the meaning of the kingdom for evangelical social and political theology. When the 1974 Congress took place, another kingdom-oriented theology was emerging which would in time supersede the Social Gospel in more radical Christian circles: the Theology of Liberation. Pioneered by Latin American Catholic priests working in deprived parishes, its leading thinkers included Gustavo Guttierez, Jose Miguez Bonino and Leonardo Boff.[169] These theologians combined the collectivist and communitarian emphases of established Catholic social teaching with the economic and class analysis of Marxism. From this, they construed a 'preferential option for the poor', which they saw conformed in the biblical paradigms of the Exodus, the teaching of the Hebrew prophets, and the life and

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[163] J.B. Green, , 'Kingdom of God', in David J. Atkinson & David J. Field (eds.) , *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 1995), 530.

[164] Albrecht Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation: The Positive Development of the Doctrine*. Translated by H. R. Mackintosh and A. B. Macaulay. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1900 (German original, Volume III, 1874). Reissued, Clifton, NJ.: Reference Book Publishers, 1966), 12.

[165] Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (New York: Macmillan, 1907), xiii, 65, 357.

[166] Carl F.H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947), 53-4.

[167] Text in John Stott (ed.), *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement, 1974-1989* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996), 24.

[168] James A. Scherer, *Gospel, Church and Kingdom: Comparative Studies in World Mission Theology* (Augsburg: Fortress Press, 1987), 173.

[169] Gustavo Guttierez, *A Theology of Liberation* (London: SCM, 2001 [1971]); Jose Miuez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (Philadelphi: Fortress Press, 1975); Leonardo Boff, *Church, Charism and Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1985 [1981]).

example of Jesus - as defined not least by his emphasis on the kingdom. Like the Social Gospel, liberation theology stresses right action, or *orthopraxis,* as inextricably linked with, and even prior to, doctrinal orthodoxy.[170] While the Catholic origins and Marxist influences of liberation theology hardly endeared it to most Lausanne delegates, certain younger South American attendees, most notably Rene Padilla and Samuel Escobar, did commend a form of evangelical liberation theology to the congress, which found supporters on the left wing of the movement. These 'evangelical liberationists' characteristically argued for an understanding of the kingdom which broadened its scope from explicit gospel preaching and social work done in the name of Christ, to all forms of overcoming oppression, poverty and exploitation. Since then, debate about the explicit Christ-centredness, church-relatedness and social extent of the kingdom have continued, and to a large degree this debate defines the different streams of evangelical civic and political theology today.[171]

While disagreement clearly persists among Evangelicals on these more detailed theological aspects of the kingdom, they should not be assumed to detract from a more fundamental consensus on the Lausanne formula. This consensus recognises the priority and indispensability of evangelism and personal conversion in the church's kingdom call, while recognising that this call is also intimately bound up with social and political witness. Although the pervasiveness of sin and the future aspect of Jesus' return mean that such witness cannot expect to realise the kingdom fully on earth, it can nevertheless prefigure it, and in so doing, point people to the eternal hope of the gospel, which is salvation through faith in Christ. The following definition by Richard Bauckham captures this consensus well:

> In relation to the coming kingdom of God, political activity can be understood as seeking to anticipate the kingdom or to realize the values of the kingdom, as far as possible in any particular circumstances, within the radically imperfect conditions of this world. The hope of the coming kingdom can give political vision and direction. But for the sake of political realism, it is also vital to remember than political activity cannot establish the eschatological kingdom of God itself. Its achievements are never more than fragmentary anticipations of the kingdom, whose transcendence beyond all such anticipations keeps political activity realistic, flexible and never satisfied with the *status quo.*[172]

4.1.7 *'The Powers', Spiritual Warfare and Final Victory*

Just as sin hampers the expression of God's kingdom in individual lives, so the effects of the Fall are apparent in what the apostle Paul on several occasions terms 'the powers' (Gal. 4; Eph. 6.12; Col. 1.16; 2.15; Heb. 6.5; 1 Peter 3.22). These powers are described using various closely related Greek terms, principally *kosmokratoras, archai, dynameis* and *exousiai.* Although sometimes explicitly linked to fallen angelic beings and demons (Rom. 8.38), they are more generally presented as the spiritual forces which drive corrupt social and political institutions. In Ephesians 6, they are very clearly associated with the 'rulers' and 'authorities' of 'this dark world', even as their provenance is identified as supernatural. Thus, they are key components in what is often called 'structural sin' or 'structural evil'.[173] In this sense they have great relevance for civic and public theology. As Melba Padilla Maggay has put it, 'sin expresses itself not only in personal and individual badness such as adultery or perverted sex, but also in corporate and systemic forms such as apartheid in the old South Africa or economic

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[170] For a helpful overview and assessment, see Samuel Escobar, 'Liberation Theology', in Alister E. Mcgrath (ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 330-35.

[171] Tim Chester, *Awakening to a World of Need: The Recovery of Evangelical Social Concern* (Leicester: IVP, 1993), 89-98.

[172] Richard Bauckham, 'Politics', in David J. Atkinson & David J. Field (eds.) , *New Dictionary of Christian Ethics and Pastoral Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 1995), 671.

[173] Hendrikus Berkhof, *Christ and the Powers* Trans. John Howard Yoder (Scottdale, Penn.: Herald Press, 1967); Graham Gordon, *What if You Got Involved? Taking a Stand against Social Injustice* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003), 58.

exploitation in many parts of the Third World by native ruling classes and multinational entities.'[174]

The most prominent western theologians to have reflected at length on 'the powers' in this context are the American scholars Stanley Hauerwas and Walter Wink. Of the two, Hauerwas has had greater direct influence on evangelicals, but the sheer comprehensiveness of Wink's work makes him noteworthy here. Having said this, neither reflects the development of socio-political demonology in that branch of evangelicalism represented by charismatic Christianity. One of the most extensive writers in this area is Gregory Boyd, and it will be helpful also to consider his work in distinction from that done by Wink and Hauerwas.

Wink develops his examination of the powers in a detailed trilogy of volumes: *Naming the Powers,*[175] *Unmasking the Powers,*[176] and *Engaging the Powers.*[177] Through these books Wink systematically defines the powers as they are presented in Scripture, and associates them with the complex 'domination system' at work in the world today. Importantly, this same system is seen to possess both societies in general, and the churches which belong to those societies in particular. The call of the gospel, Wink avers, is to break such systems of domination. Thus, the language of power, traditionally expressed in terms of Satan, demons, angels, gods and elements of the universe, is reinterpreted by him to show that these forces manifest today as patriarchy, economic inequality and other structures of oppression which disable the many for the benefit of the few. Thus for Wink one of the major challenges facing the Church is to recognise or 'name' such powers, to disempower or 'unmask' them, and to take them on or 'engage' them in the authority of an alternative counter-power - that is, the power of Jesus and his gospel. .

Wink's critique of these modern-day powers highlights the fact that they operate through a system of violence: those at the top of the pyramid exist solely at the expense of those at the bottom. What constitutes a radical alternative, according to Wink, is to offer a response of *non-violence.* This Wink develops from Jesus' teaching and exemplification of non-resistance - of turning the other cheek (forcing the opponent to treat you as an equal rather than as someone beneath you); of giving up your cloak (and your underclothes and thus exposing your opponent as being shameless); and of going the extra mile (and thus turning your opponent into the transgressor of the Roman law). Hence for Wink, the *social* dimension of the gospel expresses itself in ethical and personal demonstrations of an alternative use of power - the power of non-violence.

Non-violence is also a hall-mark of Hauerwas' ethics. As a pacifist rooted in an alternative churchmanship and motivated by embrace of the 'post-Christendom' world, Hauerwas insists that the God we meet in Jesus Christ calls human beings to a counter-culture, set clearly apart from the structures of domination to which states, nations and other civic powers are subject in a fallen world.[178] Here, we may identify two key dimensions of his thought that touch on our present concerns. On the one hand, Hauerwas insists on the development of Christian virtues that are active and transformative.[179] Invoking Jesus' own example, he will not allow the gospel to be reduced to a set of doctrines or principles alone. This is because neither in and of themselves change peoples' characters. Indeed, if the Christian faith is to be reduced to such principles, then it is these, and not Jesus himself, that we should worship. There is, however, no ethical convertive power in them alone. It is only in personal

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[174] Melba Padilla Maggay, *Transforming Society* (Oxford: Regnum, 1994), Cit. Graham Gordon, *What if You Got Involved? Taking a Stand against Social Injustice* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003), 59.

[175] Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1984).

[176] Walter Wink, *Unmasking the Powers: the Invisible Forces that Determine Human Existence* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1986).

[177] Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

[178] Stanley Hauerwas, *In Good Company: The Church as Polis (Revised Edition)* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

[179] Hauerwas outlines what this might mean in concrete terms in a series of articles in *A Better Hope: Resources for a Church Confronting Capitalism, Democracy, and Postmodernity* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001).

relationship to Jesus Christ that we are transformed, thus becoming *resident aliens* whose very existence reveals that there is indeed an alternative to the powers that threaten to enslave us.[180]

While Wink and Hauerwas' definitions of the powers in terms of earthly domination systems have proved influential in Anabaptist and more radical evangelical circles,[181] others have questioned their readiness to link such powers so negatively to civic and commercial institutions. Perhaps revealing his strong commitment to establishment, Wesley Carr asserts that at least in Ephesians and Colossians the powers are angelic and not demonic: thus in Colossians 2.15 it is not the powers which are 'disarmed' or 'stripped away' in Jesus' cross and resurrection, but Jesus' own flesh, as he attains a new 'spiritual body'. Thus, too, Carr has Jesus not making a public spectacle *of* the powers, but *with* them.[182] By contrast, Gregory Boyd affirms the corrupting nature of the powers, but is wary of Wink's attempts to 'translate' them to earthly structures of domination. Indeed, he detects in this a desire to 'demythologize' the personal and apocalyptic dimensions of the powers, and to construe them in essence as 'impersonal aspects of God's good creation.' Furthermore, although they have now gone bad, Boyd contends that Wink does not assign this to a cosmic Fall, but rather to 'the volition people who are under them give them'.[183] In stark distinction from this, Boyd insists that Paul's social and religious milieu was replete with personal and apocalyptic demonologies, that Ephesians 6.11 explicitly relates the powers to 'the wiles of the devil', and that Paul had at his disposal a number of terms ('the world', 'the flesh', 'sin', 'things on earth' rather than 'in heaven') which would have more clearly suggested a purely material, contingent form of oppression. Hence, for Boyd, 'as much as Paul might see demonic activity in structural societal evil, he does not equate the demonic powers with structural societal evil.'[184]

While the exact ontology of structural evil might be problematic, Boyd is surely right to reserve some apocalyptic orientation for the powers, in the same way that various evangelicals challenged the over-realised eschatology of the Social Gospel. As Nigel Wright has put it, 'the day when 'the kingdom of this world will become the Kingdom of our God and of his Christ' (Rev. 11.15) is yet future, but is being anticipated in the Spirit's work in the Church and the world. A great hope for the future therefore gives rise to a modest hope for the present, that the fallen structures of human social and political existence might no longer dominate and imprison people but rather serve their needs and provide a supportive and humanizing context in which they might seek after God.'[185] In the same way, the biblical end-time promises of Jesus' return, cosmological renewal and final victory should provoke Christians to present-day action for justice and peace as a sign of the coming kingdom, rather than to complacent contentment in their own salvation. (Mt. 25.31-46; Jas. 2.14-26; Rev. 20.11-15).

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[180] Stanley Hauerwas (with William Willimon), *Where Resident Aliens Live: Exercises for Christian Practice* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996); *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

[181] Nigel Wright, *The Radical Evangelical: Seeking a Place to Stand* (London: SPCK, 1996), 113; Stuart Murray, *Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 245-285.

[182] Wesley Carr, *Angels and Principalities: The Background, Meaning and Development of the Pauline Phrase hai archai kai exousiai* (Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 42. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 104-10.

[183] Gregory A. Boyd, *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity Press, 1997), 273.

[184] *God at War*, 276.

[185] Nigel Wright, *The Radical Evangelical* (London: SPCK, 1996), 113.

4.2   Promoting the 'Common Good'

4.2.1   *Historical Developments*

The familiar prayer, used by some churches, that 'we may seek the common good' reflects a profound biblical instinct. As we saw above, the apostolic writers were concerned that Christians should be law-abiding citizens who have the good of the community at heart and who pray for God's blessing and guidance for those in authority (Romans 13. 1-7; 1 Timothy 2. 1-4; 1 Peter 2.13-17). The idea of the common good also continues a solid tradition, going back at least to Augustine of Hippo, of Christian thinking about the nature of community and society. In turn that tradition drew critically and reflectively on the pre-Christian classical tradition, particularly that shaped by Aristotle and Cicero, read in the light of the Bible.

Augustine spoke of the peace, harmony and tranquillity that was possible in this world, as a reflection and anticipation of the life of heaven, and of the political good order and discipline that was needed to preserve it.[186] Medieval theologians reflected on the relation between the good of individuals and the good of the Christian commonwealth. The common good, they generally said, was greater than the individual good but included it. Thomas Aquinas said that all laws should be promulgated for the common good.[187] Both Augustine and Aquinas affirmed that the supreme common good was to be found in God. As Aquinas put it: "the supreme good, namely God, is the common good, since the good of all things depends on him".[188]

This tradition, with its classical and biblical roots, affirmed that happiness and virtue belong together and that the aim of government is to provide not merely for the material needs of citizens and their physical security, but to promote the common good by fostering the life of virtue that brings happiness – the aim of human society being, as Aristotle had insisted, not simply to live, but to live well, to lead 'the good life' in community (*koinonia)*[189].

Those who wanted to see the reform of abuses in the late medieval Western Church appealed to the common good or well-being of the Church. The Conciliar thinkers of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, in calling for a General Council to heal the divisions and corruptions of the Church, invoked the Pauline language of the whole body and its well-being (cf. 1 Corinthians 12). The laws of the Church were subject to correction by divine (biblical) law and natural law, which always had in view the common good, not the advantage of a few who held power.

The 16th century Reformers – Luther, Melanchthon, Bucer, Calvin and Bullinger – and their immediate successors laid out the conditions, not only for a faithful Church, but for a flourishing Christian society with the Church at the heart of it, though not trespassing on what were properly civil responsibilities. Laws that promoted the common good would safeguard public order and decency and mutual care. The Reformers continued the classical and medieval natural law tradition, enshrined in the Golden Rule of love for one's neighbour. "There is one law which runs through all ages, is known to all men, is written on the hearts of all people," said Luther, "... [and] which the Holy Spirit dictates unceasingly in the hearts of all".[190] The second generation of Lutheran Reformers gave greater attention than Luther himself had done to the institutions that would promote the common good, especially in law and education.

The Reformers held that, because God's work in both creation and redemption were orientated to the well-being of humankind in community – to the common good – natural law and divine (revealed, biblical) law were in complete harmony. As Calvin put it: the moral law of God "is nothing else than the testimony of natural law, and of that conscience which God has engraven on the minds of men".[191] Natural law could sometimes help to interpret how Scripture was to be applied: for example, Calvin takes the question of the place of women in the

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[186] Augustine, *City of God*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972, pp. 599-600 and 870
[187] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 90, a. 4
[188] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Bk III, ch. 17
[189] Aristotle, *Politics*, Bk I, chs 1-2
[190] *Luther's Works*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955-, vol. 27, p. 355
[191] Calvin, J., *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Bk IV, xx, 16

congregation as one instance where custom, humanity and modesty should guide the interpretation of certain Pauline texts.[192]

The modern Roman Catholic Church has made extensive use of the idea of the common good, especially in the 'Constitution on the Church in the Modern World' of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). The political life of humankind, the Council stated, exists to serve the common good, which it is the responsibility of government to promote. The common good embraces the fulfilment of individuals, families and communities. Citizens should actively participate in political life and should use their vote, not for selfish ends, but to advance the common good. The Council was already aware of the global context of human relations and taught that particular communities should take into account the common good of other groups and indeed the common good of the whole human family.

Before the 1997 General Election, the Roman Catholic bishops Conference of England and Wales issued 'The Common Good and the Catholic Church's Social Teaching'. In the Preface the late Cardinal Hume emphasised that the foundation of that teaching was the inalienable dignity of every human person, created in the image of God and offered freedom through the gospel by God. Society should, therefore, encourage men and women to take responsibility for their own lives and encourage them to co-operate with others to promote the common good. The document went on to affirm that the common good must be the criterion and judge of political means as well as political ends and that the well-being of persons in community was the primary consideration. It argued that the common good is achieved in two planes: 'horizontally' through human solidarity one with another, and 'vertically' through the subsidiarity of 'higher' levels of authority to the needs and responsibilities of 'lower' levels. While the common good varies according to circumstances and context, the report conceded, it always involves the tolerance of other views that are held in good conscience and respect for differences between one group of human beings and another.

The Roman Catholic bishops' initiative in relaunching the vision of the common good was timely. Today the language of the common good is almost forgotten. The voice of the common good is muted. There is widespread scepticism, encouraged by some political philosophers (e.g. John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin), as to whether plural and diverse western societies could ever agree on a good that they held in common. This scepticism has manifested itself also through modern-day variations on the utilitarian philosophy formulated by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, in which 'common good' reduces to a calculation of the greatest good for the greatest number, regardless of individual human beings' innate worth as derived from their creation in God's image, or from a universal endowment of natural law. Pragmatist, neo-pragmatist and certain postmodernist thinkers can be seen as operating from this worldview (Stanley Fish, Richard Rorty, Jean-Francois Lytotard) Such philosophical scepticism or cynicism is compounded by a widely held ideological suspicion (not without good reason, given the totalitarian history of the 20th century) that all appeals on behalf of the collective good are masks for an agenda of authoritarianism and the suppression of individual freedom (Michel Foucault, Zygmunt Bauman). To the extent that any common good is recognised at the ideological level by society and culture in the West today, it is the radically subjectivised value of untrammelled self-determination and self-expression. The shibboleths of non-judgementalism, of doing one's own thing provided it does not directly inflict harm on bystanders, and of undiscriminating tolerance have replaced the ideal of the common good. When society's value system has been radically privatised, it is unfashionable to argue that the good is by definition something held in common because human beings are by nature social beings, created for relationship, fellowship, communion and mutual indwelling. There is a challenge to the churches and to Christian theologians, in dialogue with sympathetic political philosophers and thinkers of other faiths, to try to work out a viable meaning of the common good in a plural society.

The idea of the common good is related to concepts of society, community and moral virtue.

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[192] *Institutes*, Bk IV, x, 31. See further on the Reformers and the common good: Avis, P., *Beyond the Reformation? Authority, Primacy and Unity in the Conciliar Tradition,* (London: T.&T. Clark, 2006).

4.2.2 Society

For the ideal of the common good to make sense, it requires a free but coherent society, held together by shared values and respect for both individual liberty and public authority. Freedom to work together for the common good depends on a healthy fabric of institutions, traditions, conventions and social practices, protected by law. It is the moral communities within civil society, among whom the churches stand out, that uphold the common good by sustaining traditions and narratives that embody salutary social and personal values.

Civil society is that diverse and complex collection of organisations and institutions which carry out their purposes in the extensive space for human activity that lies between the household on the one hand and the state on the other. In that respect, institutional churches and para-church organisations, such as the Evangelical Alliance, are components of civil society. They relate to other institutions and organisations and interact with them, as well as with the state itself through engagement with the legislature (Parliament and local government) and with the executive (the national and local civil service). As with other collective bodies, it should not be forgotten that such institutions and organisations are comprised of individuals, who may themselves contribute to civil society through personal financial giving, letter-writing, online petitioning, prayer and the like.

An essential characteristic of a healthy civil society is confidence in justice, both distributive justice (giving to all their economic and social due and treating everyone equally and fairly) and retributive and restorative justice (through the administration of the criminal law). When it is clear to all that laws are being made solely for the common good, rather than for party advantage or to make a political point, and that justice is being upheld and administered with efficiency and impartiality, then we have the effective rule of law. To participate in society and its structures, in its social and political life, is part of our human responsibility to promote the common good.

