

Early Church -

- 100-300 AD - Church was unnoticed, recognized, persecuted, & variously tolerated.
- Constantine - Constantine converted to Christianity and, with the Edict of Milan (313), made Christianity a legal religion along with the other existing religions of the empire.
- Theodosius I - 380 Christianity was made the state religion (The term used to describe a state church is establishment)
- 410 - Rome Falls & Christianity is blamed by many for it (left the pagan religions). Augustine writes his famous work “The City of God” to show the superiority of Christianity over the pagan religions and express that God’s city (the church) will gain eternal happiness and the Devil’s city (man’s) will be judged.

Middle Ages - 400-600 AD

➤ **Christianity = Stability in Unstable Times**

- With the Fall of Rome there was a vacuum of power. Different leaders struggled to gain control of the land. During this time the church, with its organized structure of bishops, network of institutions, and hierarchy, became one of the major stabilizing factors for society. The church had grown and become a leading institution, providing some structure for leadership, peace, charity, and social wellness.

➤ **Clovis I, King of the Franks,**

- Likely the beginning of the Merovingian Dynasty and responsible for creating the modern state of France,
- Converted from paganism to Arianism, then to Nicene Christianity.
- He was responsible for spreading Nicene Christianity (people adopt his religion as he wins wars).
- As orthodox Christianity spread, more specifically Christian laws were enacted and institutions erected (monestaries, schools, arts, etc).

Middle Ages - 800 AD

THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

➤ **Pope Leo III crowns the Frankish king Charlemagne.**

■ We now see that the church is so powerful that it is the institution that recognizes kings and invests people with temporal authority.

➤ **Carolingian Renaissance.** Charlemagne built up a library, employing monks to preserve many ancient texts, and he created a school for his own many children, compelling his nobles' children to attend as well.

Charlemagne also proposed reforms in the church, made changes to the liturgy, and raised standards and requirements for monasteries and monks. His desire was to strengthen the church with his rule, both by inner reform and by expansion. He sent his armies to conquer other lands and forced the conversion of conquered people at sword-point.

■ Charles delineated the roles of state and church in a letter to Pope Leo:

"Our task [as secular ruler] is externally, with God's help, to defend with our arms the holy Church of Christ against attacks by the heathen from any side and against devastation by the infidels and, internally, to strengthen the Church by the recognition of the Catholic faith. Your share, Most Holy Father, is to support our army with hands upraised to God, as did Moses in ancient days, so that the ... name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified throughout the world."¹

¹ <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2008/08/charlemagne/>

Middle Ages - 800's - England

ALFRED THE GREAT

- Converted the Danes to Christianity by defeating them in battle. Sponsored the baptism of the Danish king.
- Developed his law code off of the 10 commandments and the Mosaic civic law. This became known as the “**Doom Book**” (i.e. the law book or book of judgments). It became the basis for what we now know as “Common Law.” He instituted fines for breaking the sabbath and for practicing pagan religion.²
- **Social Order:** Believed that there should be three classes of men in order that his rule would succeed: men of prayer, men of war, men of work. All his nobles were required to be educated in Christian principles and history.
- He believed that his people had fallen to the attacking Vikings because they had turned away from true Christianity and were clinging to superstition and idolatry. King Alfred of Wessex believed that the knowledge of the Bible was the cure to all social ills.³

² <https://www.christianity.com/church/church-history/timeline/601-900/alfred-the-great-11629770.html>

³ <https://iblp.org/alfred-great-king-who-sought-first-kingdom-god/>

The Middle Ages - 1000

The Investiture controversy

- Who has the right to name bishops & abbots, the church or the political heads (nobility, kings, etc)?
- Often in the feudal system the nobles of the land would appoint a priest or bishop as a way of showing how great his fiefdom was. It was a valuable asset to his area of dominion, as well as a mark of his prestige. The question eventually became: who has the right to appoint these positions?

Late Middle Ages - 1200's - 1400's

Crusades begin -

- demonstrating that the church has a great deal of political clout when it comes to military campaigns.
 - Knights Templar and Hospitalers were erected as military orders of the church.

- **Church State Tension**
 - with the rise of the Pope and Christendom, there was sometimes tension between the church (i.e. pope) and state. Chief among these tensions was the conflict between Pope Innocent III and King John of England. The conflict resulted in Innocent putting the entire country of England under interdict. That meant that worship services ceased, sacraments were suspended (except baptism, confession, & viaticum for the dying). Couples could not wed, the Eucharist could not be received, etc.

Early Modern Period - 1500-1700's

➤ **Kings = Executors of Heretics**

- Kings continued to see themselves as the temporal rulers of Christendom, responsible for executing heretics.
- Thus, when the Pope excommunicated someone, it was expected that the king would execute him. (This is why Martin Luther went into hiding after his excommunication).

➤ **Development of Erastianism - (Church of England)**

- The state has control over the church in regard to things sacred. It has the power to excommunicate, appoint church leaders/bishops, and overturn ecclesiastical declarations/decisions.
- Its name comes from Thomas Erastus, who's pamphlet on the topic was published posthumously.
- Henry the VIII's breaks with Rome. Creates the Church of England with himself as the head of it. The king takes a vow to be the "Defender of the Faith."
- King Charles III desired to be recognized as the "Defender of the Faiths."

- **Divine Right of the King (Rex Lex)** - Kings were thought to be absolute in their rule because they derived their authority from God. As a result, they could not be held accountable for their actions. In essence, the king was law.

- **Lex Rex** - Samuel Rutherford wrote this book to explain how kings, as God's agents, were themselves under the authority of God.
 - As such, they were to abide by the law of God and be judged by it (the Law is King). *The governing authorities were only allowed to hold their positions at the consent of the people.* Thus, when kings fell into tyranny, the people had a right of rebellion.

