Augustinian Political Theology: from *De Civitate Dei* to the 20th Century

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ABSTRACT

This study defines St. Augustine of Hippo’s political theology from De Civitate Dei and examines permutations of it from the Middle Ages to the 20th Century. Augustine’s 5th Century political theology defines the limits and bounds of church-state relations, which strikingly resembles that of liberal democratic governments in the modern day: particularly, in the concept of religious liberty. Augustine believes that though citizens of a state may have their concern for different spiritual goods, all can equally share in the earthly goods of the present world (like government) in order to establish and maintain an earthly peace.
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INTRODUCTION

All of the glitz and glamour, messianic advent, feeling of a fulfilled prophecy, and sentiment of an arrival of the saving grace that accompanied the election of President Obama brings to a full-attention the idea that secular figures can attract people’s religious hopes. President Barack Obama’s campaign poster, “HOPE,” designed by Shepard Fairey, illustrated that the selling point of his campaign was primarily launched by the country’s hope for salvation from bad economy, unnecessary war, a leader with a perceived elementary education, and the disposition of general chaos and disorder. Is this insight valid? Does secular rule become a bearer of religious hopes when religious hopes should be plugged-in elsewhere? Is it possible that the American government, its Constitution, its three branches separated by the powers of checks and balances and judicial review, find its roots in the same Christian tradition that brought order and foundation to the British colonies of North America?

Robert A. Markus’ Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine provides us an in-way to answer these questions through St. Augustine of Hippo. Markus explains that through Augustine’s understanding of the role of religion in secular political affairs, the tension between the two different hopes explained above might be relieved. Markus describes:

The recognition ... that the true Christian is always and necessarily at odds with the world, and the recognition, with the ‘establishment’ Catholic of the imperial Church, that the social order does not constitute an irrelevance to the Christian life and that political engagement and commitment are inescapable duties laid upon the Christian by the exigencies of his social existence. The two sides of this attitude are equally essential to Augustine’s understanding of political life, and equally essential consequences of his eschatological

understanding of the Christian hope. For this hope is necessarily both critical and creative; and this duality is the fundamental reason for the Augustinian ambivalence of politics.  

As Markus sees it, the political environment for Augustine is both constructive and in contention with Christian hopes. The terms of political life are viewed through a Christian theological lens for Augustine, which keeps him from having what most people would what to call a “political theory.” In truth, it is an Augustinian political theology that provides us with a medium to approach our questions.  

In his abundance of letters and published works, Saint Augustine of Hippo, the famous North African late fourth and early fifth century bishop, never laid out “his leading ideas about man, society, and the state” in a single work of political theory. But an Augustinian political theory can be abstracted from his De Civitate Dei, written between 413-426 CE. The full title of De Civitate Dei reveals that it is an apologetic work: Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans. In 410 CE, the Visigoths attacked and successfully conquered the city of Rome — an event commonly known as the Sack of Rome, signaling the beginning of the end of the Roman Empire in the West.  

The pagan population of the Roman Empire blamed Christianity for bringing about this catastrophe by upsetting the pagan gods. But after the city of Rome had been destroyed, Pagans sought shelter in Christian temples and spared their lives by hiding behind the name of “Christian.” Augustine opens his De Civitate Dei (I. 1.) saying,  

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they [Pagans] should give credit to this Christian era for the fact that these savage barbarians showed mercy beyond the custom of war — whether they so acted in general in honour of the name of Christ, or in places specially dedicated to Christ’s name, buildings of such size and capacity as to give mercy a wider range.⁴

For this disrespectfulness, Augustine felt that Pagans deserved some condemnation, and Christianity deserved some recognition.

Augustine opens *De Civitate Dei* with a dedication to his patrons, but the enraged Pagan reaction to the Sack of Rome is what really caused him to write. He said in his *Retractiones*, “Burning with zeal for the house of God I began to write the books of the *City of God* against the blasphemies and errors of its enemies;”⁵ namely, the Pagans. Thus, *De Civitate Dei* is an aggressive and unrelenting theological response to the Pagan attack on Christianity. To clear Christianity of its charges, *De Civitas Dei* appeals to religion, morality, and consequently, the limits of what secular law and government can do to fulfill human hopes.