4.2.3 Community

Societies are, however, sustained by the energy generated by less formal and less structured bodies which we may call 'communities'. The good life cannot be lived in splendid isolation, but is a life lived in fellowship with others. "It is not good for man to be alone" (Genesis 2.18). There is a good life that can be discovered only through commitment and self-giving to others. As we noted in our examination of the biblical model of the image of God (4.1.3), the married couple or family is the base community, the paradigm of all communities and the building block for other expressions of community. Communities are found in the form of neighbourhoods, networks and other associations of like minded people who come together to pursue common interests, hobbies or sport. Local churches, congregations and parishes are also forms of community. Communities create the social capital that enables societies to flourish. By their worthwhile activities and charitable works in the locality on behalf of their local churches or parishes, Christians strengthen the sense of community and contribute to the common good at that level. When the Church helps to build a strong and wholesome sense of local community it is preparing the ground for the mission of the gospel.[193] In their turn, societies provide the stability, underpinned by the rule of law, that enables communities to flourish. Societies are concerned primarily with justice, rather than with love, because they are impersonal collectivities of bodies with diverse and even conflicting ideas and goals. But communities, held together as they are by a set of common purposes, as well as by bonds of affection and personal loyalty, are concerned with compassionate action for the sake of their members and – ideally – also for the sake of those outside their boundaries.

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[193] Avis, P., *A Church Drawing Near: Spirituality and Mission in a Post-Christian Culture*, London and New York: T. & T. Clark, 2003, chs 7 and 8.

4.2.4   *Moral Virtue*

Christian believers, grounded in their local Christian communities and working together through the institutional churches and para-church agencies at regional and national level, can co-operate – with discretion – with those of other religious beliefs or none, in pursuit of specific shared goals. Such collaboration is appropriate and justified because the Bible and the Christian tradition teach that all human beings can know the basic moral requirements of the good and virtuous life that make for the common good. These requirements include 'the knowledge of good and evil' and the 'Golden Rule' that we should treat others as we would wish them to treat us.

Christians hold, of course, that the ultimate good is revealed in Scripture. It is to be found in God, as he is known by faith in Jesus Christ through the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. It is experienced in the community of the Church through all the means of grace that God has provided. Christians therefore work with selfless devotion to make that truth known through mission and evangelism. But Christians also typically work with divinely inspired energy for social goods which contribute to the well-being of the wider community, precisely because these reflect the ultimate source of all good in God and in fact approximate to it to various degrees.

The ultimate goal of human life, the theological good, is to know, love and serve God, or as the Westminster Shorter Catechism famously expresses it, "to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever". The social good, the proximate goal of human life, is to live in harmonious fellowship, in love and charity, first with our neighbours, then with our nation, and ultimately with global humankind. Christians are committed to pursue the social good because their faith teaches them that all their fellow human beings are created in the image of God (*imago dei*), are loved by God and are the subjects of the working of the Holy Spirit, in every human heart and life, that calls them to repentance and faith and to live henceforth in tune with God's will for human well-being. Human fellowship and communion (*koinonia*), in friendship, marriage, the family, the neighbourhood and beyond – for all its shortcomings, fragility and imperfections – upholds God's creation mandate while reflecting and anticipating that communion (*koinonia*) with God and the saints which is the fruit of redemption.

4.3   Role of 'Faith' in British National Life

4.3.1   *Why 'Faith' is Necessary*

In recent years, the expression 'faith communities' has become the so-called 'politically correct' way of referring to both the various Christian churches and the other world religions in our society. Christians may well feel ambivalent when the term 'faith community' is applied to them. On the one hand, it seems to level all religions and the beliefs to manifestations of one basic phenomenon - faith. Is there a sub-text here that all faiths are equally valid and perhaps equally 'trivial'? Can it really make sense to lump all religious groups together in one category, in spite of huge differences in their size, their influence and their stake in society? Christians own the biblical language of 'church' and cannot be content with sociological descriptors such as 'faith community' (or even 'denomination').

On the other hand, the expression 'faith communities' does seem to have something of the heart of the matter in it. Whatever their differences (and they are significant), all religions and the communities into which they are organised are fundamentally motivated by faith. At their core is a set of convictions, inherited through the tradition of the community, about the meaning and purpose of the world and of human life and death. Religious faith, wherever it is found, is not just a 'worldview' but a sustaining vision that sees beyond the here and now to an ultimate, transcendent source in God, or in a sacred realm beyond the mundane. Christians undoubtedly share many aspects of faith with those who belong to the other monotheistic religions, Judaism and Islam (and it is this that makes collaboration on ethical and social issues appropriate), but there are, of course, distinctive characteristics of Christian faith.

For Christians, faith is Trinitarian: it is faith in the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Faith is God-centred, Christ-shaped, and Spirit-empowered. Living faith is the gift of

God, and is imparted by divine grace (Ephesians 2.8). Faith enables us to stretch out our hands to receive salvation through Christ alone (Acts 16.31). Faith brings us the assurance of the reality of the things we hope for from God and is the evidence in our spirits of things we cannot see (Hebrews 11.1). Faith is pleasing to God and without faith it is not possible to please God (Hebrews 11.6). It is through faith that God's revelation of himself in his written Word, the Bible, comes alive. The sacraments of the Church, Baptism and Holy Communion, are received in the context of faith, and it is faith that makes them efficacious. Faith is required for the process of Christian initiation to be complete, and it is by faith that Christians walk with Christ day by day. Along with Christian hope and Christian love (*agape; caritas*), faith is one of the 'theological virtues'. Just as every individual needs faith, so does every society and nation.

4.3.2 *A Nation Without Faith?*

Christians long that others in their families and neighbourhoods and in the wider community may come to share their faith and the blessings that it brings. This motivates both their prayers and their witness. Christians are saddened when they see so many people in our society who are apparently (as they themselves once were) without faith and are therefore often directionless and adrift in life, 'without Christ ... having no hope and without God in the world' (Ephesians 2.12).

The ultimate goal of faith is more than the making of new individual Christians and individual salvation. It also includes the pursuit of a kingdom pattern of community life that conforms to God's purpose for humankind. God wills that all nations and societies should honour him and walk in his ways. When Christians, motivated by their faith, get involved in their community, especially through community-based projects, to work for justice, healing and human well-being, they may also be considered to be engaged in work for the kingdom of God, enlarging the sphere in which God's reign may be willingly and gladly acknowledged. While they do this for its own sake, because it is a good and worthwhile thing in itself, community involvement, not least in the form of practical social justice and voluntary support, naturally offers valuable opportunities for witness and worship - a fundamental religious freedom that is currently enshrined in human rights legislation. Attempts to erode this freedom, along with others, for example, by raising the spectre of enforced proselytism, must continue to be strenuously resisted.[194]

It is by no means a straightforward matter to evaluate the state of faith in British society at the beginning of the 21st century. There is real diversity of belief and religious cultures in our country. But the extent of this diversity is exaggerated for ideological motives by the proponents of so-called 'political correctness'. Christianity is almost completely erased from sections of the media. The fact that 72% of people identified themselves as Christian in the 2001 census is not reflected in public media discussion of the values and beliefs of British people today. The percentage of individuals who identify themselves as atheists is tiny, though up to 30% of the population would appear to be practically agnostic, tinged with Christian sentiment.

Many millions of the 72% of Christians appear on the face of it to live their daily lives as though Christianity made little difference. But here appearances may be deceptive. Allowance should be made for relentless secular peer pressure and a largely secular media, which impacts young people in particular, and the corresponding lack of Christian role models. Ours is not a society without faith, but one in which overt Christian faith may be hidden or undeveloped. It is often difficult to discern the submerged nine tenths of rather inchoate, inarticulate and often hazy spiritual aspiration that is often in strong sympathy with Christianity, and in fact perhaps sometimes passes as 'invisible Christianity'. Both empirical evidence and pastoral experience suggest that the proportion of people who hold basic Christian beliefs, who pray, who have some meaningful contact with the churches and for whom the spiritual dimension of life is important is several times the proportion of people who regularly

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[194] Ann Morisy, *Beyond the Good Samaritan: Community Ministry and Mission*, (London: Mowbray, 1997).

attend church (now about 8%).[195] However, notwithstanding the reality or otherwise of such a perception, caution must be exercised in identifying too closely a typically post-modern 'pick and mix' religiosity with authentic Christian faith.

There are, of course, many reasons why people who have basic Christian convictions and values do not translate these into active participation in church life. Apart from the apathy and inertia that committed Christians often identify in their fellow citizens, some of these are rather subtle. Certain people have had bad experiences of churches, clergy and ministers; they have been alienated by churches and their representatives (approximately 40% of the population has had some real contact with a church at various points).[196] Some wrestle with the problem of evil and suffering and wonder how a good and loving Creator could allow that on the scale that we see in the world. Others labour under various crude misapprehensions about the Bible and Christian teaching. Many have only scratched the surface of what Christianity has to offer, and have not discovered the richness of the manifold spiritual paths in its various internal traditions: a narrow, distorted and impoverished Christianity is all they know and it does not satisfy them. Yet others feel that, much as they would like to believe, they simply do not have the gift of faith. It is this area of wistful half-believing and of spiritual searching that provides one of the most challenging and fruitful arenas for sensitive and intelligent evangelism, by clergy, ministers and all committed Christians.

4.4 Mission, Church and Nation in the 21st Century

4.4.1 Church and Mission

'The Church lives by mission as a fire lives by burning.' The Christian Church is called by God to play a crucial part in God's saving purposes for the world. Scripture reveals that God's eternal plan is to reconcile all things to himself through Christ and to gather them together in him (Colossians 1.20; Ephesians 1.10). This gracious design is an expression of the mission of God (*missio dei*) which is nothing less than the unceasing outpouring of God's life and love into the world and human history. The Church is constituted by the mission of God and commissioned to be an agent and instrument of that mission.[197]

The fundamental commissioning of the Church is described in 'the Great Commission' of Matthew 28.16-20, where the risen Christ charges his apostles with the triple task of making disciples, baptising and teaching. This threefold commission encapsulates the core tasks entrusted to the Church and its ministry: to preach the gospel and teach the Christian faith, to baptise believers and to minister pastoral care and oversight.[198]

So mission is clearly a matter that concerns the entire Church and the particular churches; it is therefore an ecclesial issue and should not be divorced from individuals and freelance or 'parachurch' organisations engaged in mission, even though these may sometimes appear to make up for deficiencies of churches themselves with regard to mission. The *nature* of the Church, as the body of Christ and as the pilgrim people of God, is related to the *purpose* of the Church, as the agent and instrument of God's gracious purposes in the world. The Church cannot be considered apart from the mission that has been given to it and Christian mission cannot be separated from the Church. Though a narrowly institutional view of Church is not in view here, ecclesiology and missiology should go hand in hand.

In all its activities, therefore, the Church can never for a moment forget those outside its community who have not yet come to know Christ as their Saviour and Lord, have not yet

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[195] See Paul Avis (ed.), *Public Faith? The State of Religious Belief and Practice in Britain*, (London: SPCK, 2003).

[196] Philip J. Richter and Leslie J. Francis, *Gone But Not Forgotten: Church Leaving and Returning*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1998).

[197] The definitive work of missiology is David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).

[198] For fuller exposition of this theme see Paul Avis, *A Ministry Shaped by Mission* (London and New York: T. & T. Clark, 2005).

been gathered by baptism into the body of Christ and have not yet come to share in the privileges of communion with God and the people of God. Like the Good Shepherd himself, pastors and people will long to reach out to those who are outside the fold. They will not rest until all those within their reach have been touched by the gospel in word and deed and helped to make the journey of repentance and faith back to God and have been gathered into the Church. While Jesus spoke of the ninety-nine who were safely gathered in and of the one lost sheep that needed to be rescued (Luke 15.3-7), the proportions today, in a society that has wandered far from Christian commitment, are almost reversed: there are comparatively few in the fold, and the great majority are scattered on the mountain side, thus presenting a huge challenge to the pastoral mission of the Church.

- First, then, the Church needs to be *motivated for mission* by obedience to the Lord's command in Matthew 28.16-20, by compassion for those who are like sheep without a shepherd (Mark 6.34) and a burning desire that others should come to know God's redeeming love in Christ and share in the Christian Way with all his disciples today.

- Second, the Church needs to be *geared for mission*, organised in such a fashion that churches, acting individually and together, can make the widest and deepest impact within their communities, ensuring both continuity, which builds essential qualities of trust, and flexibility to respond to changing contexts.[199]

- Third, the Church also needs to be *equipped for mission* through the education and training of its members and ministers in all the skills and knowledge that they need to be effective in their task, to be biblically and theologically resourced for mission. A special extension of 'equipping the saints' for mission is the fostering and training of evangelists.

- Fourthly, there is an extended sense in which the Church needs to be conscious it is *engaged in mission* in a committed and sustained way on behalf of the gospel. This implies engagement, not only with individuals and households, but with whole communities and with the institutions and organisations that make up civil society, and at the level of the state, for example, in relation to public policy. Such an understanding of mission is plainly predicated on a model of the Church which necessarily involves engagement with and participation in society and culture, rather than an ecclesiological model that is inwardly focussed and/or separationist in outlook.

4.4.2 *Mission and Evangelism*

While the Church's ongoing mission includes its life of prayer and worship and the nurture and pastoral support of all its members, the most crucial aspect of mission is oriented towards those who are not yet faith-full members of the body of Christ and have not so far found their way to participating fully in that life of praise and prayer. This is the task of evangelism or evangelisation, which may be seen as the cutting edge of mission, because it is always moving forward into unclaimed territory, breaking new ground and opening up new possibilities for the gospel. While mission tends to be regarded as a broader term than evangelism, evangelism is clearly an essential part of mission. It is impossible to envisage a concept of mission that does not include evangelism, although evangelism undertaken without reference to the Church is in danger of being detached, superficial and ephemeral.

Evangelism has often been seen in terms of personal, one-to-one witness by individual Christians, or in terms of huge rallies led by famous international evangelists such as Billy Graham. Given their characteristic emphasis on personal conversion and active public witness, Evangelicals have led the way in such forms of outreach. However, in today's conditions probably a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of lifestyle evangelism is called for. The personal ministry of leading other individuals to Christ of course remains indispensable, but also overall strategies for bringing the transforming power of the gospel to bear on the life of the

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[199] See *Mission-Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*, (London: Church House Publishing, 2004).

nation, backed by vision involving the possibility of societal transformation across the widest possible front is necessary. To fulfil this level of strategy will necessarily involve the raising up, equipping and training of evangelists, of those who have the God-given skills to win others for Christ and who can model this vocation for clergy, ministers and Christians everywhere. In addition, it will be crucial to encourage and train Christians to be skilled and effective in all areas of Christian apologetics who can engage at all relevant levels society, including with the academy, government, media, education and the arts. Ordinary Christians should also be encouraged to take their place in every area of structural society, in the form of teachers, doctors, lawyers, MPs, etc, where they can live out holistic gospel-driven lives, ideally effectively resourced and supported by the Church. In the present climate of general decline, retrenchment and lack of confidence in the churches, whole-life evangelism should be among the most sought-after, prized and honoured of all Christian ministries, because on it the future of the Church depends.

4.4.3   *Strategic Mission and Evangelism*

Christian commitment in Britain, and especially in England, has declined to the point where we are faced with the challenge of the re-evangelisation of the nation. In the face of this daunting task every opportunity should be seized and every avenue explored. Prejudice should be set aside and disunity among Christians should be overcome wherever possible so that we may make common cause in the gospel. We should not be reconciling ourselves as churches to continued decline, to a 'bit part' in national life, but rather praying and working for the renewal of the Church that will generate fresh energies for mission and evangelism. A widespread spiritual awakening among the people, not internal exile, is what we should be praying and preparing for.

The sustaining historic vision of major national churches, such as the Church of England and the Church of Scotland, has been of a Church among the people and for the people. Now the gap between church and people is greater than it has been for centuries. We need, therefore, to transpose the outmoded traditional vision, that of Church and nation wedded to each other, to the realities of our present-day situation, one that is marked by secularism, pluralism and widespread spiritual searching. The Church of England's missionary commitment to the nation and to every community within it is obviously no longer on the basis of state-enforced religious uniformity or an Anglican religious monopoly (those were dismantled centuries ago). It must find its ground today in a new understanding of mission and ministry – that will enable it to connect with individuals, households and communities, especially at the symbolic milestones of life, the rites of passage that the church seeks to sanctify through its occasional offices (baptism, marriage and funeral rites). Such engagement at the level of personal, familial and communal faith helps build trust and so provides a spiritual power base and ecclesial credibility.

How can the Christian Church strengthen its links with the population and respond effectively to the spiritual longing and questioning that we find all around us, acknowledging that largely this is where the Church is failing? Such a mission objective necessarily involves making God findable, presenting Christ credibly, and making the Church both visible and credible in a popular culture that rarely mentions Jesus Christ and a society in which accountable personal morality and disciplined responsible living is increasingly marginal.

4.4.4   *Prophetic and Pastoral Modes of Mission and Evangelism*

In a post-modern society undergoing secularisation, we need to take the persistence – indeed, the resurgence – of the sense of the sacred in our culture seriously. In a prophetic ministry the Church needs to address both the public forum of social policy and popular ethical assumptions as well as the private forum of individual conviction and personal religious experience. In the ordinary local or parochial way of being a Christian, the life of the church and the life of the local community should interpenetrate. As Christians we could probably do more to show that we do not restrict our appreciation of spiritual experience narrowly to our own particular fold, but that we recognise the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit at work beyond the structures of our own particular churches. In this generous spirit we can perhaps

better help individuals to make essential connections between their most deeply cherished moments in life and the unique gospel entrusted to the Christian Church.

In a society that is being secularised, the Church should speak boldly and prophetically to the conscience of the nation by enunciating broad Christian moral principles and theological truths that are in danger of being overlooked or eclipsed. But it should speak at the same time in a pastoral and relational way to the heart of individuals who have awareness of transcendant sacred reality and experience glimpses of God, but who have not yet identified and connected such glimmerings with the gospel of Christ.

4.4.5 *Access for the Gospel*

If mission and evangelism is understood in such wholistic ways, including pastoral and relational models in presenting the ministry of the word of God and the sacraments of the gospel, it must be offered on as broad a front as possible, through a multiplicity of points of access. These points of access for people are points of impact for the gospel. Of course, if we wish to see church growth today the first and most important requirement is for every individual Christian to be effective and prophetic right where they are in terms of holistic relational living, working and speaking, empowered by the Holy Spirit. This is particularly crucial in a world in which institutional forms of religion are widely distrusted. In this context, we should not minimise the importance of spiritually significant persons (clergy and other publicly identifiable ministers), spiritually significant places (churches and chapels, etc.), and spiritually significant occasions (especially, but not exclusively Sunday worship, and every occasion that is significant for the values of the wider community, including national events of mourning or celebration). However, they are helpful adjuncts to the real work of evangelism which increasingly must be taken on board by way of individual responsibility. The strategic significance of the Church increasingly must become empowering and resourcing individuals for witness, and in this regard major investment in discipling and training and releasing people in ministry must become the focus of the Church, rather than restricting the work of ministry for privileged professionals inside the Church.

The Church must simultaneously take risks in exposing its gifts of grace all along (though not across) the boundary with an increasingly secular society. Deeply implicated in the structures of community and civil society, it needs to be perceived as welcoming the spiritual aspirations of individuals, couples and families, of communities, organisations, institutions and societies. Not condemning them for their shortcomings, but if anything erring on the side of charitable presumption, giving the benefit of the doubt, 'not breaking the bruised reed or quenching the smouldering flax'. The Church vindicates its place in the nation when it is seen to be committed to the well-being of all, the common good, strengthening the bonds of family and community, and presenting a united witness to Christian truth. Forging connections, getting involved and making valuable contributions to society whilst remaining distinctively Christian are key essentials.