- **Covenanters**
 - National Covenanting - Nations must covenant with God and pledge to follow Christ's law alone nationally.

 - Enforcing both first and second table of the law.

 - Presbyterianism is essentially the "law of the land."

Westminster Confession 23

Original Language

i. God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates, to be, under him, over the people, for his own glory, and the public good: and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defense and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evildoers.

ii. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto: in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth; so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the new testament, wage war, upon just and necessary occasion.

iii. The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven: *yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administrated, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.*

iv. It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them tribute or other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience' sake. Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrates' just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to them: from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted, much less hath the pope any power and jurisdiction over them in their dominions, or over any of their people; and, least of all, to deprive them of their dominions, or lives, if he shall judge them to be heretics, or upon any other pretense whatsoever.

American changes to WCF 23. 3

iii. Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the Word and sacraments; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; *or, in the least, interfere in matters of faith. Yet, as nursing fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger.*

And, as Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in his church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise thereof, among the voluntary members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief.

It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered, either upon pretense of religion or of infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury to any other person whatsoever: and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance.

➤ **LBC**

Follows the WCF in some respects, but is noticeably short. The state is to punish evildoers and promote those who do good. Nothing is said about religious orientation of the magistrate. This is mostly due to the fact that the baptists were persecuted by the major churches at the time. They sought to create the LBC as a way of saying, “See, we basically believe what you do.” Because of their persecution, they were reluctant to say that the civil magistrate had power to do anything towards the religious realm.

Anabaptist / Radical Reformers (16th-17th cent)

- Do not take oaths, sometimes communal (sharing all things together), pacifistic (embracing non-violence),
- **Brotherly Union (or Schleit-heim Confession) of 1527,**
 - One of the first formal statements of early Anabaptist beliefs.
 - The Anabaptists in Switzerland and south Germany recognized the sword as “an ordering of God,” wielded by secular rulers in a fallen world to punish the wicked and protect the good.

- The Anabaptists insisted that the sword was “outside the perfection of Christ.” *“The worldly are armed with steel and iron, but Christians are armed... with truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and with the Word of God.”*
 - *Radical two kingdom approach: The kingdom of God (i.e. the church) and the kingdom of satan (the world/civil realm).*
- Until recently, most Amish and Mennonites did not vote, say the pledge of allegiance, or join the military.
- The primary focus of God’s redeeming work in the world, they believed, was the lived example of the Christian community as an alternative sociopolitical reality. The state – rather like a utility company – served a useful public purpose, but for the Christian it had no divine status and was therefore not worthy of absolute allegiance.⁴

⁴ <https://www.plough.com/en/topics/justice/politics/religious-liberty/the-anabaptist-vision-of-politics>

Contemporary Modern Period 19th-21st cent

Rise of Secularism (Due to the Enlightenment 17-18th c)

- Marxism - Secularism and atheism becoming more consistent and powerful

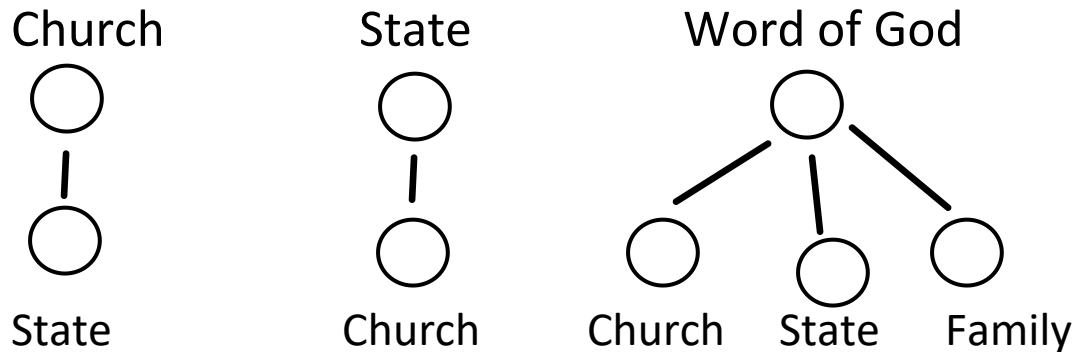


- Post-millennialism / Modernist / Fundamentalist
 - ◆ Optimistic view of man develops. Man is no longer overtly depraved, but basically good.
 - ◆ He can usher in the kingdom of God in this world. We can bring in a utopic society through good works
 - ◆ Fundamentalist (“Evangelical”) Church recedes from public activity during this time. “Just preach the gospel”



Kyperianism - doctrine of “sphere sovereignty;”

- The Lord has created several “spheres” of life which the Word of God speaks to, including the state, the family, the church, business, education, etc.



- Rise of Theonomy -

God’s law in the OT gives (sometimes called the ‘civil’ or ‘judicial’ law, as opposed to the moral and ceremonial law) an outline of what a civil government ought to enforce. Biblical case law provides the basic principles for just society.

- Radical Two Kingdom

- The church does not have anything to do with politics and political world is ruled only by a thing called “natural law.”

- Scripture does not speak to the political issues of life as it only has to do with the spiritual life of man and the spiritual kingdom of God.

Old Two kingdom

- Kingdom of power - magistrate is the co-regent of God
- Kingdom of grace - Christ as mediator in the church

Radical two kingdom (R2K) -

Lutheran position distinction between the church and state. Kingdom of man or common kingdom which is ruled by “natural law.”

The church is separate from the common kingdom and should only be involved in the work of the gospel.