This paper will explore Augustine’s political theology and how it may have influenced religious and political thinkers from the time Augustine lived until the 20th Century. I hope to accomplish this task in a five chapters. Firstly, I will examine Augustine’s political theology from *De Civitate Dei*. Secondly, I will further examine the continuity and transformation of Augustinian motifs in medieval political theory and politico-religious movements. Using these two realms of interpretation, I will juxtapose them against each other to provide an overall fortune of Augustinian political theology in the Middle Ages. Thirdly, I will transition to the major political theologies of the Reformation that find their roots in Adam’s original sin. Here I will examine the theories of Martin Luther, Jean Calvin, and the Puritans in England to

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⁴ Augustine. *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*. Pg. 7.

⁵ St. Augustine. *The Retractions*. Washington: Catholic University of America, 1968. 11.69
survey the extent at which they are Augustinianisms. Fourthly, I will examine the Calvinist political theories in the early American colonies. I will draw on the political treatises, poems, and letters from some of the earliest colonial leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Colonies, such as, John Cotton, Thomas Hooker, John Winthrop, Nathaniel Ward, Jonathan Mitchell, and Roger Williams, to analyze what traits of Augustinianism existed in their political theories. Finally, I will take on two case studies that resemble the liberal and conservative political attitudes in 20th Century America. Reinhold Niebuhr will illustrate the liberal attitude and Rousas John Rushdoony will illustrate the conservative attitude. Both religio-political thinkers represent a stream of political ideology that stems from two very different conceptions of Calvinism that coexist and attempt to cooperate in the modern American political spectrum.

A geographic visual helps illustrate the movement of this study. I begin in the ancient period with Augustine in Northern Africa and Rome. Then, I travel north into the European mainland for the subsequent ten centuries to occupy the Middle Ages. As the Middle Ages fade out, the Age of Reformation starts up with Lutheranism in central Europe, and picks up with Calvinism farther west in France and Geneva. Together, Lutheranism and Calvinism flood into England, where Calvinism subsists among the peasants. These English Calvinists call themselves Puritans, of which numerous denominations form. Nonetheless, the majority of them migrate across the Atlantic Ocean to the northeastern shores of America, namely to the Massachusetts Bay Colonies. From there, for the sake of time, this study leaps over 200 years of socio-political and economic progress in America,
including the complete founding of all 50 American states. Finally, this study lands into the modern period of the mid to late 20th Century.


Generally speaking, De Civitate Dei outlines Augustine’s conception of the world in terms of two cities, the Civitas Dei and the Civitas terrena. The term “city” Augustine finds in scripture, mostly the Psalms in particular. Psalms 87, 3 reads, “xxx.” And among other mentions, Augustine also refers to Psalms 46, 4, “xxx.” Augustine refers to this distinction between the two cities throughout De Civitate Dei, but he specifically addresses this topic in Book XII. He explains to the reader, saying, “We may speak of two cities, or communities, one consisting of the good, angels as well as men, and the other of the evil.” The Civitas Dei is the city populated by both angels and humans, and the Civitas terrena is the city populated by evil human souls.

This he derives from his interpretation of the passages in Genesis where God first says, “‘Let there be light’; and light was created” (Gen. 1:3), and soon afterwards, Moses narrates, “God divided the light from the darkness” (Gen. 1:4). Augustine interprets this to mean that God’s handiwork created “two societies, contrasted and opposed; the one good by nature and rightly directed by choice, the other good by nature but perverted by choice.” Both kinds of angels originally shared the same nature— that of goodness—but they differ based on a right or

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6 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 471
7 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 469
wrong, a good or bad use of “the immaterial light of the simple Wisdom of God.”

Wisdom, in this case, is the knowledge of truth— that God Himself and His Law is good and right. The angels of Light “enjoy God,” meaning his knowledge and truth, and continue up towards Heaven for eternity. On the other hand, when the Devil, who represents the chief angel of Darkness, “[swelled] with pride,” thinking he knew and had mastered a knowledge and truth superior to that of God’s, him and all of his followers fell from God’s grace into the darkness below the heavens. Such is the story of humanity: it “was in truth, but did not continue in it,” and thus remains in a fallen state.