4.5   Christians and Civil Disobedience

Religious liberty issues are now very much to the forefront. In the wake of high profile terrorist incidents the rise of militant fundamentalist Islam has been the catalyst for not only unprecedented security concerns especially in the West, but also calls for restrictions on what have been regarded as basic human freedoms. In France we have witnessed the banning of religious symbols in schools. In Britain we have seen government proposals to ban religious hatred and challenges by Muslims, Sikhs and Christians to perceived insult in the arts and the media. In addition, the government has attempted to outlaw any forms of proselytism in voluntary Christian projects that involve public financial support – 'proselytism' being defined very restrictively even in terms of saying grace before meals. In Europe, in what Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, has described as the 'pushing God to the margins' by 'secular forces' seeking to privatise religious faith, Rocco Buttiglione was forcibly barred from taking the post of European Justice Commissioner for his traditional Catholic views on homosexuality and gender. Ratzinger suggested that this implies that anyone who defends Christian orthodoxy is now effectively excluded from public life as a result of an aggressive ideological form of secular intolerance. Though many avowed Christians hold senior posts as public servants throughout Europe, there are nevertheless grounds for serious concern. From a different perspective, the re-election of George Bush has been widely attributed to the influence of the so-called 'Christian Right' in America. This has unleashed an at times almost hysterical response from secular left wing media and others making accusations of conspiracy theories and demanding enforced marginalisation of religious groups and their views from democratic political processes. Such reactions were even shared by some Christians, notably in America by Jim Wallis and the Sojourners, whose outspoken opposition to Bush illustrated a growing disparity of views found between more traditional evangelical Christians and what has become known as the 'emerging church' – an amorphous grouping largely composed of those who cherish their formation in the evangelical tradition but who perceive limitations in that tradition's ability to relate effectively to postmodern culture, and who are open to a wide range of other spiritual influences and innovations. Many in this group would identify with the earlier description 'post-evangelical'.[200] The fact remains, nevertheless, that many Christians in all parts of the world experience officially sanctioned marginalisation, prejudice, insult, offence, prohibitive legal sanctions, intolerance, discrimination, and even arrest, trial, imprisonment or persecution. This reminds us of New Testament warnings that all true Christians can expect persecution. Part of our response has to be simply to endure this. But a crucial question once more becomes topical and relevant. Can it ever be possible for Christians to join in civil disobedience or even violent revolution?

Of course, this is not a new question. The early church encountered the challenge in Jerusalem where Peter and John declared that obedience to God took precedence over unjust directives from the authorities (Acts 4.19). Many Christians were killed in the first three centuries for refusing to worship the Roman emperor – many more died in the 20th century under tyrannical regimes.

Therefore, given scriptural and historical precedent, to what extent may Christians resist the state? Or is resistance always wrong? To what extent is obedience to the state and the law a constant imperative and in what circumstances might disobedience be a right option? On the one hand, to resist the state violently is necessarily to act illegally, for no country's law allows armed insurgency. However, on the other hand, western democracies permit peaceful protest. So the question of the Christian's attitude to law is important. Is it immoral to act illegally? Is revolution ever a valid route to liberation?

Responding to this is necessarily both deeply theological as well as controversial. A Christian worldview includes the consideration that in a fallen world there are powerful forces of evil and that human beings and institutions are corrupted by sin. Societies and governments may therefore be corrupted by power and the desire for domination which, as history confirms, often results in coercion, sometimes with violence. Christians are commanded in Scripture to

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[200] Cf., Dave Tomlinson, *The Post-Evangelical* (Lonon: Triangle, 1995); Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003).

resist forces of evil. So does this confer a mandate for civil disobedience? And if so, to what extent? It needs to be remembered that there is also an honourable and influential history of Christian pacifism, notably from the Quaker and Anabaptist traditions.

The weight of history confirms that Christians have generally been supporters of the status quo. However, if, as most Christians accept, they should be politically involved in democratic processes, many believe this may, where necessary, take the form of active resistance to the state. This can take different forms and may encompass disobedience to law, civil disobedience, involving selective, non-violent resistance or protest, or ultimately violent revolution. By way of historical Christian precedents, figures such as Tyndale, Knox, Milton, Cromwell, Bunyan are often cited, and more recently Barth, Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King and Desmond Tutu. These were devout Christians, some of whom were willing, though not lightly, to justify force or even armed rebellion in certain circumstances and non-violent resistance in others. They wrestled with the same theological questions we face today. Christians hold differing views relating to the various degrees of opposition to the state which for the sake of simplicity we have classified as 'civil disobedience'. Fundamental theological questions relating to the validity for Christians of breaking the law, violence and war inevitably come into what is a complex and highly controversial debate. Christians simply disagree on these matters.

Civil disobedience is not a kind of on/off button, just as the circumstances in which disobedience may be justified are difficult precisely to define. Of course, before the question of civil resistance is determined, various other options need to be considered, and in today's democratic society winning the persuasion battle in the media is inevitably a crucial prelude to and basis for any form of demonstrative action. Certainly, in a modern democratic state it is much more a question of various graduated responses, which may begin with a simple and entirely lawful withdrawal of co-operation with state authorities before progressing through various forms of resistance focussed on a particular area, to ultimately deliberate defiance and even perhaps revolution. It is, however, ridiculous to contemplate revolution without having wrestled with other alternatives which may be less drastic in terms of their potential for confrontation but may bear much clearer witness to Christian values than revolution ever would.

For a start, it is important to recognise that state regimes that promote injustice in some areas may well still be fulfilling their God-given mandate in others. Many states that fail to act in line with God's word may nevertheless exercise valuable functions in protecting society from the effects of human fallenness, an argument frequently made by those who support just war theory. However, those who engage in action, the purpose of which is to undermine or remove a regime, must think carefully about the moral consequences of what they are doing. A country where the state has simply lost its effectiveness and where anarchy threatens is invariably worse off than one where an organised government exists. The biblical portrayal of anarchy at the end of the book of Judges makes very sombre reading.

There are very few matters where state action may be unambiguously recognised by Christians as perpetrating evil that has to be resisted by deliberate acts of defiance. Requiring citizens to worship the emperor would be one, as would a blanket refusal to allow the Christian gospel to be made known (current government proposals to penalise proselytism arguably might in due course fall into such a category). But many other forms of evil and injustice may properly prompt Christian resistance in a measured and focussed way. In particular, Christians who are at the sharp end of some official state policy that they cannot in good conscience follow may have to take action of a sacrificial kind. To pick up on examples given earlier, the Church needs to decide how to support Christian marriage registrars or Christian social workers who feel obliged to resign rather than comply with state requirements that compromise what they (and the wider Christian community) believe to be their Christian faith and what they regard as right or wrong for society as a whole. It is disappointing that some church leaders not infrequently show more concern with protecting the position of ordained clergy than protecting the lay members of their flocks in such situations. Resisting evil in the modern state is as complex a matter as promoting good, and certainly a task that can take many different forms.

Christians must take great care not to provoke unnecessary confrontation. To give a rather trivial example, there may be possible reasons for limiting the right to door-to-door visitation in student halls of residence to do with protecting privacy and maintaining security. If so, Christians may feel it more appropriate to comply with such policies and seek other ways of spreading the good news of the gospel rather than engaging in self-publicising confrontation. On the other hand, if the real motivation of the authorities is to ban dissemination of the gospel in a public arena, this would need to be robustly challenged. Thinking about how to respond to policies adopted by the state which Christians see as inimical to their faith requires a good deal of careful and prayerful thought. A guiding principle should be that we resist very clearly and firmly policies that are manifestly unbiblical and that Christians in general cannot with good conscience comply with, while doing our utmost not to undermine the rightful authority of the state. There are many lawful ways of resisting such policies that fall short of deliberately breaking the law in ways that have so readily come to be associated with extremists such as animal rights protestors. The latter may more easily grab media headlines and may in a strange kind of way satisfy a hunger for apparent dramatic action on the part of its proponents. But especially where Christians are concerned, it may in any case be much less effective than the former and in practice end up being counter-productive. And the former may also be far more sacrificial on the part of the Christians concerned, especially when, for example, promotion prospects are jeopardised or resignation occurs. The example of Christ and the power of sacrifice in Christian theology and Christian tradition must never be underestimated or forgotten.

Is there nevertheless an authentic Christian argument for justifiable force? Certainly, the concept of liberation theology, versions of which include resistance by force, has acquired particular respectability especially in the contexts of South America and South Africa. Most Christians have traditionally argued for its legitimacy in certain circumstances, usually in support of the right of a state to restrain evil by use of coercive power. Few Christians are absolute pacifists and many have supported the idea of just war and just revolution, though of course these themselves remain theologically controversial.

From a biblical perspective, the passages most often cited tend to be Mark 12.17, and Romans 13.1-7, where obedience to the authorities is enjoined. However, many Christians have believed throughout history that these injunctions are applicable to lawful and just power only. Though undoubtedly controversial, the weight of theological opinion is probably against the idea of eternal biblical truth validating passive submission. Of course, there is minimal direct parallel of the biblical material with the opportunities provided by modern democracies. Though the concept of 'government' is present, there is no real equivalent to the idea of the state in the New Testament. And an injunction such as that of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5.39) would not generally be regarded as a categorical imperative, i.e., in the sense of an absolute law of conduct, but rather as taking the form of a contextual ethical aphorism. If this were not so, all resistance is absolutely condemned – violent or non-violent.

In fact, it would appear that resistance of some sort is permitted, as in the biblical examples provided by Daniel, the apostles in Acts 4, and the martyrs in Revelation 13. Such examples could not necessarily be pressed to justify the overthrowing of governments or armed rebellion, though certainly resistance to the authorities and acceptance of the consequences in the form of martyrdom appears to be enjoined. Questions therefore remain regarding the extent to which such contextual examples may be regarded as divine precedents for other times and places. Throughout history many prominent theologians have argued that they are. Calvin affirmed that it was acceptable for properly constituted officials or magistrates to rebel against tyranny. Knox and Rutherford insisted that it was everyone's duty to resist evil. They believed that an unjust state forfeits any claim to authority and therefore obedience.

Whilst the general thrust of the New Testament is that Christians are meant to obey the state, a comparison of the key texts – notably Matthew 22.21, Romans 13.1-4, 1 Peter 2.13-17, Acts 4.18-20 – suggests that civil government – as with the whole of life – stands under the greater law of God. In our fallen world God has permitted certain offices to protect society from the consequences of its fallenness. But no office can enjoin or prohibit action or belief contrary to the Word of God (though of course, as church history abundantly testifies, what this means is

open to a great variety of interpretations). A state that does this abrogates its authority and forfeits the obligation of obedience.

But what might this imply in practice? God has ordained and instituted the state as a delegated authority, an agent of justice, a restrainer of evil, a punisher of wrongdoers and a protector of the common good. If it actually does the reverse it becomes lawless and tyrannical and consequently need not be obeyed. The refusal of the early Christians to worship the emperor was considered a *political* offence. Accordingly, at a certain point it would appear that there is not only a right but a moral duty to disobey the state where it has departed from the principles of God's law, where disobedience takes on the nature of resistance to tyranny – tyranny effectively being defined as satanic rule without the sanction of God. Such civil disobedience, however, would nevertheless represent a complete antithesis to anarchy.

Could such resistance ever take the form of physical force or even armed revolution? In the context of Presbyterian 17th century Scotland and the Westminster Assembly, Samuel Rutherford argued that for the private individual there remained three effective defences against tyrannical government – protest, flight, or force. Force was to be seen very much as a last resort. Where a corporate body, such as a church, was involved, protest or force in self-defence were available, if possible by recourse to law, though if necessary by armed intervention – a course argued for and actually undertaken during the English civil war. Rutherford distinguished between lawful resistance and lawless uprising. His views were supported by John Locke. More recently in Nazi Germany Karl Barth encouraged Christians to condemn and resist National Socialism as a totalitarian unjust rule which was responsible for destroying all order, justice, freedom and authority. Dietrich Bonhoeffer became involved in a conspiracy against Hitler.

Many contemporary Christians will concur with protest and flight but stop short of using force. Some Christians will of course insist on absolute pacifism. However, most Christians would probably accept that recourse to legal action is a perfectly valid option, whilst flight is less possible in today's global context than in the 17th century.

Before any resort is made to protest, compulsion, constraint or force against a person or an entity such as a state, Christians would normally attempt to work hard on the task of reconstruction, i.e., seeking to persuade, correct and rebuild society before advocating disruption or conflict. But many Christians, notably encouraged by writers such as the evangelical apologist Francis Schaeffer and J.G. Davies[201], believe that if necessary appropriate force may be justifiable where it is legitimate and where there is appropriate vigilance and precaution against possible over-reaction. Over-reaction can easily descend into sheer violence. Schaeffer argues that in a fallen world the ideal of legal justice without the exercise of force is patently naïve – people have the right of recourse to the law, the police, and if necessary the use of physical force to defend themselves against assault. Schaeffer avoids a definition of 'legitimate force', though it would be characterised by its defensive nature. It would not include, for example, offensive force, such as the destruction of property or the deliberate injuring of others. Any use of force would have to be safeguarded by evidencing both a legitimate basis and legitimate exercise. Though in practice clear lines of differentiation may be extremely difficult to draw, Schaeffer argues that over-reaction may result in the effective crossing of the line between force and violence, and he believes that violence can never be justified. Christians cannot imagine they could 'take the law into their own hands'. So, if the state becomes totalitarian and all avenues of protest and flight are closed, then the use of defensive force may become a necessary and legitimate remedy for Christians. However, many Christians would prefer to adopt an response modelled on the peaceful or non-violent use of force, such as that espoused by Martin Luther King or Mahatma Gandhi who famously declared that 'non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.' Of course, not everyone considers that Gandhi was right and some Christian groups today continue to justify the use of violent resistance as a last resort.

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[201] See Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1982); J.G. Davies, *Christians, Politics & Violent Revolution* (London: SCM, 1976), to which this section is indebted.

Inevitably Christians will continue to disagree on the rights and wrongs of this issue. Probably in today's climate the most prudent and practicable option for Christians remains that of peaceful protest. There is still freedom, particularly in western democracies, to do that. Protest is a form of force or non-violent resistance. Of course, there is wide difference of opinion regarding when and how to exercise civil disobedience. Many Christians would regard threats to religious liberty as sufficient to trigger civil disobedience, for example, if freedom to preach the gospel was restricted or freedom to teach Christianity to children was prohibited, as in the Soviet Union. Ethical and social justice issues tend to be more controversial and Christians often are divided about what constitutes a legitimate response to abortion, euthanasia, poverty and threats to the environment. Most Christians would advocate use of both political and legal means, along with non-violent civil disobedience if necessary. However, most would also draw the line at attacking or threatening abortion clinics, theatres, broadcasters and personally targeting individuals associated with them. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, for Christians, any government that commands what contradicts God's law impairs its authority. Just as the early church decided that it would not worship Caesar, the church of the 21st century will need to decide when, how and in what circumstances it will resist unjust oppression or law in accordance with the guidelines set out in this section. The church should try to come to a common mind that at some point there is not only the right but the duty to disobey the state. In practice, however, it seems inevitable that where the bottom line is drawn will differ depending on perspective. The Commission does not attempt to define where the bottom line may be fixed – in this context it has agreed that its role has to be limited to advocating the principles involved and suggesting a practicable approach for Christians in the present as well as the future.

4.5.1 Avoiding Misunderstanding

In the light of the above, it is important to stress that Christians need to be clear what they are saying to avoid being misunderstood. Firstly, in no sense should they be heard to be advocating any kind of theocracy. There is little New Testament basis for such a close link between church and state until the return of Christ. Constantinian Christendom, though it still has its passionate advocates like Oliver O'Donovan, and whilst undoubtedly working well in some situations over the centuries, has nevertheless also been responsible for grave distortions of the gospel, and has frequently resulted in confused loyalties. And even O'Donovan implicitly appears to accept that where the state does not unambiguously aid the mission of the church it risks losing its legitimacy.[202] What is clear, however, is that the Kingdom of God must never be confused with a national flag. There has probably never been a time such as the present when this has become such a self-evident truth. Finally, it is imperative that Christians who believe in the ultimate use of force should be those who *as well* are practising and modelling the Christian humanitarian alternatives.

4.5.2 Co-operation and Co-belligerence

Section 3.3 has already shown that the Evangelical movement has at various times made common cause with non-evangelical Christians in the furtherance of its social mission. Thomas Clarkson was not overtly or demonstrably evangelical, yet worked closely with Wilberforce on the abolition of slavery. The religious liberties work of the Evangelical Alliance in the 19th century often proceeded in co-operation with non-evangelical Christian churches and political representatives, and its support of the German Confessing Church in the 1930s linked it with theologians and leaders (e.g., Rudolph Bultmann) who would hardly have been regarded as evangelical. Likewise, the Alliance's officially-defined stance of 'benevolent neutrality' towards the World Council of Churches when the latter was formed in 1948 allowed it to work in parallel with the new ecumenical body, even while it eschewed organic union.

When so-called 'neo-Evangelicals' like Carl Henry and Billy Graham diverged from Fundamentalists in the United States after the Second World War, one of the key points at issue was the acceptability or otherwise of partnering non-evangelicals in the social and civic sphere.

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[202] Oliver O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 193ff.

In the Church of England, evangelicals have at certain times found themselves standing with traditional Anglo-Catholics against liberal innovations - on homosexuality and radical feminism, for example. Even more controversially, the past thirty years have seen evangelicals forging closer links with Roman Catholics on the social agenda. The Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission (1977-1984) laid important common theological ground for this enterprise, but the Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT) initiative, and its practical outworking in the Christian Coalition in the United States, has seen Evangelicals and Catholics join forces in a concerted campaign against what the ECT Statement on Mission defines as the 'culture of death' widespread in modern secular society - that is, against abortion, euthanasia, stem cell research and the like. As we have seen, in Britain similar alliances with non-evangelical Christians (and, indeed, with some non-Christian groups) have formed around the Jubilee 2000 campaign on Third World Debt, around a range of projects on disaster relief, and around present-day religious liberties.

Writing in 1970, when a new spirit of co-operation with non-evangelicals was emerging as a response to the rise of 'godless morality' in the public square, Francis Schaeffer coined the term which has become standard in debates about evangelical social action - 'co-belligerence'. Schaeffer attempted to define it in the following way:

> Christians must realize that there is a difference between being a co-belligerent and an ally. At times you will seem to be saying exactly the same thing as the New Left elite or the Establishment elite. If there is social injustice, say there is social injustice. If we need order, say we need order. In these cases, and at these specific points, we would be co-belligerents. But do not align yourself as though you are in either of these camps: You are an ally of neither. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is different from either - totally different…We must say what the Bible says when it causes us to *seem to be saying* what others are saying, such as 'Justice!' or 'Stop the meaningless bombings!' But we must never forget that this is only a passing co-belligerency and not an alliance.[203]

In depicting evangelical social outreach in these terms, Schaeffer was echoing the conviction of Abraham Kuyper (see 3.9.2.6 above), that the operation of God's sovereignty beyond as well as within the true Church makes engagement with possibly 'unsound' Christians, as well as with others who do not share Christian faith at all, a justifiable step in certain cases. Unfortunately, Schaeffer did not explain his distinction between 'alliance' and 'co-belligerence' in any great detail, and it might well be asked how such a distinction would be drawn in practice. Perhaps it is better to conceive a continuum of co-operation running between informal, contingent 'common interest' at one pole and formal, organic merger of resources, organisation and principles on the other. What seems clear is that the rise of pluralism and secularism in the UK, and the concomitant pressure they are likely to place on all Christians at the cultural and legislative level, will make 'co-belligerence' increasingly vital.

Certainly on an international basis, evangelical Christians have found themselves alongside others in pressing certain causes – often to do with human rights and religious freedom. In Malaysia, for example, Christians have made common cause with Buddhists and Hindus to counter Muslim oppression. In Japan, evangelical Christians have worked with the National Council of Churches, Roman Catholics, Buddhists and secular organisations, including the Japanese communist party, in their struggle against the nationalistic religion of Shintoism. In the United Kingdom, evangelical Christians have been working with secular humanists and the media to oppose proposed government legislation to restrict free speech. More and more inter-faith bodies are being created and being expected by governments to speak for the so-called 'faith sector' in engaging with the democratic processes.

Some Christians understandably question whether it is appropriate or acceptable to 'compromise' in such a way. They frequently appeal to Jesus' words "He who is not with me is against me" (Matthew 12.30). Others who favour co-belligerence counter this by citing Jesus in

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[203] Francis Schaeffer, *The Church at the End of the 20th Century* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970), 37.

return, "Whoever is not against us is for us" (Mark 9.40). However, in contemporary contexts it would seem that co-belligerence is becoming not only appropriate but necessary as weight of numbers and influence are crucial in swaying public and government opinion. Nevertheless, when Christians decide to campaign alongside others who do not share their beliefs, they enter a world of dangerous alliances and need to act both wisely and cautiously. Careful preparation is required.

Wise preparation involves clarity[204]:

- clear beliefs
- clear unity
- clear principles
- clear purpose
- clear outcomes
- clear language

Otherwise, serious difficulties are likely to be encountered. The dangers of engaging in co-belligerent activity need to be minimised and include awareness of

- The danger of losing control. There is unlikely to be much trust between co-belligerents. Advantage may be taken of others for selfish rather than common goals.
- The danger of unacceptable compromise. Established principles and beliefs normally dictate which compromises are acceptable and which are non-negotiable. It is possible to get sucked into unacceptable compromises gradually and insidiously without realising it. Syncretism is a real danger. Pressure may be encountered to sacrifice one's own beliefs for the good of others.
- The danger of the final result being distorted by co-belligerents. After all the effort and apparent trust between the parties in a shared exercise, it may become apparent that a party has been taken advantage of or "used".
- The danger of being misunderstood by one's own constituency. Accusations may be received from supporters of 'betraying the cause'.[205]

4.6   Priority of Mission: Apologetics and Evangelism

Apologetics is the discipline of commending the Christian faith at an intellectual level, 'giving a reason for the hope that is within us' (1 Peter 3.15). On the one hand, apologetics defends Christian faith against attack, showing that Christian faith is always on the side of truth and wisdom and welcomes the light of knowledge from whichever direction it shines and fresh imaginative expressions of the Christian mystery. On the other hand, apologetics seeks to convince those who are open to reasoned persuasion of the truth claims of Christian theology. Although intellectual conviction is only one aspect of conversion – the emotions and the will must be involved as well – for some people it is a hugely important part.

Churches and organisations such as the Evangelical Alliance could perhaps do more to encourage a vocation to apologetics among gifted Christian writers. A first step would be to recognise publicly the intellectual challenges that face Christianity in our present world with its confusing mix of religious pluralism and ideological secularism, and to express confidence that the challenges can be met. A second step is to put resources into theological research with an apologetic slant and to encourage suitable young scholars to engage in this. At the same time we should seek to promote more intelligent preaching, including a more scholarly use of the Bible, so that over time congregations become better equipped to share their faith and to

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[204] Based on a paper presented to the Evangelical Alliance by John Langlois
[205] For a useful overview of evangelical thinking about co-belligerence, see Daniel Strange, 'Co-belligerence and Common Grace: Can the Enemy of My Enemy Be My Friend?', Cambridge Paper 14 (3) (Cambridge: Jubilee Centre, September 2005).

respond to contemporary questions and challenges from enquirers. Public lectures can help to create a climate of awareness of the need for a ministry of apologetics and can contribute to the armoury of Christian arguments. Apologists cannot of course be manufactured to order: apologetics is a skill and requires the right gifts, but it can be fostered, recognised and rewarded.

4.7 Constitutional Reform

As indicated in the earlier section on the constitution, there are different ways in which the constitution may be understood. These are complemented by varied understandings of the subject of reform, of which we may instance four in this context.

First would be the formal enactment of the constitution into a comprehensive and codified form. This may have certain theoretical attractions. It would be likely to produce greater clarity, and might stimulate public interest in basic questions about how we as a people are governed. But equally it would be a very difficult exercise to achieve satisfactorily; it would be very time consuming and most importantly, there would be no guarantee that at the end of the process the constitution would be significantly improved. It could have the effect of increasingly bringing the courts into conflict with the executive. Nor is this option 'practical politics' at present.

Second, there is the possibility of a continuing programme of change such as Labour claim to have followed since 1997. As implied above, whether recent changes can be seen as a genuine programme of inter-related change driven by clear principles is debatable. It is not clear, for example, whether the real aim of the changes has been to disperse power through introducing more formal checks and balances, or to enhance the power of the central part of the executive.

Third, particular changes may be made to various parts of the constitution, without necessarily any clear constitutional rationale or intent. Joining the European Union (originally the European Economic Community in 1973) was not intended to be a constitutional change, but over time it has assumed that character as European arrangements have themselves evolved. The rise of judicial activism, especially through judicial review, was not part of a conscious effort to alter the constitution. But again it has had that effect. The unwritten nature of the constitution means that this kind of change is often difficult to discern as well as potentially being profound in its effects.

But there is arguably a fourth level of change of greater importance still. The British constitution depends to an unusual degree on conventions and understandings and these in turn depend upon the attitudes, manners and culture of the people who constitute these nations. As the habits and behaviour of people change so this impacts on the working of the constitution, which in turn adapts to a changed context. Among factors that have altered patterns of behaviour in ways that affect the constitution are: loss of trust; decline in deference; the rise of individualism, secularism, consumerism and corresponding decline in community values; and, of course, the widespread erosion of Christian ethics.

To place emphasis on reform of the constitution is to run the risk that remedies of a superficial kind will be sought for what is a more fundamental malaise. What is needed is a renewal of the roots that nourish the constitution within our society. This involves a more active citizenry inspired by ideals of the common good, not simply organised groups pressing for their own advantage; a more evident spirit of service among political leaders rather than a sense that politicians are merely seeking benefit for themselves; a more intelligent and serious level of public debate rather than tabloid press tantrums. Again, there is a call here for Christians to engage seriously and constructively with the public realm, and to receive encouragement and support as they do so from their churches. The Christian faith is not a private faith; on the contrary, properly understood Christianity demands expression in the public square as well as in every aspect of an individual Christian's life and work. Those who are employed in so-called secular callings are every bit as much ministers of the gospel as those who enter the ministry or take up so-called 'full-time Christian service'.

4.8 Religious Education and Schools[206]

4.8.1 Class Teaching and Curriculum

The United Kingdom is amongst a minority of countries in the world that have compulsory religious teaching in state schools. Some segregate children so that they are taught according to their family religious affiliation. In the UK, the Religious Education (RE) curriculum is designed to be suitable for all pupils, regardless of their family background or personal faith. Freedom of conscience is assured through an 'opt-out' clause, which allows parents to withdraw their children. It is not often used.

Until the 1970s, RE syllabuses were basically Christian in character (albeit often theologically liberal), even if other religions were taught. After that, with the exception of Northern Ireland, they became increasingly multifaith (the pressure for multifaith teaching in Northern Ireland is, however, growing). The 1988 Education Reform Act for England and Wales required that the predominantly Christian make up of British religious life should be recognised in syllabuses. Despite this, syllabuses are still multifaith *in ethos*, even if a majority of teaching time is given to Christianity. The proposed National Framework reflects the same policy. Church schools will also usually teach other religions, although the ethos of the syllabus will often be explicitly Christian, particularly in Roman Catholic schools.

A significant development, especially in England and Wales, is a move from understanding the role of RE as being to teach facts about religion to seeing it as being designed to promote pupils' personal, moral and spiritual development. There is considerable emphasis on relevance to pupils' lives (an approach variously called learning from religions or personal search). This is an opportunity to teach Christianity as a living faith.

For the sake of simplicity, Evangelicals could be described as probably broadly dividing into two camps in their response to classroom RE. On the one hand are those who urge that Christianity should be taught as true, arguing that to accommodate a multifaith ethos is to make concessions to the ideology of pluralism. This group usually stresses the Christian heritage of this country, assuming or adopting a Christendom model for church/state relations. Although they do accept the necessity of teaching other religions, they usually find themselves in conflict with the RE profession and with members of other faiths and are consequently a relatively ineffective voice in influencing syllabus development. On the other hand are those who more readily accept that modern Britain has a more diverse faith make-up with an ethos that is dominantly secular. They see this plural situation as a mission opportunity rather than as necessarily a cause for concern. Such people look for partnership with others in the RE profession, seeking to present and proclaim Christian truth alongside other religions in the market place of beliefs and ideas that constitutes modern classroom RE.

Given the realities of the current context, if Evangelicals wish to be a movement for change in RE, the second strategy of *transforming missionary encounter* is the more promising way forward. This means ensuring that Evangelicals are at the heart of the RE profession by identifying and supporting those who can be agents of change. We need people who will develop exciting and innovative teaching strategies that earn the respect of all RE teachers whilst at the same time facilitating the clear and distinctive teaching of gospel truth. There is current opportunity as the proposed National Framework emphasises the importance of pupils deciding about religious truth, a far cry from previous descriptive approaches. We need Evangelicals in RE as teachers, advisers, curriculum developers and SACRE members who can capitalise on this opportunity and utilise the latest insights from conservative biblical scholarship in classrooms. There is, sadly, a current dearth of such people.

RE is not the only subject in the curriculum of state schools where distinctive Christian input is possible. It is required that all subjects are taught in ways that promote the spiritual and moral development of pupils. How to do this is not well understood by the teaching profession. Evangelical Christians should support the development of innovative, transformative models whereby Christian beliefs and values can be communicated through a variety of subjects in the so-called 'secular' curriculum. Again, there is a dearth of evangelicals currently able or willing

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[206] The Commission is grateful to Trevor Cooling for his input to the sections on education.

to do this though there are expert Evangelical agencies seeking to provide appropriate training and resources.

4.8.2 *Assemblies*

Assemblies are compulsory in schools throughout the British Isles. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the requirement is for a daily assembly, but it is less frequent in Scotland. The daily requirement is highly contentious and much resented by teachers, particularly in secondary schools. The law is broken in many schools.

Traditionally the term 'assembly' has been used to describe this activity. More accurately it should be described as 'Collective Worship' in England and Wales and 'Religious Observance' in Scotland. In England and Wales, to be lawful the daily act must be demonstrably religious and worship of a divine being or power clearly evident.

Historically, the daily assembly has reflected the Christian heritage of the country. Since the 1960s this has become more and more contentious. In England and Wales the requirement is that Collective Worship should be *wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character*. It is often unclear what this means in practice and, indeed, which god is being worshipped, so that the legal criteria may frequently be widely interpreted or indeed ignored.

There is considerable pressure for change being exerted particularly to adopt more inclusive worship and the celebration of, so-called, shared values and common spirituality. Models based on concepts such as *worthship* and *god-centred pluralism* are very influential. The danger is that any new arrangements will either require compulsory acts of multifaith worship that are syncretistic and may please nobody, or will 'ban' acts that are distinctive of Christianity or any other religion. They may also require a balance in the range of celebrations. In order to prevent these outcomes, it is essential that evangelicals develop creative, inspirational models for new style assemblies that are appropriate for the modern context and that will win wide support from schools, particularly community schools. Following N.T. Wright's warning that we lose our public signs, symbols and other iconography at our peril, we should not easily give up on assemblies altogether.

These models are likely to include relaxation of the daily requirement and the dropping of the word 'worship'. Such flexibility should ensure that the invaluable opportunity that currently exists to share the gospel with large numbers of pupils is not lost.

However, it needs to be acknowledged that such call for change and flexibility is likely to excite considerable resistance from a vocal minority of Evangelicals who regard loyalty to the traditional model of school worship as a litmus test of Christian integrity. Though undoubtedly challenging, the Church needs to be prepared to resist what may be regarded as unrealistic and even backward-looking attempts to maintain a '1950s' approach to school assembly if there is to be hope for effective future ministry through school assemblies in the very different context in which schools now have to operate. We would want to preserve the right for faith-based schools to worship in the distinctive manner of their particular faith.

4.8.3 *European Initiatives*

Twenty four out of the twenty five countries of the European Union, with the formal exception of France, recognise either state religions (in northern Europe, of the Protestant tradition), established state churches (as in England and France), or, in the case of countries with a Roman Catholic tradition, concordats with the Vatican.

An initiative to instil religious education in European countries has recently been introduced with the draft resolution 'Education and Religion' and whilst its outcome is uncertain it may nevertheless represent an indication of the direction European education policy is headed in. The report deplores that, while many European countries give little or no attention to religious education, others choose to focus on one religion, in accordance with their national history and cultural identity and with the beliefs of their nations. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted the report in September 2005 though it has only advisory status.

This report conveys a need to give greater importance to the teachings of all religions in primary and secondary schools, with complete impartiality. It affirms that it is essential to

promote a more tolerant attitude towards other religions and to eliminate religious fundamentalism and extremism. It also proposes to centralise religious teachings at the European level, while denying the right of Member States to choose which religion to teach and how to teach it. Whilst such an approach may seem to threaten the prerogatives of denominational schools, they should continue to be protected by the ECHR (European Convention on Human Rights) and EUCFR (European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights) religious freedom clauses that protect the right of parents to choose an education for their children in accordance with their own beliefs, and probably is not too different from current practice in UK schools anyway.

What is of concern is that the report apparently offers no protection for any previous arrangement with official national churches (concordats and other arrangements) or for national educational programs devoted to a specific religion that reflects the historic beliefs of the nation. This appears to be an attempt to privilege European directives above national sovereignty and effectively deny the right of a democratically elected government to make choices for its population. It is currently unlikely that the Report will be formally adopted by the Committee of Ministers in the Council of Europe. Nevertheless, as with many draft proposals within the European context, there are indications as to how thinking is developing and continued vigilance by Christians is essential. Careful arguments need to be made on the differences between tolerance, acceptance and impartiality.

4.8.4   *Faith Based Schools*

Faith based schools are funded in two ways. The independent schools charge fees, although they may offer bursaries to pupils from less affluent homes. The state maintained schools are funded by government, usually with a small capital contribution from the faith sponsor. The debate focuses on the legitimacy of using taxpayers' money to fund the latter.

The argument for faith based schooling rests on the premise that education is never neutral. The contention is that schools that claim to be neutral are, in fact, imposing a secularist agenda that is anti-Christian, or, most likely in a post-modern context, imposing a relativist agenda. The proposition is that, in a plural democracy, parents should have access to an education for their children that is in accordance with the beliefs and values of the family without having to pay twice. The state should not be in the business of shaping the religious beliefs and values of children through its schools.

The government is quietly supportive of faith based schooling and is opening up more opportunities for faith sponsors for maintained schools. The philosophy is that diversity leads to greater opportunities for all children to experience 'personalisation and choice' and that this will lead to higher standards overall than with a 'one size fits all' system. Government is supportive of a strong values base in schools and sees this as a particular strength of faith based schools.

The critics of faith based schooling are opposed for two reasons. Firstly, they regard such schools as fostering sectarian attitudes and cite the problems of Northern Ireland and Bradford as evidence. Secondly, they regard them as infringing the basic right of a pupil to autonomous decision-making in matters of religion. The British Humanist Association is a leading voice in this opposition. The alleged teaching of 'creationism' at Emmanuel College in Gateshead unleashed a storm of atheistic outrage in the media that served to foster this negativity.

There is no doubt that children from Christian families benefit greatly from nurture in Christian schools, both independent and maintained. The price for supporting such a system is that children from non-Christian homes are 'protected' from encountering the gospel in school since they will attend schools where they will be nurtured in their own faith.

An important question that must be addressed in the current education context is what concern should Christians demonstrate for the education of children from non-Christian families? Should Christian schools be open to all pupils as many church schools are now? Can they be run in ways that are not sectarian and do not infringe children's responsibility to answer for themselves before God in relation to their commitment and values in life? Can they meet the

needs of families from all religious backgrounds or none? Given the popularity of church schools with nominal believers and some unbelievers, clearly it is possible to meet such needs.

Christian advocates of the common school believe that a values base that is both distinctively Christian and acceptable to others can be negotiated with people of other commitments. Christian schools should not simply exist for the benefit of Christian families, but for the 'common good'.

There are significant new opportunities to develop Christian schools within the maintained sector. However, there is still lack of clarity as to what it means for a school to be distinctively Christian, and particularly the appropriate balance between the deliberate nurture of Christian faith and the promotion of the common good. Evangelicals are recommended to support a variety of current and future initiatives, such as City Academies, including giving explicit encouragement to teachers working in common schools to work out what is distinctively Christian about their ministry and how to maintain rather than compromise such distinctives within a general environment governed by objectives centred on equality. There is still much work to be done and it needs support from government and other sources of funding.

In particular, it is important that the false assumption that the curriculum and management of the school can be shaped by the secular experts without damaging its Christian character is challenged. The idea that the Christian character of the school is confined to RE and assembly will create a sacred/secular divide that privatises and marginalises the Christian contribution. Christians need to recognise the urgent need to nurture evangelical educators who can successfully integrate an inspirational and distinctive Christian faith with the most recent insights in curriculum and school management.

4.9   Evangelical Responses to Human Rights and Toleration

It is essential that evangelicals understand the differences and similarities between the secular human rights agenda and the range of forms that a Christian perspective on human rights might take. It is also important that they are able to appreciate what is distinctive about an evangelical perspective on human rights. Only then can evangelicals make an informed decision as to what they can and cannot agree with in terms of the secular human rights agenda - or indeed, the Christian perspective on the human rights of another group. Such understanding will assist in the evaluation of social, legal and political initiatives that may undermine the basis of their faith. Appendix 4 offers a more technical theological analysis of human rights discourse; here we identify key practical concerns for evangelicals operating in a public square which is increasingly characterised by the language of rights.

Evangelicals ideally seek to find common ground with secular human rights while at the same time ensuring that their distinctive Christian voice is heard. The secular agenda has at root a respect for human dignity drawn from Judeo-Christian thought in the Enlightenment - a respect shared, of course, by evangelicals. However, evangelical approaches are rooted in God, and respect for human dignity and human rights are a consequence of faith in the Creator God who made human beings in his own image. Humanity has dignity and is interconnected because it is divinely created. Ultimately, therefore, those who disrespect human dignity and basic human rights disrespect the image of God. Divine creation is also the basis from which other rights, e.g., relating to animals or the environment are best derived rather than from human-centred rights. These therefore represent key underlying assumptions of evangelical Christian responses to human rights. Because Christians love God they love their neighbour, for love is at the root of Christian social action. To work towards the realisation of human rights that do not undermine Christian faith is to be responsible to God and to one's neighbour. It of course needs to be acknowledged that what is deemed undermining of the Christian faith is increasingly disputed, not least amongst evangelicals where increasingly even what have been regarded as inviolable doctrines have been challenged from within the evangelical fold in a supposed attempt to make Christianity more acceptable to the contemporary world.

Stated in such a way, it can be noted that similarities between the secular human rights agenda and the Christian agenda lie in their agreement concerning the essential importance of respect for human dignity. Differences between the two lie in their context and rationale.

Secular agendas place respect for human dignity at the core of 'human rights'. The Christian places God at the core of his or her 'human rights agenda'. The crucial spiritual dimension of Christian responses to human rights must not be forgotten. Christians have a theologically articulated response to human rights that is consequently necessarily and practically worked out through social action, which inevitably involves engagement with politics and law.