Half of the Civitas Dei’s population lives eternally in heaven as angels, and its other human half pilgrimages towards heaven, on earth. The pilgrimaging half of the Civitas Dei is interwoven with the Civitas terrena on earth, which is to say that citizenry to either city cannot be known by man. Members of the two cities fall into different categories because of varying interests of their soul’s love, will, and desire. For many reasons God is the only one that can distinguish the difference on earth, but mostly because he predetermined the goodness and evilness of souls.

Even though only God can know who will ultimately end up, humans can understand what constitutes citizenship in one city as opposed to the other. The Civitas Dei “[clings] to God,” and the Civitas terrena “[does] not cleave to him.” In other words, on earth, the Civitas Dei aims to achieve salvation in the world.

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8 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 442
9 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 468
10 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 468
11 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 447
12 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 191-192. “Against such profane and irreverent impudence we assert both that God knows all things before they happen and that we do by our free will everything that we feel and know would not happen without our volition.”
13 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 471
14 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 471
hereafter. The present is a trial, on stage in front of an audience consisting solely of God, to demonstrate one’s good virtue (though unmanaged by free will), which means treating situations in a faithful and loving way that is akin to God’s Will. Contrarily, the Civitas terrena “aims at dominion...but is itself dominated by that very lust of domination.”\textsuperscript{15} Put another way, the Civitas terrena is concerned entirely with the temporalities of the present life—like, material and sexual pleasures, and drives for pride. It perpetually lungenes for these things after having already achieved or attained them because it madly tries to fulfill spiritual and fleshy desires with temporal goods— a pathetic task to say the least. At best, the Civitas terrena fulfills its fleshy desires, but remains spiritually parched. The result leaves the Civitas terrena ignorant from the emptiness of the present life that the true goods that accompany the life hereafter. Despite the internal differences between the two cities, the part of the Civitas Dei on pilgrimage and the Civitas terrena have their roots in the same human nature that is a result of original sin — Adam’s first sin in the Garden of Eden.

Augustine’s political theology arises in part from his exegesis of Adam’s first sin in the Book of Genesis. In Genesis’ second account of creation, God “formed man from the dust of the ground”\textsuperscript{16}, “God created humankind in his image ... male and female he created them,”\textsuperscript{17} and put them in the Garden of Eden.\textsuperscript{18} These three series of events designates that man consists of a bodily part (dust) and a spiritual part (the image of God) that exists in a place said to be paradisiacal. In the Garden, Adam

\textsuperscript{15} Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 5
\textsuperscript{17} New Revised Standard Version. Genesis 1:27
\textsuperscript{18} The New Revised Standard Version of the Harper Collins Study Bible footnotes that the first man is the notoriously known “Adam.” For our purposes, I will refer to the first man as Adam, and the first woman as Eve, even though the first woman was not named Eve until after her fall.
had only menial, custodial chores— tilling the plants, maintaining the garden, mowing the lawn so to speak. God permitted him to eat from any tree in the garden except for the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God said that when he “[does] eat of it [he, meaning Adam] shall die” (Gen. 2:17). But so long as Adam and Eve stayed in Eden, they were free to eat of the tree of life and live eternally.

Augustine maintains we learn two things about humanity from the beginning of the story of the first sin. One, humanity is subject to God’s rule. In the first chapter in the Book of Genesis, God declares that everything created is good. Furthermore, Augustine says in his Confessions that God is “incorruptible and inviolable and unchangeable.”19 Together, this is to be understood that all of God’s creations are good in their original nature because The Creator declared them so, He cannot do evil, become evil, or be deceived by evil. Since humanity is “made in God’s image,” humanity’s original ontological makeup must have had, in part, these same characteristics. However, this is not to say that God’s creations cannot cease being good: they can fall. In practical terms, God and man are two totally different entities— one is The Creator and the other is the created; one is incorruptible and the other is certainly corruptible. Because good is better than evil, and God is eternally good, where as man can become evil, we conclude that God is superior to man because the essence of His being is entirely better than man’s.