However, despite the differences in the two agendas, it is possible for secular and Christian agendas to share some commitment to a common core of morality that can become the basis of a shared agenda for action. There are areas where there are overlapping concerns and consensus between the secular and the religious. Evangelicals should not be afraid to commend aspects of the ideology of human rights where it contains significant value in terms of a commitment to a respect for human dignity and attendant human rights. But they should also recognise that while there are many areas of convergence, the relationship between evangelicals working for human rights and secular agencies working for human rights is one of a fragile and sensitive alliance that cannot be fully co-operative at its core. This is because the evangelical context is much broader cosmologically and places at it heart a different object – God, rather than individual human beings. So evangelicals are also very aware of the limitations of human rights as an overarching framework for governing human society, not least because of its tendency to fuel human selfishness and relativise human responsibilities. They are also conscious that secular humanists committed to human rights are frequently and inconsistently hostile to an openly religious approach in the public sphere. Their contradictory rationale appears to be that religion is 'intolerant' – therefore 'intolerance of the intolerant' is deemed fully permissible. When this manifests itself as unconcealed attempts to ban religion from the public sphere – whether engaged in furtherance of a human rights agenda or not – then evidently impasse is a likely outcome. When government or public policy itself begins to reflect such an intolerant approach, e.g., by denying public funding to religious voluntary work on account of supposed 'proselytising', then the issue becomes one of religious freedom and needs to be confronted where appropriate.

Governments and international organisations in the 21st century must attempt to find strategies that enable peoples to live together. A core issue relates to the universality of the human rights project - how can the ideology of human rights cross cultural, religious, social, political and legal boundaries, especially where there is a tendency to deny universal human rights in some countries and cultures? Evangelicals must fully engage publicly with this debate in their own nations and where possible at international and global levels. As already indicated, there are a number of areas where the human rights agenda is problematic for the Christian. Silence in the face of this difficulty is to side-step the problem and lose an opportunity to explain and defend Evangelical Christian perspectives.

The most common accusations against religion made by those promulgating the secular human rights agenda is that many religions fly in the face of freedom of conscience by condemning those who are apostates. Secular agencies also criticise some religions for supporting forms of retributive violence such as the death penalty, when the secular agenda affirms unconditional banning of the death penalty because it is humanly degrading. Additionally, it is argued that in stark contrast to human rights and the call for equality, many religions make distinctions between the faithful and the unfaithful, the morally correct and morally wrong. It is also thought unacceptable to many adopting the secular human rights agenda that some religions, and factions within religious traditions, believe that despite living in an age of accepting diversity and difference, gender distinctions and other 'inequalities' are acceptable and should be endorsed. In such ways secular human rights concepts and religious worldviews inevitably come into conflict.

Secular human rights is mainly concentrated on the issue of individual human rights which can often be seen as furthering an individualistic agenda at the expense of communal responsibilities. Evangelicals consider *community* to be an important aspect of human experience, instilling values such as accountability and responsibility in the individual. The cluster of human rights legally possessed by each person can cause difficulty when they inevitably clash with the exercise of a right by another. Who should defer to whom and why? It appears that despite claiming to speak for minorities, frequently the loudest and most powerful 'rights' tend to

prevail. This raises issues relating to which groups exercise most power in society. Here the Church and its members need to be well informed and be prepared to debate at every level. The human rights paradigm all too often does not clarify duty, or support communal or corporate rights. The privileging of rights over obligations and individuals over communities creates social imbalance and can end up as a form of social engineering. In this regard, it is significant that the government's recent Equality Bill originally included within its preamble a commitment 'to create a society' that corresponded with its equality agenda. Absolute equality for all is neither feasible nor desirable. The Church has a major role to play in the articulation of the communal, and the balancing of rights with responsibilities, for the Judeo-Christian paradigm encompasses both community and individual in a holistic way that the human rights paradigm does not.

An Evangelical position on human rights should take account of the fact that human rights can in fact be interpreted as a competing secular 'theology' to that of religion – based on an ideal theoretic concept of religious 'neutrality' or the paradoxical expression of non-belief as a 'faith position' requiring parity with religious belief. It is therefore frequently unable and unwilling to incorporate the claims of religious groups and individuals. In the UK we are currently seeing the creation of a new Single Equality Body incorporating new human rights strands, one of which is somehow supposed to represent credibly both religion and belief and 'non-belief at the same time. In the United States there are consequently frequent disputes concerning what separation of religion and state means in practice in the light of the supposed intentions of the constitution's founding fathers. Drafting of the European Union constitution almost came to a halt over the issue of whether a reference to the Christian heritage of Europe was appropriate. The matter was effectively decided by the removal of references to the Christian heritage, largely in deference to French secularism. This exclusionary pattern is being increasingly adopted in legislation.

The human rights paradigm is also a challenge to the Church to re-examine some of its traditions and institutions to discern how far they may be said to be based on cultural preference rather than equality between peoples. Evangelicalism is called to struggle intellectually and practically in order to adhere to those aspects of the human rights paradigm in keeping with the Judeo-Christian ethic. It is important that they continue to seek common ground with other religions in relation to the increasing spread of secular human rights which disregard religious freedoms, and would seek to impose behaviour on churches damaging to the integrity and practice of their faith.

Evangelicals should therefore spend time considering the extent to which secular attitudes to freedom of religion make that freedom subservient to other human rights and why that should be the case. They should also ensure that they protect the freedoms of those they disagree with. Here there is a need to educate the public that society, as well as Christians, are damaged by denial of the ability to speak and to act in accordance with their faith. Christians should also be protected from unwarranted fear and outrage of other faith communities or the secular community towards them where this goes beyond the reasonable exercise of freedom of speech, since Christians do not seek privileged status or special pleading. At a time when general ignorance of religion is more prevalent than ever, the public need to be educated as to the meaning of free debate which includes the ability to listen to words of critique or opposition spoken with respect and listened to with equal respect, free of fear. Unfortunately, the British government seems currently on course to take the legislative route of seeking to chill free speech in what they regard as a proportionate response to world events, notably following 9/11.

It is essential that evangelicals work to ensure that the Church educates its leaders and its people, as well as the nation, so that all are quite clear about the religious attitude taken to issues of human rights, and the point at which people of faith consider that their human rights have been abused and their religion undermined. Christians as well as others need to understand that they cannot expect special privileges they would deny to others. But sensitivity by the state is also crucial. If the state views religion simply as a threat to be neutralised, and insists on the silencing of expressions of religious thought and belief, there are wide social implications that follow, not least recognition of issues of identity closely associated with religious affiliation. Failure by government, police and courts to take account of religious sensibilities could easily

result in serious consequences within the UK's multi-faith society that may inevitably impact the stability of society at large.

It is necessary for there to be careful consideration of the points of convergence and divergence between secular and Christian human rights and a consequent informed debate modelling toleration. Evangelicals will need to continue to remain engaged, but be prepared to speak out where appropriate with robustness as well as sensitivity, love and respect to the 'other'. This will enable the Church to make a serious and valuable contribution to the secular development of human rights whilst defending precious religious freedoms.

4.10   Role of Evangelicals in British National Life[207]

The Evangelical community's role in UK public policy is both complex and constantly evolving. Evangelicals in particular have given the impression of ambivalence with regard to political engagement throughout the 20th century and into the 21st, switching almost randomly between grand campaigns aimed at major reform and extended periods of relative passivity or even complete disengagement. There has been evidence in recent years of the emergence of a more stable and mature approach to public policy with a wider and readier acceptance and recognition of responsibility to participate meaningfully in the UK's democratic political community. This has in turn led to the perceived, and often real, increasing influence of evangelicals in political debate, assisted not least through the election of a Christian prime minister, MPs and government officials. The higher profile of evangelical Christians involved in academia, journalism and media, as well as representative and lobby groups has also been important. The emergence of widespread consensus concentrated on crucial and often emotive public issues such as preservation of human life, religious freedom, the importance of the family, social justice, poverty and care for creation has been particularly vital in focussing evangelical voices and actions.

Whilst many regard this as good news (though recently there have been hysterical fears raised by sections of the media in the UK concerning the emergence of a powerful fundamentalist and politically activist evangelical lobby akin to the American model), active evangelical political engagement has not always been accompanied by appropriate levels of expertise, professionalism, communication skills and adequate in-depth analysis of issues. The more evangelical Christians believe they have historic opportunities to help shape society through the use of political influence, the more challenging has become the task to gain agreement from supporters and society itself and to accept the responsibilities that necessarily accompany aspirations for increasing influence. The Evangelical Alliance, for example, has consistently claimed it speaks for over one million Christians in the UK. Such claims undoubtedly help to ensure that the Alliance is listened to by government, especially when both sides find the dialogue to be constructive and helpful. However, the task for evangelicals is not merely one of acquiring the expertise for dialogue at such a level, but remaining faithful to beliefs and faith positions – reflecting the views of their adherents whilst simultaneously educating the evangelical constituency on how to think about complex issues in the first place – both politically and theologically.

Evangelicals are not renowned for authoritative, scholarly, sustained, theologically-grounded thinking on complex social and political issues in ways that have characterised some other Christian traditions, such as, for example, Roman Catholicism. Accordingly, it has not been unusual to find evangelical political engagement appearing somewhat fragmented, inconsistent, unbalanced and consequently ineffective. What is needed for evangelicals to maximise their potential in the UK can be presented in the form of a fourfold challenge.

Firstly, evangelical politics must be rooted in faith in the Lordship of Christ and the authority of the Bible. Secondly, evangelicals must face up to the need to produce greater expert analysis together with more sophisticated study and research. Thirdly, they need to work harder at co-operating with each other, as well as learning to work with others where

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[207] This section is partly based on a chapter contributed by Don Horrocks to *God in Society: Doing Social Theology in Scotland Today*, William Storrar and Peter Donald (eds), (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 2003), 210-16.

appropriate. Fourthly, evangelicals need themselves to become far more engaged in aspects of public life on the ground.

A major challenge facing Christians in the 21st century has to do with truth and tolerance in the public arena. In the face of secular and pluralist society structures increasingly antipathetic to the Christian worldview, Christian engagement with the public arena must neither merely reflect secular political agendas nor retreat into a sectarian inwardness or ghetto mentality. Like the Reformers, the Church's main task involves aiming to change society through allowing a biblical worldview and scripturally balanced agenda to inform and direct its public policy work. A responsible ethical and political philosophy takes Scripture seriously and emphasises its primary authority. It involves knowing a range of relevant issues intimately and doing the related scientific, political, economic and social analysis. It also calls for the employment of 'sanctified reason' and common sense. There are many present-day issues which the Bible does not directly mention and comprehensive study and informed assessment of the contemporary world is as indispensable as competence in handling scriptural principles. This approach claims that 'being' the Church involves preserving its God-given distinctives, whilst simultaneously engaging constructively with 'the powers that be', and where necessary confronting them. In this context, the Evangelical Alliance recently published *Uniting for Change: An Evangelical Vision for Transforming Society*[208] and *Movement for Change: Evangelical Perspectives for Transforming Society*[209], which set out the rationale for a vision of a movement for change rooted in a contemporary understanding of the Kingdom of God at work in society.

John Stott has highlighted the need for Christians to develop a 'Christian mind … which can think with Christian integrity about the problems of the contemporary world'.[210] This points to the fact that evangelicals, apart from a few commendable exceptions, have not been noted for seriously engaging at a scholarly or practical level with contemporary issues. The reasons for this are manifold, but have included fears concerning the social gospel, liberal dilution of biblical truth, 'surrender' to the world, and even fundamental theological questioning about whether Christians should engage with the world at all.

But there is evidence that evangelicals now addressing public issues in a more considered and engaged way, listening to other Christians and seeking ways to apply biblical principles in specific contexts. In some quarters, this process has been described as engaging in 'public theology', a term defined by Robert Benne as "the engagement of a living religious tradition with its public environment … the economic, political and cultural spheres of our common life".[211]

This approach contrasts with some popular caricatures especially of evangelicals as being fundamentally opposed to liberal, secular trends in society, notably in the area of equality and human rights. There have until recently also been critical perceptions of evangelicals, especially from the emerging church, with regard to practical social engagement at the grassroots, which, although at one level apparently belied by the prevalence of Christian voluntary projects, nevertheless probably contain some elements of truth. Evangelicals, for example, have been seen as relatively inward-looking and more focussed on their own church affairs, moral issues and doctrinal matters than with the needs of society and weightier matters affecting the wider world. Due sometimes to historical factors, evangelicals have in some cases been relatively reluctant to engage in the social gospel and have not always been swift to adopt a holistic view of mission. However, today the accuracy of such criticisms and the extent to which they may be valid is open to dispute as more and more evangelical churches are taking seriously the full gospel mandate as it specifically relates to social concerns and social justice.

Evangelical groups, such as the Evangelical Alliance and CARE, have over a number of decades tried to engage positively in political processes. Their approach has generally been to seek interaction with key politicians in a constructive way to help influence the gestation of

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[208] Published by the Evangelical Alliance
[209] Edited by David Hilborn, (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004)
[210] *New Issues Facing Christians Today*, (London: Marshall Pickering, 1999), p.36.
[211] Robert Benne, *The Paradoxical Vision: A Public Theology for the 21st Century*, (1995), p.x

public policy, rather than perhaps by merely making reactionary and declaratory statements, initiating legal challenges, or trying to whip up campaigns. The Alliance, for example, has appointed parliamentary officers in the UK nations to engage with MPs, MSPs, assembly members, civil servants and the wider civic society. Part of their role has been to encourage and persuade evangelical Christians themselves to take part in democratic political processes, both at local and national levels.

Of course, many important new moral and socio-political issues, such as bioethics and human rights are not just controversial public issues. Christians frequently disagree with each other on how to respond and dispute to what extent the Bible or tradition might contribute to ethical debate. Christians have often been more used to speaking to each other than to society, and the task of interpreting the Bible and evangelical concerns in the public realm remains a pressing one if evangelicals wish to be understood and so progress their declared transformational role.

Evangelicals have rightly been identified by their commitment to the Scriptures as the rule for life and faith, and in this regard there is little doubt that evangelicals will remain committed to the pre-eminence of the Bible in the process of social and political theology and ethical decision-making. This inevitably involves the careful contextualising of theological truth and sound hermeneutical principles.[212] By way of illustration, the Evangelical Alliance's Millennium Manifesto incorporated a decision to create a standing policy commission, which was initiated in 1999. Its remit was to identify contemporary controversial issues, commission relevant studies, and, in adopting an evangelical viewpoint, recommend appropriate policy positions and statements. The issues with which it was primarily to be concerned were to be typically of an ethical nature with societal, national or international implications – as distinct from purely theological and doctrinal concerns. With a strong educational objective and addressed primarily to evangelical Christians and churches, its studies were intended to be of wider application and relevance to the Christian community, but also society at large, as it sought to offer a co-ordinated response to matters of wider public debate. The Commission has functioned as a steering group for the Evangelical Alliance, comprising evangelical representatives from a wide range of academic, scientific and professional disciplines. Its reports and position statements have been produced following a wide-ranging discussion and consultation process, both internally through the Evangelical Alliance membership, and externally with reference to appropriately qualified academics and practitioners in the relevant fields. Its studies are therefore multi-disciplinary and multi-perspectival. Such a process could, perhaps, most accurately be classified as 'study-dialogue' methodology. Although the majority of contributors have tended to be themselves evangelicals, interaction with and peer review by scholars and experts from other traditions and faith (or indeed non-faith) sectors has not been shirked.

The Commission's initial studies, which have received wide acclaim and been extensively applied to real life situations, covered the important contemporary issues of gender identity disorder and GM crops and foods.[213] Transsexuality is a highly controversial subject, surrounded by its own mythology, involving far-reaching consequences for society as a whole and especially involves complex issues relating to religious liberty and the right of churches, for example, to organise and run their own affairs according to their beliefs and ethos. Little prior published material existed, and Christian awareness was virtually nil. The report produced by the multi-disciplinary working group formed the basis for submissions to the government's consultation process in connection with the Gender Recognition Act, and to date has played a crucial role in the debate concerning recognition of transsexual rights to gender self-determination, culminating in active dialogue with the government and others, including transsexual lobby groups, in the unfolding of the Gender Recognition Act 2004. It was peer-reviewed and commended for its scientific accuracy, ethical judgement, theological relevance and humanity. Subsequent engagement with the government on the basis of the report was largely responsible for significant

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[212] For a useful overview of hermeneutical principles in relation to politics see, for example, Craig Bartholomew, (ed.), *A Royal Priesthood: The Use of the Bible Ethically and Politically* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2002).

[213] Don Horrocks (ed.), *Transsexuality*, (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000); Donald Bruce and Don Horrocks (eds.), *Modifying Creation? GM Crops and Foods: A Christian Perspective*, (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001).

but crucial concessions made in the Act in respect of religious conscience and church autonomy. Not only has the study proved invaluable to churches and pastoral workers, but it has been used extensively by public bodies and other faith groups to inform themselves concerning a difficult and complex issue. Taken seriously by the academic world, it has directly provoked considerable debate in scholarly journals and elsewhere in the public sphere.

GM crops and foods is an important contemporary issue on which Christians themselves are divided. The Alliance study, undertaken in a fruitful partnership with the Church of Scotland, sought to examine the scientific, ethical, agricultural, economic and theological cases for and against GM. It was able, through a process of managed dialogue and peer review, to produce a balanced and considered treatment of the subject together with an assessment of the implications of GM. The Alliance Council received the report and, armed with an in-depth analysis, had available the resources to formulate an informed position which it believed characterised a sensible and scriptural evangelical response to the issues. The report has received respectful critical review and has spearheaded an up to date Christian response to environmental concerns which are particularly apposite in the light of the 2002 Earth Summit.

Other examples could be multiplied of evangelicals not shirking the challenge of important but complex issues. By way of further example, CARE has set up the Centre for Bioethics and Public Policy to encourage serious academic engagement with what many regard as perhaps the most critical future challenge for the human race.

Such examples act as a useful illustration of ways in which British evangelicals have in recent years engaged in important projects which diverge from stereotypical characterisations of evangelicals being fixated with campaigns related to issues of sexual morality, the sanctity of life, and religious freedom. This has not prevented – nor should it prevent – evangelical Christians recently from being prominently associated with campaigns to preserve standards of taste and decency in the media or to oppose moves to legalise euthanasia, nor from protesting outside Parliament against moves to restrict freedom of speech.

There are of course both opportunities and potential pitfalls for evangelicals in the context of changing forms of relationships between the religious sector and the state and a warning is appropriate here. In recent years the Labour government has been keen to acknowledge, indeed even emphasise, the role of religious groups, not least in helping to deliver social vision on the ground in the form of religiously motivated educationary, community and voluntary projects. Faith groups, including evangelicals, are now regularly targeted by the government to respond to consultations and become involved in working groups and consultative committees, as well as the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights. In some ways, it could be seen that the government has shown a keen desire to engage in partnership with faith groups. A key issue for the Church, and for evangelicals in particular, is the extent to which partnership between Church and State, as well as with other faiths, is possible or indeed permissible and desirable whilst continuing to seek to present an independent faithful witness. There are a number of risks involved with partnership, not least of which is the implicit acceptance of a liberal agenda which inter alia could involve implicit adoption by the Church of public principles of democracy, human rights and secular reason. In this context the concept of 'public theology' might well become intrinsically subversive when taken to imply the apparent congruency of Christianity with public values. The Church, if it is not careful and discriminating in its political engagement, could find its distinctive authenticity, its critiquing, counter-cultural role, its prophetic voice for truth in the public square, and not least its missional calling, significantly undermined. Ironically, the Church itself might well run the risk of being reduced to compliance with an agenda that aligns the Christian faith with liberal democracy and a secular political philosophy that sees as one of its main objectives the fundamental privatisation of religion. At the very least, where evangelicals are willing to encourage constructive engagement with the state and civil society, they need to be warned of the evident dangers of partnership and the need to exercise caution whilst continually being reminded of its mission and calling. In other words, evangelical political engagement must not take place at the expense of its prophetic distinctiveness.

During the 19th century evangelical Christians led the way in social engagement and community action in Britain. For various reasons this distinctive was lost for most of the 20th

century. More recently, evangelicals across the denominations have reawakened to the challenges and opportunities of holistic mission in the public square – of bearing witness at the interface of 'faith and nation'. As this reawakening has occurred, the interface itself is subject to rapid and significant change. Overt secularism appears to accompany a more pluralist political reality, however inconsistent and opportunistic this may be. One result is that it may also be more amenable to evangelical involvement. However, this presents its own distinctive problems and dangers. Daunting though these problems and dangers may be, withdrawal and disconnection from socio-political life are not a desirable option for evangelicals in the UK today. This report has suggested constructive ways forward for British evangelicals in the 21st century, but there is still a long way still to go. Our hope is that the work contained here, and the recommendations which follow, will persuade evangelical churches, groups and individuals to take up the challenge of holistic mission in strategic and effective ways, to the glory of God.

Appendix 1

Membership of the Commission of Inquiry

Donald Shell (Chair)	Senior Lecturer, Department of Politics, University of Bristol
The Revd Prebendary Paul Avis	General Secretary for Council of Christian Unity in the Church of England and Director of the Centre for the Study of the Christian Church
Rt Revd Dr Peter Foster	Bishop of Chester
Ram Gidoomal CBE	Leader of Christian Peoples Alliance and Chairman of South Asian Concern (retired during *Inquiry*)
Sharon Hanson	Acting Director, Birkbeck Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Religion and Lecturer in Law and Religion
Alison Inglis-Jones	Formerly Public Affairs Officer, Shaftesbury Society (retired during *Inquiry*)
Prof. Frank Lyall	Formerly Professor of Public Law, Aberdeen University
Lord Mawhinney	Conservative Member of the House of Lords
The Very Rev Dr Trevor Morrow	Minister, Lucan Presbyterian Church, Co Dublin (retired during *Inquiry*)
Dr R. David Muir	Deputy Chairman, Metropolitan Police Authority (retired during *Inquiry*)
Rev Dr Stephen Plant	Methodist theologian, Wesley House, Cambridge
David Porter	Director of Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland
Andy Reed, MP	Labour MP for Loughborough
Angela Sarkis	Independent Consultant
Rev Vera Sinton	Centre for Youth Ministry, Oxford
Dr Jenny Taylor	Writer, commissioning editor, researcher and specialist on comparative faiths (retired during *Inquiry*)
Romaine Thompson	Partner and Head of Charity Law Services, Anthony Collins Solicitors (retired during *Inquiry*)
Rev Dr Derek Tidball	Principal, London School of Theology
Prof. Steve Webb MP	Liberal Democrat MP for Northavon
Prof. Stephen Williams	Professor of Systematic Theology, Union Theological College
Rev Dr Nigel Wright	Principal, Spurgeon's College

Evangelical Alliance   Dr Don Horrocks   } Project Directors
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                                  Mrs Alexandra Lilley
                                  Ms Julia Murphy
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Appendix 2

Evangelical Characteristics

Evangelicals often appeal to the derivation of their name from the Greek New Testament word for the 'gospel' or 'good news' of Jesus Christ. On their own account, they are 'gospel people', committed to simple New Testament Christianity and the central tenets of apostolic faith, rather than to later ecclesiastical accretions. As such, they seek to maintain and present the authentic teaching 'once for all entrusted to the saints' (Jude 3). As John Stott points out, this means that Evangelicalism is neither 'a recent innovation' nor 'a deviation from Christian orthodoxy'.[214]

Although Evangelicals sometimes see these emphases embodied in the ministries of the radical Oxford preacher and Bible translator John Wycliffe (c. 1330-84), the prophetic Czech church leader Jan Hus (1372-1415) and other pre-16th century pioneers like Peter Waldo and Girolamo Savanarola, the shape of Evangelicalism as we know it today was formed more decisively by the Protestant Reformation. Led by Martin Luther in Germany, John Calvin in Geneva and Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich, Protestantism was driven by the 'rediscovery' of core gospel truths which were seen as having been neglected by the medieval Catholic Church. These truths were summarised in three 'solas'. The first of these was *Sola Scriptura* – 'By Scripture alone'. This entailed the conviction that God's objective truth was supremely revealed through his Word in the Old and New Testaments, and that the Bible must always take precedence over reason, tradition, ecclesiastical authority and individual experience. The second was *Sola Gratia* – 'By grace alone'. This was the conviction that God takes the initiative in salvation and the outworking of his plan for the world. It held that we know the truth first and foremost not because we deduce it rationally from observation of nature, but because the God of truth has revealed it to us. In fact, without this divine initiative in grace, we are powerless and lost. The third pillar of the Reformation was *Sola Fide* – 'By faith alone'. This emphasised that although God takes the initiative in salvation, he nevertheless elicits our response and 'includes' us intellectually, emotionally and physically in the outworking of his purposes. Hence our being 'saved by grace through faith'. As we shall see, Luther, Calvin and Zwingli differed on finer points of theology, and on the ways in which these Reformation principles should be worked out in relation to Church and State. All of them in turn diverged from more radical reforming groups like the Anabaptists in this area. Even so, it is with the Reformation that we see the term 'Evangelical' first deployed in relation to a specific 'party' or worldview within Christianity. Early on, it tended to describe the Lutheran strand of Reformation thought and practice, but by the mid-17th century was being more widely applied to a range of Protestant convictions.

While the great Reformation *solas* define the *theological* foundations of Evangelicalism, its specific *social* and *historical* character did not decisively mesh together until the 1730s, when an American Calvinist Jonathan Edwards and two Church of England clergymen, George Whitefield and John Wesley, developed a 'revivalist' application of Reformation principles through itinerant preaching, evangelism and a deepened emphasis on conversion or 'new birth', assurance of faith, and personal holiness. In particular, these revivalists stressed that assurance of salvation was the normative pattern of Christian experience, and that this could be given to an individual in a moment. Such assurance gave Evangelicals the freedom and the inner dynamic for their now familiar activism in preaching the gospel and engaging in good works.

Against this historical and theological background, the following five points, adapted from the work of David Bebbington and Alister McGrath, represent a practicable summary of Evangelical characteristics:

- **Biblicism** – Through the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the God who is objectively 'there' has revealed universal and eternal truth to humankind in such a way that all can grasp it.

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[214] *Evangelical Truth* (Leicester: IVP, 1999), 16-17.

- **Christocentrism** – God's eternal Word became human in the historical man Jesus of Nazareth, who is himself Truth and who offers true knowledge of God and true relationship with God to people of all cultures.
- **Crucicentrism** – The good news of God's revelation in Christ is seen supremely in the cross, where atonement was made for people of every race, tribe and tongue.
- **Conversionism** – The truth of the eternal gospel must be appropriated in personal faith, which comes through repentance – that is, a discernible reorientation of the sinner's mind and heart towards God.
- **Activism** – gospel truth must be demonstrated in evangelism and social service.[215]

Although they are still conflated by some academics and many journalists, an important distinction needs to be drawn between the terms 'Evangelical, and 'fundamentalist'. *Fundamentalism* is now often used to refer to any type of dogmatic (and often backward-looking) thought, usually in religion. However, it originated with a series of Christian theological papers, *The Fundamentals*, published in America between 1910 and 1915. Although these papers were written by a group of Evangelicals concerned to restate their defining beliefs, by no means all of them would qualify now for the label 'Fundamentalist'. After the Second World War, a division between relatively progressive and conservative American Evangelicals on issues like biblical criticism, ecumenism and social engagement became evident in North America, and gradually the term *Fundamentalism* was reserved for the latter group. More recently, distinctions between the two constituencies have also emerged in such matters as 'young earth' creationism, the state of Israel and its role in Biblical prophecy, and the role of women in church leadership. Where Evangelicals tend to 'agree to disagree' on such things, Fundamentalists are typically more monolithic in their approach to them.

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[215] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s,* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989) 4-8; Alister McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1995).

Appendix 3

Human Rights: An Evangelical Theological Assessment[216]

Sections 2.1.7 and 4.9 of the main report note the prevalence of human rights thinking in modern British social and political life - especially since the passing of the Human Rights Act in 1998. The roots of such thinking can arguably be traced back to the concept of 'natural justice' articulated by Aristotle and to some extent by the Stoics.[217] Later, the Mediaeval Jurists built on this notion of natural justice by distinguishing between *dominum* as the actual ownership of an object, and *ius* as a more abstract, universal principle of entitlement aligned to the order of nature. The same distinction influenced Magna Carta's entrenchment of ecclesiastical autonomy and fair trials in 1215, and was refined in Thomas Aquinas' (1224-74) application of the Aristotelian natural law tradition to Christian thought. Further significant refinements of it were made in the early 17th century by the Dutch legal philosopher Hugo Grotius (1583-1645).

Whereas Grotius yoked divine and natural law by appealing to an interventionist God whose role had been confirmed through 'many proofs [and] miracles attested by all ages',[218] the English philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) popularised a near-Deistic theology (Deism's roots were in Judeo-Christian philosophy) in which human minds, once created, were seen to operate autonomously, forming laws without direct divine guidance. This more thoroughly rationalistic account provided the framework for the modern, secular formulation of human rights. Locke's thinking certainly influenced the English Bill of Rights of 1689, which decisively buried the old interventionist presumptions of the 'divine right of kings' by establishing a constitutional monarchy.[219]

As filtered through the overtly Deistic philosophy of Tom Paine (1737-1809),[220] Locke's understanding of rights suffused the American Declaration of Independence (1776), with its assertion of the 'self-evident' principle that 'all men are created equal', and therefore have natural rights to 'life, liberty and pursuit of happiness'.[221] Similarly, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789) asserted such rights as 'natural, inalienable and sacred', adding that 'ignorance, forgetfulness or contempt of the rights of man', rather than 'sin or 'evil', were 'the sole causes of public misfortunes and the corruption of governments'.[222] Here, the philosophy owed at least as much to Jean Jaques Rousseau's more positivistic notion of the 'Social Contract', but the fundamental focus on 'natural rights' rather than 'divine decrees' was comparable.

By the 20th century, even vaguely theistic references had disappeared from key human rights documents, to be replaced by a humanistic universalism of reason and natural law, from which it was assumed that equally universal entitlements to dignity, equality, freedom, justice and peace would flow. These secularized universal concepts pervade the preambles to the UN Declaration of 1948 and the European Convention of 1950.[223]

Among modern philosophers, there are those who are quite sanguine about the universality and global applicability of human rights; on the other hand, there are a significant number of sceptics. Of the optimists, John Rawls conceives a system of basic liberties corresponding to fundamental 'principles of justice' across the planet, and sees this as essential for fair societies and a fair world

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[216] This Appendix is edited and adapted from a longer paper by David Hilborn entitled 'Universality in Human Rights and Christian Ethics: An Evangelical Perspective', originally delivered at Cheonan University, Seoul, South Korea in September 2005, and forthcoming in *Evangelical Review of Theology* (2006).

[217] Margaret MacDonald, 'Natural Rights', in Jeremy Waldron (ed.), *Theories of Rights* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 21-40.

[218] Grotius, 'Laws' (11), 74.

[219] 'The English Bill of Rights', in Micheline R. Ishay (ed.), *The Human Rights Reader: Major Political Essays, Speeches and Documents from the Bible to the Present* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 91-93.

[220] Tom Paine, *The Rights of Man, Common Sense and Other Political Writings* (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks), 1998.

[221] 'The United States Declaration of Independence', in Ishay, *Human Rights Reader*, 127-130.

[222] 'The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen', in Ishay, *Human Rights Reader*, 138-39.

[223] Brownlie & Goodwin-Gill, *Basic Documents on Human Rights,* 18-19; 399.

community.[224] Ronald Dworkin casts rights as universal 'trumps' over contingent political decisions and laws - trumps which define goals common to societies rather than relative to individuals.[225] For Alan Gewirth, human rights similarly reflect a universal anthropology, confirming our 'capacity for purposive action' and exemplifying a 'principle of generic consistency' which is expressed first and foremost in 'a mutual general respect for the absolute right to life'.[226]

By contrast to all this, others have favoured Jeremy Bentham's insistence that the notion of universal human rights is 'nonsense on stilts'. J.D. Mabbot challenges the presentation of rights as 'self-evident' and absolute in a manifestly plural world.[227] Even more cuttingly, Richard Rorty concludes that they are the products neither of universal rationality nor natural justice, but of sentimentality - an emotivist rhetoric of the heart which may produce amenable local outcomes, but which should be assumed as neither essential nor global.[228] Perhaps most famously of all, Alasdair MacIntyre in his book *After Virtue* declares that 'there are no such rights, and belief in them is one with belief in witches and unicorns … human rights then are fictions.'[229]

Whatever their intrinsic nature with respect to humanity, human rights might still be seen as an understandable response to the universal *fact* of suffering. As Peter Jones stresses, "outside the cocooned world of the academy, people are still victims of torture, still subjected to genocide, still deprived of basic freedoms and still dying through starvation. We should remember these people before we decide to forget about rights."[230] Jones here echoes the self-professed motivation of most modern rights declarations - namely, their construction as a bulwark against oppression, exploitation and state terror, such as had been seen in the Second World War and the Holocaust prior to the UN Declaration of 1948 and the EU Convention of 1950. Here we see a version of what Dworkin calls the 'trumping' character of rights. On this level of universal just practice, they are promulgated not so much in defence of the state as *over against* the state, lest it ever tyrannize the individual for whom such rights were primarily designed.

There are, of course, important points to be recognised. As demonstrated by the foregoing, 'rights' thinking was developed to protect individuals and minorities against tyrannical government. Now, many fear that it is being used by the state or by the majority to coerce individuals and groups. And the notion of 'rights' has evolved from 18th century ideas of 'moral' rights relating to liberty, equality before the law, freedom of speech, etc. (all of which have no direct resource cost), to late 20th century so-called 'distributive' rights involving employment, education, goods, facilities and services. In other words, human rights has now become a veritable 'industry'.

Theological Models for Human Rights

One of the most commonly advanced evangelical objections to the idea that human rights might drive Christian public theology is the simple point that rights language as such does not appear explicitly in the Bible. As Paul Marshall puts it, "the view of personal entitlement implied by notions of moral, innate or natural rights (as distinct from natural law or duty) was not present in the … biblical world."[231] Likewise, Marc Lienhard suggests that "… the Bible contains no irrefutable evidence of the idea that man, by the mere fact of his existence, is entitled to make a number of fundamental demands or claims on other members of society."[232] Though more sympathetic to the presence of implicit 'rights concepts' in Scripture, Julian Rivers nonetheless points out that "in common with all ancient legal systems, Hebrew contains no word that corresponds to our concept of a right".[233]

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[224] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1972).

[225] Ronald Dworkin, *Taking Rights Seriously (Revised Edition)* (London: Duckworth, 1978).

[226] Alan Gewirth, R*eason and Morality* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1978).

[227] J.D. Mabbot, *The State and the Citizen* (London: Hutchinson, 1967 [1958]).

[228] Richard Rorty, 'Human Rights, Rationality and Sentimentality', in S. Shute & S. Hurley (eds.), *On Human Rights: The Oxford Amnesty Lectures 1993* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

[229] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue [2nd Edition]* (London: Duckworth, 1985), 69-70.

[230] Peter Jones, *Rights* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1994), 227.

[231] Paul Marshall, 'Rights, Human', in David J. Atkinson & David H. Field (eds.), *New Dictionary of Ethics and Pastoral Theology* (Leicester: IVP, 1995), 747.

[232] Lienhard, 'Protestantism and Human Rights', *Human Rights Teaching* [UNESCO] 2:1 (1981), 31.

[233] Rivers, 'Beyond the Morality of Rights', in Michael Schluter (ed.), *Christianity in a Changing World: Biblical Insight on Contemporary Issues* (London: Marshall Pickering, 2000), 130.

Although these observations are in a strict sense true, various biblical terms at times connote ideas which might justifiably be related to modern-day human rights. The Hebrew root *dîn* means acting as a judge or advocate, and in certain cases conveys a sense of right judgement akin to our notion of applying human rights. Thus, King Lemuel is urged in Proverbs 31.8 to promulgate the 'right judgement' of the destitute, and in Jeremiah 5.28 the prophet chastises Israel for failing to plead the 'right judgement', or 'rights' of the orphan. Similarly, in Jeremiah 32.8, the term *mišpat* appears to describe a 'right' of possession with respect to Jeremiah's purchase of a field while Babylon is besieging to Jerusalem. In Leviticus 25, various 'rights of redemption' are inferable from the text: to a dwelling in a walled city within a year of its sale; to houses in the cities of the Levites in perpetuity; and for resident aliens who sell themselves into slavery. However, in these texts I should be noted that in the OT context the emphasis is on bestowing upon the poor what is due to them under the Law, i.e., the 'right' in focus here is the right to justice. Beyond any lexical correspondences, however, much broader thematic parallels can be traced between the latter day philosophy of human rights, and its precursors in the Old and New Testaments.

The Image of God in Humanity

The picture of male and female made in God's image in Genesis 1.26-7 has long been viewed as a critical connecting point between Christian rapprochement with human rights, and most evangelical theologies of rights strongly reflect this. As Matthis de Blois construes it, "the creation of [humanity] in God's image and likeness … makes it clear why we have to recognize the dignity and respect of each and every individual human being as such. All human beings are worthy of respect, irrespective of any additional quality such as nationality, intelligence, age or social status."[234] Moreover, the fact that God's image and likeness is expressed in both male and female, and that they are made for mutual relationship, enshrines the principles of society and co-operation in the pursuit of moral goals.[235] This inference of rights from the *imago dei* is closely related to another model drawn from the early chapters of Genesis - that of stewardship.

Stewardship

When God tells the first male and female in Genesis 1.28 to 'fill the earth and subdue it', he endows them with a purpose - a creative task to be worked out in the preservation and development of the earth. This could be said to anticipate the kind of freedom of choice which is so fundamental an element in modern rights thinking.[236] For John Stott, this ordinance on stewardship validates Christian embrace of the modern understanding of the right to work, rest, food, clothing, shelter, health and a share in the world's resources, as well as to freedom from poverty and disease.[237]

Covenant

The first clear-cut covenant in the biblical narrative - God's covenant with Noah in Genesis 8.21ff - confirms that human beings have a distinctive place and role in the world under God - one in which they exercise the power and gifts over which they have control, no so much in pursuit of their own freedom and happiness, as 'creatively for others in support of their human well-being.'[238]

The history of Christian thought is marked by sometimes fierce debate about the extent to which the Fall and its effects have marred the universal attributes of *imago dei* - attributes such as conscience and reason. Yet even if we adopt a radical view of human depravity, the later Sinai covenant can still be regarded as a strong foundation for a positive Christian account of rights, even if it is itself not couched in rights language. Thus, here in the Law of Moses, we find principles of fair trial with at least two witnesses (Ex. 22.47; Deut. 17.6); equality of foreigners with citizens (Ex. 12.47; Lev. 23.22); the sanctity of life (Ex. 20.13); protection of leisure (Ex. 20.8-11), and the equitable distribution of land

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[234] Matthis be Blois, 'The Foundation of Human Rights: A Christian Perspective', in Paul R. Beaumont (ed.), *Christian Perspectives on Human Rights and Legal Philosophy* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1998), 7-29.
[235] John Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today* (Basingstoke: Marshalls, 1984), 144-5.
[236] De Blois, 'Foundation', 15
[237] Stott, *Issues*, 145.
[238] John Gladwin, 'Human Rights', in David F. Wright (ed.), *Essays in Evangelical Social Ethics* (Wilton, Conn.: Morehouse-Barlow, 1979), 168.

(Num. 33.54; Lev. 25.14-18; 25-34). Certainly, in her mainline *Human Rights Reader,* Micheline R. Ishay sees fit to begin with various selections from the Torah on this basis.

Now of course, as soon as one brings the Torah into discussions on the 'theology of human rights', a serious hermeneutical problem arises. This problem stems from the fact that the discourse of the Torah is principally a discourse of divine command rather than human entitlement; of precept and compliance, prescription and duty, rather than of 'self-evident', 'intrinsic; or 'inalienable' rights. Yet despite this apparent mismatch, the *reciprocity* between God and humankind which is implicit in the covenantal language of Torah and elsewhere, can be seen to mitigate this problem to an extent. Hence, as Chris Wright proposes, though the Decalogue may not seem at all close to present-day rights-language, it does emerge from a context of human liberation in the Exodus, and the beginning of Israel's recovery and self-realisation having escaped the yoke of Egypt. Hence Wright's observation that "in the Exodus redemption, God had conferred rights and freedoms on his people. But, precisely for the purpose of preserving them, these were immediately translated into responsibilities."[239]

Indeed, much the same process applies in the New Testament, when Jesus delves into the heart of the Torah to define what must surely be a universal moral code - the so-called 'Golden Rule'.

The Golden Rule: Matthew 22.35-40

When Jesus tells a legal expert in Mark 12.28-31 and Matthew 22.34-4 that the Law and the Prophets hang on the command of Deuteronomy 6.4-5 to love God, and on the injunction of Leviticus 19.18 to love one's neighbour as oneself, the immediate ethical context is once again clearly command-driven rather than rights-based. Yet George Gatgounis is surely not stretching a point when he comments that as summed up by Jesus in this way, "the Bible's social theory … implies that *everyone* has the right to be treated according to the principle of love … that everyone has the right to be treated well.'[240]

The Impartiality of God: Compassion, Redemption and Common Grace

If the Torah and the Golden Rule imply something akin to universal rights, we might well see this inference linking with the core biblical teaching that God 'shows no partiality' - whether in his compassion towards all those in need regardless of race, class or ethnicity (as in the Parable of the Good Samaritan), or in the insistence of James 2.1-9 that prejudice on such grounds is a grave sin. The same universality might also be derived from Jesus' statement in Mark 10.45 that he had come to lay down his life as a 'ransom for many' - that is Gentiles from every nation as well as his own Jewish people.

The cross of Christ in turn suggests an ethic of self-denial and self-sacrifice which does not deny rights, but which is hardly limited by them. Indeed, it has at its core the possibility of what Stott calls a 'responsible renunciation of rights'. As Stott goes on to note, although in very nature God, Jesus often suffered abuses of his human rights: "He became a refugee baby in Egypt, a prophet without honour in his own country, and the Messiah rejected by his own people … He became a prisoner of conscience, refusing to compromise in order to secure his release. He was falsely accused, unjustly condemned, brutally tortured and finally crucified. And throughout this ordeal, he declined to defend on demand his rights, in order that by his self-sacrifice he might serve ours."[241]

Human rights might well also be interpreted theologically under the rubric of 'common grace'. While the particular grace of Christ for salvation cannot be claimed by us against God as rights are claimed against another person or the state, there is a broader stock of divine blessing and favour which both mitigates the world's sin and contributes to the good ordering of civic society. In John Warwick Montgomery's terms, human rights belong to this sphere of common grace precisely insofar as they are gifted by God rather than 'owned' by humanity: "Ultimately, [then], it could be said that one has no 'right' to human rights. Indeed, this realisation is the *sine qua non* for a truly adequate philosophy of human dignity. If people's rights *were* of their own making, they could as easily *unmake* them. [But] since rights come as a divine gift from above, their inalienability is sure."[242]

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[239] Christopher J. H. Wright, *Human Rights: A Study on Biblical Themes* (Bramcote: Grove Books, 1979), 17.

[240] George Gatgounis, 'Human Rights - A Biblical Notion?' (Rutherford Institute Paper, 1995), 1.

[241] John Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today* (Leicester: IVP, 1984), 149.

[242] John Warwick Montgomery, *Human Rights and Human Dignity*, (Edmonton: Canadian Institute for Law, Theology and Public Policy, 1995), 217.

Theological Risks of Human Rights

If the strands of biblical teaching just mentioned lend themselves plausibly to refraction through the human rights lens, it must be recognised that significant theological risks remain for the *overall* enterprise of transposing the Bible's metanarrative into the modern language and root paradigms of 'universal human rights'. The first of these is the risk of anthropocentrism.

Anthropocentrism

Just as the Enlightenment at times vaunted man as the 'measure of all things' and construed human rights on the assumption of self-validating reason, so Paul Marshall needs to be heeded when he warns that rights discourse derived from this source might "place not a divine call but a purported human attribute, and … even human autonomy, as an important feature of, and even as the very foundation of, moral reflection."[243] It need hardly be added that this risk is nothing less than the risk of vain idolatry - of exchanging God's greatest creation for the Creator himself (cf., Gen. 3.5; Rom. 1.25). No doubt this first pitfall is closely related to a second: the potential of human rights to blind people to their sin.

Bypassing Sin

Commenting on the secular humanist underpinning of much modern rights theory, and on its attendant faith in the perfection of humanity through education, the German Brethren scholar Thomas Schirrmacher, writes: "We [know] that doctors smoke as much as lay people do, that others maintain healthy lifestyles, that [many] women continually become pregnant in spite of a flood of information about birth-control. We all know for our own lives, that knowing the right answer, even being convinced of it, in no way guarantees that we live accordingly."[244]

Schirrmacher goes on, of course, to relate this phenomenon to the universality of sin, and comments that human rights might dupe people into denying their need for repentance and forgiveness by God. Indeed, we might well note the irony of the fact that both the 1948 UN Charter and the 1950 EU Convention emerged in response to the manifest iniquities of Nazism and the Final Solution, yet still confidently assert the intrinsic goodness of humanity. In this context, it is interesting that we are currently observing the beginnings of a public mindset, corresponding to developments in genetic research, that tends to suggest that human responsibility for anti-social or unacceptable behaviours may be relative rather than absolute, thus dispensing with notions of 'right' and 'wrong', and certainly 'sin', once and for all.

Downplayed Responsibilities and Rationalised Revelation

Reflecting further on the covenantal matrix as a corrective to the individualism and self-regard to which rights can fall prey, Chris Wright argues that if rights language is to be retained in a biblical theology at all, its 'first aspect' must be that it 'suspends the horizontal plane of inter-human duties from the transcendent hook' of God, on the basis that 'responsibility to God is constitutive of human nature itself.[245] This same need to uphold the transcendent authority of God in rights talk is linked to the importance of prioritising divine revelation over human reason - of emphasising what John Warwick Montgomery terms the 'revelational content' of authentic human rights over theories which locate them too readily within the realm of human reason or natural law.[246]

Rights in the Multi-Faith Context

Recognising the contribution made by religious traditions to moral discourse around the world, and intending to maintain a spiritual dimension in human rights, representatives of various major faiths met in 1993 at a special ' Parliament of World's Religions' in Chicago. Led by the Catholic theologian Hans Kung, the theological track at this event produced a Declaration intended to define a new 'global

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[243] Marshall, 'Rights, Human', 749.
[244] Thomas Schirrmacher, 'Human Rights and Christian Faith', online at: www.Trinitysem.edu/journal/schirrmacherv3n2.htm, 3
[245] Wright, *Human Rights,* 8.
[246] John Warwick Montgomery, *Human Rights and Human Dignity*, (Edmonton: Canadian Institute for Law, Theology and Public Policy, 1995), 161-82.

ethic' for the coming millennium. Unsurprisingly, this was fuelled substantially by a concern for universal human rights. Whereas the Lausanne Covenant defines failure to hear the gospel as a tragedy at least on a par with material suffering and poverty, the Declaration begins baldly by stating:

> The world is in agony. The agony is so pervasive and urgent that we are compelled to name its manifestations so that the depth of its pain may be clear. Peace eludes us … the planet is being destroyed … neighbours live in fear … women and men are estranged from each other … children die! This is abhorrent![247]

However, the Declaration moves on to affirm that 'this agony need not be' because the basis for a new global ethic 'already exists' in the main religious systems of the world. In summarising this universal morality, the Declaration identifies 'Four Irrevocable Directives', namely:

- Non-violence and respect for life
- Commitment to economic justice
- Tolerance and truthfulness
- Equal rights and partnership between men and women.[248]

Implicit within this formulation are rights to life, shelter, food and water, work and fair employment, as well as to education, free expression, freedom of religion, and to non-discrimination on the grounds of sex. Inasmuch as they are cast as 'Directives' these principles retain a deontological force of sorts, but the lack of any clear notion regarding what sort of God or gods might have issued such directives means that they function in this context just as well within the rights paradigm. Their purported universality - their global reach - is asserted as a quid pro quo for the sidelining of what Christians would call 'special revelation': that is, the particularity of one understanding of God within any one faith. No doubt we can assent to these Four Irrevocable Directives and find scriptural backing for them, but if we are to define a 'global ethic' which truly reflects our evangelical convictions, we cannot be content with this alone. Indeed, to accept only this minimal framework of rights and values without also defining an authentically Christocentric universal moral theology would be effectively to collude with sycretism. As a tool for peacemaking and social justice alongside other faith traditions the World Parliament's Directives have some currency for Christians; but that currency will be debased for us if not tied to a fuller, more biblically-grounded worldview which has God's Only Son at its heart.

Significantly, it is not only Christians who are compelled to regard secular human rights charters and multifaith ethics as adjuncts to their own moral theologies. In August 1990, representatives from a number of Islamic states gathered in Cairo to draft a 'Declaration on Human Rights in Islam'. Motivated by a conviction that the UN Declaration and its various supporting texts reflected a largely western, secular philosophical provenance, the Cairo delegates supplemented the provisions of that text with a document of their own, defined not by Locke or Paine, by Sharia Law. Hence Article 6 asserted against the gender equality ethos of the UN that 'The husband is responsible for the maintenance and welfare of the family'. Hence, Article 12 circumscribed the right to freedom of movement 'within the framework of Sharia Law'. Hence, against the Deistic natural law tradition of the west, Article 10 insisted that 'Islam is the religion of true unspoiled nature.' Hence too, against the allowance of proselytism implicit in the UN's endorsement of religious liberty, it warned potential evangelists among Muslims, "It is prohibited to exercise any form of pressure on a man … in order to force him to change his religion to another religion, or to atheism."

The Cairo Declaration suggests that no form of 'universal ethic' is likely to be comprehensive in terms of adequately speaking for every cultural and religious community. The UN Declaration and the EU Convention and Fundamental Charter are necessarily reductive, consensual, default texts, and particularly thanks to their secular formulation, will always be subject to theological elaboration by faith groups seeking to express shared human rights with reference to their own holy scriptures and their own doctrinal traditions. Of course, as Evangelical Christians, we ourselves must go on believing that Christ is the Saviour of not just one people-group, but of the world as whole and that flowing from the Bible's account of God as Creator the rights of all – human, animal, environment – indeed, the whole of creation - are derived. And of course, we must go on asserting our right to proclaim Him freely as such in the public arena.

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[247] Hans Kung, *Yes to a Global Ethic* (London: SCM, 1995), 9.
[248] Kung, *Yes to a Global Ethic*, 17-25.

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Index of Submissions Received

The full texts of submissions and oral transcripts will appear in Volume 2 of this Report

Submissions received in various formats:

Abbreviation	Author/Title
Alison	Alison, Rt. Hon Michael
Avis *Privatisation*	Avis, The Revd Prebendary Paul, *Beyond the Privatisation of Faith*
Avis *Church*	Avis, The Revd Prebendary Paul, *Church, State and Establishment Issues*
Avis *State of Faith*	Avis, The Revd Prebendary Paul, *The State of Faith*
Avis *Settlement*	Avis, The Revd Prebendary Paul, *Act of Settlement*
Avis *National Churches*	Avis, The Revd Prebendary Paul, *National Churches – the Church of England*
Basden	Basden, Dr Andrew, *Politics with Eternal Significance: The Combination of Tsedeq and Radah*
Battye	Battye, Rev Lisa
Beales	Beales, Rev Chris
Beckett	Beckett, Fran
Birchall	Birchall, Mark D.
Birnie *Constantine*	Birnie, Dr Esmond MLA, *In Praise of Constantine and the Reformed State*
Birnie *Britishness*	Birnie, Dr Esmond MLA, *A Senile UK State? Resisting the deconstruction of 'Britishness'*
Buchanan	Buchanan, Rt. Rev Colin
Buchanan *Disestablishment*	Buchanan, Rt. Rev Colin, 'Disestablishment – the straightforward case', Mills-Powell, Mark (ed.), *Setting the Church of England Free*, (Alresford, John Hunt Publishing Ltd, 2003)
Buchanan *Disestablish*	Buchanan, Rt. Rev Colin, 'Surely we should Disestablish?', *Anvil Vol. 19, No. 4 2002*
Bunting	Bunting, Madelaine, *The Media and Religion*, (Gresham College Lecture)

Carr   Carr, The Very Revd Dr Wesley

Chisnall   Chisnall, Ian

Clements   Clements, Revd Dr Keith

Clements (Email)   Clements, Revd Dr Keith, *(email correspondence)*

Coffey   Coffey, John, *Secularisation: is it inevitable?*, (Cambridge, Cambridge Papers Limited, 2001)

Cooling   Cooling, Trevor

Cranmer   Cranmer, Frank MP

Davie, G   Davie, Prof. Grace, *From Obligation to Consumption: Patterns of Religion in Northern Europe at the start of the 21st Century*

Davie, M   Davie, Dr Martin, *Faith and Nation – some theological reflections*

Denton   Denton, Dr Clifford, Cambrian Papers:
                        To the utmost of my power…
                        Erosion
                        The Laws of God
                        Law and Custom of the Constitution
                        Education
                        Foundations
                        Law and Gospel in Britain

Diamond   Diamond, Paul

Fergusson   Fergusson, Prof. David

Frost   Frost, Rev Dr Rob, *The Church, Spirituality and Secularism*

Gill   Gill, Prof. Robin, *The Future of the Churches*

Glasman   Glasman, Dr Maurice

Glasman *Citizenship*   Glasman, Dr Maurice, *Citizenship and Faith*

Gloin   Gloin, David

Griffiths, L   Griffiths, Rev Dr Leslie

Griffiths, T   Griffiths, Rev Dr Tudor

Harte   Harte, David

Hoek   Hoek, Marijke

Hughes   Hughes, Dr Dewi

Hunter   Hunter, Robert LC

Hurd   Hurd, Rt. Hon Lord Douglas, *Church and State – Will the partnership last?* (Hereford Cathedral School Lecture)

Jones   Jones, Dr Arthur, *Advancing Christian Education*

Lamey   Lamey, Richard

Langlois   Langlois, John

Langton   Langton, Steve

Letwin   Letwin, Oliver

Longworth   Longworth, David

McBain   McBain, Douglas

Modood *Multiculturalism*   Modood, Prof. Tariq, 'Multiculturalism, Secularism and the State', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy, Vol. 1, No. 3 Autumn 1998*

Modood *Muslims*   Modood, Prof. Tariq, *The Place of Muslims in British Secular Multiculturalism*

Modood *Britishness*   Modood, Prof. Tariq, *Britishness Out of Immigration and Anti-Racism*

Murray Williams   Murray Williams, Dr Stuart, *Faith, Church and Nation: An Anabaptist Perspective*

Nazir-Ali *Strategic Issues*   Nazir-Ali, Rt. Revd Michael, *Shapes of the Age to Come: Strategic Issues for the House of Bishops and the Archbishops' Council*

Nazir-Ali *Church and State*   Nazir-Ali, Rt. Revd Michael, *Church and State – An Anglican Worldview*

Nazir-Ali *Coronation*   Nazir-Ali, Rt. Revd Michael, *What a Coronation should be*

O'Donovan   O'Donovan, Rev Prof. Oliver, *Establishment*

Rivers   Rivers, Julian

Roffen   Roffen, Michael, *Thinking and Acting Morally*

Scott-Joynt   Scott-Joynt, Rt. Rev Michael

Sinclair *Human Rights*   Sinclair, Revd Dr David, *The Church of Scotland General Assembly Committee on Church and Nation – Human Rights*

Sinclair *Church*   Sinclair, Revd Dr David, *Church-People-State-Nation*

Sinclair *Communities*   Sinclair, Revd Dr David, *Compassionate Communities*

Sinclair *Culture*   Sinclair, Revd Dr David, *Compensation Culture*

Sinclair *Commission*   Sinclair, Revd Dr David, *A Human Rights Commission for Scotland*

Sinclair *Kingdom*	Sinclair, Revd Dr David, *Nearer the People? Nearer the Kingdom?*
Sinclair *Political Process*	Sinclair, Revd Dr David, *The Political Process: Communication, Consultation, Involvement and Accountability*
Sinclair *Public Life*	Sinclair, Revd Dr David, *Public Life in Scotland Today*
Sinclair *Reform*	Sinclair, Revd Dr David, *Reform of the House of Lords*
Sinclair *Scottish*	Sinclair, Revd Dr David, *The Scottish Human Rights Commission*
Sinclair *Sectarianism*	Sinclair, Revd Dr David, *Sectarianism*
Sinclair *Social Theology*	Sinclair, Revd Dr David, *Social Theology in the Church of Scotland*
Sinclair *Land*	Sinclair, Revd Dr David, *Theology of Land and Covenant*
Smith	Smith, Dr David
Spencer	Spencer, Nick, *Apolitical Animal? A Biblical Perspective on Engaging with Politics in Britain Today,* (The Jubilee Centre, Cambridge, 2003)
Summerton	Summerton, Dr Neil
Taylor, E	Taylor, Elizabeth
Taylor, J	Taylor, Dr Jenny, *There's Life in Establishment- but not as we know it*
Turner	Turner, Martin, *(no title)*
Weaver	Weaver, Dr John
Weaver *National Church*	Weaver, Dr John, *A Baptist Response to the Notion of the National Church in the UK*
Wolffe	Wolffe, Dr John
Wolffe *Jubilees*	Wolffe, Dr John, *After the Jubilees: The Churches, The Monarchy and British Society 1809-2002* (Westminster Abbey Lecture 10 June 2002)
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Wright, D. *Theology*	Wright, Prof. David, 'What Kind of Theology for the 21st Century?', *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology, No. 17.2*, (Edinburgh, Rutherford House, 1994)
Wright, N	Wright, Dr Nigel, *Disestablishment – Loss for the Church or the Country? A Dissenting Perspective*, (The Liddon Lectures 2003)
Wynn	Wynn, Terry MEP, *(no title)*

ORGANISATION / CHURCH RESPONSES

BU	Baptist Union
CARE	CARE, *The Church and our National Life*
CPA	Christian People's Alliance, *The Constitution and Christ*
Church of Scotland	Church of Scotland
Jubilee Centre	Jubilee Centre
PTS	Protestant Truth Society
St Margaret's	St Margaret's Church, Bradford

ORAL CONTRIBUTIONS (subsequently transcribed)

Submitted by:

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Fergusson (Oral)	Prof. David Fergusson, Director of Postgraduate Studies and Professor of Divinity, University of Edinburgh
Davie (Oral)	Dr Martin Davie, Council for Christian Unity

SOCIO-POLITICAL SUB-GROUP PLENARY (02/12/04)

Griffiths (Oral)	Rev Dr Leslie Griffiths, Superintendent Minister, Wesley's Chapel
Ashcroft (Oral)	Mr John Ashcroft, Research Director, Jubilee Centre
Sinclair (Oral)	Rev Dr David Sinclair, Secretary, Church and Nation Committee, Church of Scotland
Scott-Joynt (Oral)	Rt. Rev Michael Scott-Joynt, Bishop of Winchester
Davie (Oral)	Dr Grace Davie, Professor of the Sociology of Religion, University of Exeter

CONSTITUTIONAL SUB-GROUP PLENARY (12/03/04)

Nazir-Ali (Oral)   Rt. Rev Dr Michael Nazir-Ali, Bishop of Rochester

O'Donovan (Oral)   Rev Oliver O'Donovan, Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral
                                Theology, Christ Church College, University of Oxford

Wright (Oral)   Prof. David Wright, University of Edinburgh

Buchanan (Oral)   Rt. Rev Dr Colin Buchanan, Area Bishop of Woolwich

PUBLISHED MATERIAL SUBMITTED

Wakeham Report   A House for the Future: Royal Commission on the Reform of the
                                House of Lords (January 2000)

Hansard   House of Lords Hansard, Vol. 635, No.142, 22nd May 2002 (submitted
                                by the Rt. Hon Lord Maclennan of Rogart and Lord Alton of
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                                (Alresford: John Hunt Publishing Ltd, 2003)

Buchanan *Disestablish*   Buchanan, Rt. Rev Colin, 'Surely we should Disestablish?', *Anvil Vol.
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Spencer	Spencer, Nick, *Apolitical Animal? A Biblical Perspective on Engaging with Politics in Britain Today,* (Cambridge: The Jubilee Centre, 2003)

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE COUNCIL

Theology

All recommendations made here proceed from the following core theological principles:

a) As Creator and Sustainer of the cosmos, God is sovereign over the whole of life. Environmental, civic and political concerns are as much subject to his eternal rule as more obviously churchly and devotional matters. (Gen. 1.1-2.25; Ps. 24.1; Mt. 6.10; Phil. 2.10).

b) The life of God as a Trinity of persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - suggests a pattern of sociality which may be seen to inform God's ordering of the Church and civic life as intrinsically communal and interdependent. This analogy of the 'Social Trinity' is one way in which a godly society could be said to reflect the unity-in-diversity of God himself. (Mt. 28.19; 2 Cor. 13.14).

c) God created all men and women in his own image. Though this image has been drastically corrupted by sin, it remains an essential rationale for treating all human beings as possessing God-given worth and dignity. Though much present-day rights discourse has become purely humanistic, recognition of this image of God in humanity validates the Christian endorsement of rights. (Gen. 1.26-7; Ps. 8.5-8; Jas. 3.9).

d) Nations, states, governments and civic institutions are part of God's plan for humanity now, but in their organisation and conduct are subject to God's rule, and ultimately to God's judgement. (Rom.13. 1-7)

e) Because it takes place in a sinful, fallen world, civic and political engagement must always be regarded by Christians as a limited means of bringing in the kingdom of God. Politics is the art of the possible and inevitably involves a degree of compromise in this life. However, Christians are mindful of a future new creation which perfectly reflects God's intention for human society. This goal should inform a political vision and engagement in which political decision making rests on mature reflection, discernment and guidance by the Holy Spirit. (Jn. 18.36; Acts 24.10-21; Acts 26.6-8; Rev. 21-22).

f) In his incarnate life and ministry Jesus Christ demonstrated God's concern for the just ordering of human community and civil society. In bringing good news to the poor, healing the sick and ministering to the outcast, he showed that godly use of power is measured by its respect and compassion for the least well off. In calling individuals to follow him, he commended personal responsibility and good stewardship. In challenging the powerful with the values of God's kingdom, he pointed the way to a more righteous and peaceful world. (Luke 4.16-20; Mt. 25.14-30; Jn. 18.28-19:16; 1 Tim. 6.17-19).

g) The calling of Christians is to present the gospel to others with a view to their conversion and incorporation into the Church. This divinely-ordained mission proceeds alongside our continuing mandate to care for the earth, and also includes relief of poverty and suffering, peacemaking, building community and involvement in civic and political life - both through internal participation and prophetic confrontation of those in power. In this context we believe active political service and witness to be legitimate ministries of the Church and individual Christians within it (Mt. 5.3-10; 11.5; 1 Tim. 2.2; Acts 6.1-4; 24.1-26.32).

h) Whatever the precise nature of their relationship to the State in any particular context, Christians are called to bear witness in their life and work to that present and future reign of God which is greater, purer and more righteous than any earthly realm, and to which all earthly realms are subject (Jn. 18.36; 19.11; Acts 5.29; Lk. 21.27; Rev 11.15; 17.14).

i) The biblical end-time promises of Jesus' return, final judgement and cosmological renewal should provoke Christians to present-day prayer and action for justice and peace as a sign of the coming kingdom, rather than to complacent contentment in their own salvation. (Mt. 25.31-46; Jas. 2.14-26; Rev. 20.11-15).

With these foundational beliefs in mind, we undertake to meet the following challenges, and call on the Board, Council and members of the Evangelical Alliance to do the same:

Religious Liberty

1. Affirm and defend the right to religious liberty and liberty of conscience as recognised by international and European conventions and domestic law, and as supported by Scripture..

2. Recognise the preservation of religious liberty and freedom of religious expression as fundamental rights which must be defended, especially in the areas of broadcasting, education, social and community action, employment, and voluntary conversion from one religion to another without legal or economic penalties (Luke 10.25-37; 1 Cor. 8.1-13; Gal.5.22-3).

3. Recognise that whilst the preservation of religious liberty in the 21st century entails respect for the freedoms of others, such respect implies no necessary approval or endorsement of those others' beliefs.

4. Recognise that it is important for the state to restrain those who would use the cloak of religious liberty to incite violence or hatred against others.

5. Recognise that Christians and members of other faith groups must seek to overcome teaching and conduct which threatens the life, liberty and property of others.

Strategic Thinking

6. Make every effort to understand contemporary society and to actively demonstrate the diversity of those identifying as evangelicals, working with fellow believers and relevant experts to engage seriously with the complex issues of the day. In the light of this, ensure that we include and value the contribution of those we represent as we seek to educate and resource the evangelical constituency to meet the challenges of contemporary social and political engagement, and achieve an appropriate balance between inward spiritual and ecclesiological concerns and social/ civic involvement.

Role of Evangelicals in British National Life

7. Recognise that the term *evangelical* is much misunderstood and often vilified in public discourse, but that attempts to abandon it are unwarranted. Acknowledge that a constructive presentation of evangelical faith and practice must be a priority in the area of public policy.

8. Maximise our considerable potential to engage effectively with society, rooting our politics firmly in faith in the Lordship of Christ and the authority of the Bible, and relying on the power of the Holy Spirit for prophetic vision and proclamation.

9. Work harder at co-operating with fellow evangelicals, and, where appropriate, with others, in public life.

10. Participate fully in the democratic process by becoming better informed, by voting, and by contributing both locally and nationally through responsible political, civic, cultural and social action.

11. Pursue constructive political engagement, seeking to avoid a clamorous or censorious tone which could prove counter-productive, and repudiating violent, threatening or coercive methods.

12. Recognise that while politics involves compromise and negotiation on some fronts, authentic evangelical engagement with government and political institutions must resist any temptation to dilute the gospel in pursuit of public favour, to suspend essential evangelical convictions, distinctives and practices so as to comply with the demands of state or party, or to withdraw from the public sphere altogether.

13. Resist any suggestion that specifically Christian political parties should command priority claims on Christians, acknowledging that it is possible for Christians to serve God with equal integrity in any of the mainstream political parties.

14. Encourage Christians to work in political parties and urge churches to support and pray for them as they do so.

15. Urge Christians, whatever party they serve, to be consistent in incarnating Christian principles of honesty, integrity and self-sacrifice.

Church, Pluralism and Human Rights

16. While acknowledging the minority status of practising Christians within the UK, maintain that the public truth of the Gospel applies to all people everywhere for the common good.

17. Insist that the path of Christian discipleship embraces the whole of life in both public and private, 'sacred' and 'secular' spheres, and that churches have a responsibility to help people make positive connections between these spheres.

18. Resist strict segregation between the public and private realms, and maintain that God is sovereign over all Creation, even as his sovereignty may be expressed in distinct ways in different arenas, e.g., domestic, ecclesiastical and political.

19. Recognise that distinct roles and strategies may be required of churches and their members from time to time in these various arenas, and that considerable discernment may be needed in formulating these roles and strategies.

20. Recognise the right of different faith groups to constitute themselves according to their own beliefs and ethos, emphasising that government commitment to political equality should not be used as a pretext for interfering with the organisation or activities of such groups.

21. Acknowledge that the self-determination of religious groups must proceed in accordance with those basic universal principles of human dignity, worth, respect and social good which are implicit in the biblical doctrine of humanity's creation in the image of God.

22. Protect human rights, on the basis that all people derive their value, dignity and purpose from their creation in the image of God.

23. Hold governments to account at home and abroad for their protection of fundamental human rights.

24. Emphasise that individual rights are not unlimited and should be balanced by responsibilities to others and to society as a whole.

25. Support and encourage equality in the areas of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age, as well as in religion, whilst recognising that an evangelical Christian perspective in this area may be very different from current secular views.

26. Urge the proposed Single Equalities Commission to be sensitive to the diversity of faith communities, and to employ clear guidelines which respect the distinctive religious character and teachings of such communities, in accordance with the UN *Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief* (1981) and related documents.

27. Assert religious liberty in respect of sexual ethics, in particular the right of religious communities to order their life, membership and leadership according to their own established standards of sexual morality. Insist that this right is not subordinate to more general rights regarding sexual orientation.

28. Recognise that most African-Caribbean and Asian Christians in the UK are evangelical, and that British evangelical churches are therefore well placed to offer first-hand reflection on the complex interplay of race and religion and to play a lead role in the dialogue on integration and multiculturalism as expressed by the Christian community.

29. Urge government and civic institutions to engage positively with such Christians, not purely in terms of their racial character but also in terms of their evangelical Christian convictions.

Keeping Sunday Special

30. Urge government to recognise the rights of workers to attend Sunday public worship and to maintain a weekly day for rest and family time. Emphasise that it is for the benefit of society as a whole that a proper balance between work and home life be encouraged, by legislation where appropriate. Uphold the rights of other religious traditions to reasonable time off work in conjunction with their own religious festivals.

The Media

31. Urge the broadcasting authorities to present more balanced treatment of religion, noting particularly:

    iv. The decline in religious broadcasting in the mainstream media and the tendency of terrestrial television in particular to caricature and misrepresent the nature of religion, and especially of evangelical Christianity

    v. The need for orthodox majority religious traditions to be more proportionately represented, with less focus on sectarian, marginal or extremist expressions of faith.

    vi. The need for greater right of reply to be given to mainline, orthodox religious perspectives when minority views or hostile critique are emphasised.

32. Constructively and discerningly make use of the various complaints procedures offered by media outlets, regulators and the law when material seriously offensive to Christians and others is broadcast.

33. Object to the restriction of territorial broadcasting licences for religious groups, and urge government to reconsider the granting of national licences to responsible religious networks.

34. Encourage Christians to see a career in the media as a legitimate vocation, and support Christians already working in the media as they seek to integrate their faith with their professional responsibilities

Social Justice

35. Actively promote justice and compassion for the poor, vulnerable and oppressed, prioritising care through the maintenance of healthy welfare and charitable sectors for those who suffer disadvantage and need.

36. Among other projects related to poverty and injustice, maintain strong support for debt relief, fair trade and sustainable development.

Environment

37. Emphasise and demonstrate care of God's creation, affirming that the divine mandate for human dominion over the earth means responsible stewardship of its resources, and pursuit of environmentally sustainable lifestyles.

38. Urge government to honour the UN's millennium development goals through specific policies designed to meet associated targets.

39. Urge government to take action to slow down anthropogenic climate change and mitigate its untoward consequences.

Civil Disobedience

40. As far as possible, use political and legal channels to resist state demands which clearly conflict with Christian conscience.

41. Recognise that as a last resort, recourse to civil disobedience and resistance may be necessary, particularly when faced with tyrannical rule and/or the breakdown of the rule of law.

Co-operation and Co-belligerence

42. Where theologically appropriate, and where a socially beneficial outcome is likely to ensue, make common cause with those who do not share an evangelical, Christian or religious worldview.

43. Recognise that working in co-operation with non-evangelicals to bring about societal change may blur gospel distinctives and should thus be carefully weighed before being undertaken, with clear principles and guidelines defined in advance and reassessed in the course of co-operation.

Importance of Mission

44. Seek to ensure that in pursuing social and community projects the imperatives of the Great Commission are maintained, with evangelism observed and practised as a priority in the wider ministry of the church (Matt. 28.16-20).

45. Foster the teaching and practice of effective Christian apologetics, recognising its importance in an increasingly pluralistic, multicultural society. Acknowledge apologetics to equate with the scriptural imperative of 'giving a reason for the hope that is within us' (1 Peter 3.15), and take it to involve dynamic 'double listening' to the world as well as the Word, so that the latter might be applied cogently, relevantly and persuasively to the former.

Constitutional Reform

46. Seek to influence constitutional development in ways that reinvigorate responsible government which is held properly and democratically accountable.

47. Acknowledge that the British constitution depends largely on changing conventions and cultures which reflect changing social contexts, and that superficial, technical constitutional reform should therefore be subordinate to active participation in society's structures for the public good.

48. Encourage reversal of voter apathy by organising, through local church networks, programmes of voter education, aimed particularly at young people.

Europe

49. Engage cautiously but constructively with the European Union, offering broad support to the European community project as a means to mutual respect and co-operation between nations, but maintaining critique of serious democratic deficits relating to the EU and its accountability.

50. Ensure that the proposed new European Constitution rejected in 2005 is not revived, at least until a fresh text is produced which properly recognises Europe's considerable Judaeo-Christian heritage and adequately safeguards Britain's constitutional sovereignty.

51. Refrain from denigrating the European Union as a conspiracy designed to subvert decent democratic government and undermine Christianity.

The House of Lords

52. Recognise that Evangelicals hold a variety of views on reform of the House of Lords, and should have freedom to follow their conscience in pursuing debate on it.

53. Urge that representation in any new revised chamber should reflect the diversity and contribution of faith in the nation.

54. Accept that if a proposal to remove or reduce the number of bishops is made in the context of a thoroughgoing reform of the House which is intended to enhance its significance and make an effective response to the decline of Parliament, this should not be opposed.

55. Resist any stand-alone initiative to remove the bishops, on the grounds that this would send quite the wrong signal to society about the role of religion in public life - namely that it should be officially and specifically diminished.

56. Support and pray for the bishops who sit in the House of Lords, that they might be resourced to make a responsible contribution to the work of Parliament and effectively represent the interests of other Christian and faith communities in the House.

The Judiciary

57. Support and work for a proper balance between the judiciary and other major components of the state.

58. Recognise that we now live in a society where the role of judges as lawmakers is increasingly influential in the shaping of society and respond appropriately.

59. Support the establishment of an independent appointments commission for judges, as a means to allaying suspicions about the judicial appointments process.

60. Urge Parliament to ensure that the appointment of judges is transparent and impartial, and that the judiciary is truly independent, not least in the addressing of grievances.

The Monarchy

61. Be prepared to re-examine the symbolic, sentimental and other associations of monarchy, and maintain a realistic view on the limitations of its constitutional power.

62. Recognise that as long as the monarchy remains, it must be shaped as effectively as possible to meet the needs of British society in the 21st century.

63. Urge that the next Coronation service should:

    i. Retain its historic character as an act of Christian worship, while being more ecumenical in form to reflect the growing diversity of Christian life and witness in the UK.

    ii. Feature representatives from non-Christian faiths as guests.

    iii. Avoid any suggestion of interfaith or syncretistic worship as not only wrong in itself, but incompatible with the monarch's role as Supreme Governor of the Church of England and 'Defender of the Faith' - that is, of the Protestant Christian faith by law established in England.

64. Resist the current heir to the throne's suggested re-titling of himself as 'Defender of Faith', on the grounds that such a change may too readily be interpreted as an endorsement of syncretism.

65. Suggest that the Sovereign's concern for Britain's various non-Anglican faith-communities should more appropriately be expressed in ways that do not appear to compromise the explicitly Protestant Christian constitutional position of the Church of England.

66. Consider possible separate ceremonies confirming the monarch as Head of State on the one hand and Supreme Governor of the Church of England on the other, with representation of different religious groups more extensively acknowledged in the former.

Prime Ministerial Patronage

67. Note arguments for retaining the Prime Minister's role in the appointment of senior Church of England clergy based on the importance of lay participation in key Church decision-making.

68. Note that some who reject the principle of Prime Ministerial patronage reckon it presents little serious practical threat to the life and mission of the Church of England.

69. Recognise that many reject Prime Ministerial patronage on the grounds that it compromises the Church's spiritual integrity.

70. Accept that removing responsibility for the appointment of bishops from the Prime Minister's office would incur few if any significant constitutional difficulties.

Establishment and the Church

71. Acknowledge that while some believe establishment offers positive mission opportunities in a secularised society, others hold it to be outmoded, counter-productive, and ill-attuned to our modern plural context.

72. Affirm that the relation of Church to State at any point in history is contingent, and loss (or surrender) of established status should not jeopardise the capacity and call of the Church to fulfil its mission.

73. Recognise that the status of an established church today is problematic

74. Acknowledge that concerted, wholesale disestablishment would involve longstanding and complex constitutional challenges, and accept on this basis that government and churches should not divert significant resources to such a project.

75. Accept that a gradual, ongoing attenuation of establishment is evident - for example, in the lapse of the blasphemy laws - and acknowledge that systematic resistance to such gradual attenuation is not necessarily warranted.

76. Encourage churches and other faith communities to accept that many of the special constitutional privileges and protections formerly granted to religion in the UK (and especially to Christianity and the Church of England) are now largely seen as anachronisms, and that such churches and communities must organise and represent themselves in the face of this perception.

77. Recognise that the active roles played in national life by various churches in the UK which are not established demonstrate that there is a range of valid and creative models for civic and political engagement today, of which establishment is but one.

78. Recognise that if establishment is to remain viable it must be creatively re-examined and reconfigured, so as more clearly to benefit the wider Church, and indeed other faith communities, in the 21st century.

79. Acknowledge that this reconfiguration must involve engagement between faith and state for a full range of religious groups on a level playing field.

Religious Education and Schools

80. Strive as Evangelical Christians to be at the heart of the religious education profession, shaping the content of religious education in schools.

81. Develop models for new style school assemblies that are appropriate for the modern context and that will win wide support from schools.

82. Oppose potential requirements for compulsory acts of multifaith worship that may be syncretistic and thus offensive to other faith groups, as well as to Christians.

83. Whilst acknowledging present-day social diversity, embrace significant new opportunities to develop Christian schools within the maintained sector.

84. Actively encourage teachers working in common schools to integrate a transforming Christian faith with the most recent insights in curriculum and school management.

85. Recognise the growth in recent years of new independent schools formed with a clearly evangelical ethos, and support them insofar as they maintain good academic standards and train their pupils to respond constructively to non-evangelicals and non-evangelical worldviews. Support is also provisional on their being open to inspection and to their willingness and ability to conform to the education standards endorsed by HM inspectors.

86. Urge the same in respect of the growing popularity of home-schooling programmes among evangelicals.

Marriage and Family

87. Commend and support the divine ordinance of marriage as exclusively between one man and one woman, and promote it, together with the family, as central to the well-being of society.

88. Call on government to promote laws and policies and financial incentives that strengthen marriage and family life as foundational for civil society.

89. Resist church services of blessing for same-sex partnerships as unbiblical.

90. Support Christian civic officials (e.g., registrars and members of adoption panels) who find themselves compromised by new regulations that would force them to act contrary to their religious conscience, particularly in connection with civil partnership ceremonies for same-sex couples.

Human Life

91. Urge preservation of the sanctity and dignity of human life, especially at its beginning and end, and oppose extension of individual freedoms and rights in the practice of abortion and euthanasia.

92. Counsel caution in the field of genetic human experimentation, and insist that it be subject to rigorous ethical oversight.

Terrorism

93. Repudiate terrorism, and particularly its targeting of innocent civilians, as morally indefensible and evil.

94. In the wake of the terrorist atrocities of 11 September 2001 and the bombings which have ensued in various cities including London, recognize the need for government to bolster the security and protection of its citizens.

95. Accept that the greatest human right is the right to life, and that other rights might be strained when this primary right comes under serious threat from terrorism; but urge that this process be subject to close scrutiny.

96. Urge that a balance be struck between civil liberties and national security, wherein government neither exploits nor is to seen to exploit the heightened threat from terror as a means of arrogating power to itself for other purposes.

97. Emphasise that it is incumbent on religious communities and leaders to be particularly active in discouraging the fanaticism that breeds terrorism.

98. Support a thoroughgoing citizenship programme, developed in ongoing consultation with religious and other community groups.

The Common Good

99. Oppose the pervasive contemporary culture of autonomy, self-expression and privatised values, reasserting instead the crucial importance of community based life involving commitment and self-giving to others for the common good.

100. Encourage churches and other Christian groups to devote significant energy and resources to strengthening helpful expressions of community with the aim of creating quality social capital that enables societies to flourish.