The second fact is that Adam was not originally made susceptible to evil internal desires. Augustine understands Adam’s mind to have been made subservient to God’s will. When God created man “according to His [meaning God’s]

likeness,"20 man’s will was alien to evil. But because of free will, Adam "[had his] own mode and kind of being... a peace and harmony among [himself]."21 Adam was incapable of doing everything, but Adam had the capability from free will to “do whatever he wished, just because he did not want to do whatever he could not do.”22 This means that Adam was not entirely “like” God because he was corruptible, violable, and changeable. Therefore, we understand that Adam was capable of disobeying God’s commands, but was not tempted by the internal desires of his mind at this point in the story.

Augustine’s exegesis of the origins of sin does not end there because God then gives Adam a wife, Eve, made from Adam’s own bones (Gen. 2:18-25). A serpent, described by Augustine as the mouthpiece of “the arrogant angel,”23 deceives Eve into eating the forbidden fruit, suggesting that she will become “like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:5). The serpent deceives Eve as a way to trick Adam into sin. Eve is more vulnerable to deception because she was “the inferior of the human pair.”24 Adam “could not be trapped by a false move on his own part, but only if he yielded to another’s mistake.”25 Augustine explains that the constitution of Adam’s mind was stronger than Eve’s because he was created more directly—more purely—requiring less steps and elements. Therefore, he could not sin from his own doing because if he were to sin, Adam required external temptation (i.e. Eve).

20 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 569
21 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 476
22 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 575
23 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 569. (Though neither the Bible nor Augustine explicitly say that “the arrogant angel” is the Devil or Lucifer, we can conjure that this is what Augustine meant when he describes the infamous, non-human entity that rebelled against God’s Will.)
24 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 570
25 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 570
This is exactly what happens when Adam falls in with Eve’s suggestion to eat the forbidden fruit. Adam does so, in Augustine’s analysis, because “he refused to be separated from his companion, even if it involved sharing her sin.” Augustine clarifies that this marks “the first evil act of will, since it preceded all evil deeds in man, was rather a falling away from the work of God to its own works.” Adam made bad use of his free will, and was punished. The punishment is the key element of the story; it represents the human condition, as it exists here and now in the earthly realm. Adam’s sin caused man’s will to disjoin from God’s Will, while his own will turned against itself. Augustine describes the transformation associatively, saying, “the retribution for disobedience is simply disobedience itself.” He calls man’s new will an “evil will” but holds that it still “belongs to the nature of which it is a defect.” In a broader perspective, this means that the punishment placed on Adam for his individual transgression will also plague his offspring, meaning all of mankind. Therefore, the human mind of all humans is perpetually disturbed and the human body is subject to death.

Had Adam not sinned, Augustine seems to believe that we humans would still exist in a conjugal human society, where men and women would be “equal in respect of their shared access to the privileged knowledge of what to do in the actual present in order to bring about a complete reconciliation of interests and the manifestation of God’s Will.” Hence, humans would remain social, meaning without a politics, because everyone would be blissfully ignorant of the divine

26 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 570
27 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 568
28 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 575
29 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 568
30 Hollingworth. The Pilgrim City. Pg. 90
power structure they would subconsciously obey. This would present itself as a kind of “perfect dictatorship” as Miles Hollingsworth describes it in his book, The Pilgrim City. A “perfect dictatorship” is the state where God “would have achieved what no human dictatorship can: true freedom through perfect submission and obedience.”

Thus we know two things about humanity at the beginning of the Garden story: that both Adam and Eve were subject to God’s rule and that they were not tempted by evil internal desires. After Adam disobeys God’s command, he is cut loose from the chains of God’s Will, and the attack-dogs of lust and pain are released onto his mind. Humanity becomes engineered by a “libido dominandi ‘lust of ruling.’” As a perpetually mad lusting creature, the human is tempted to conquer his neighbors for influence over the affairs of their community. Left to its own devices, human society devolves into the world of power politics.

Therefore, as a result of Adam’s first sin, man migrates from a social to a political environment. John Neville Figgis in his The Political Aspects of S. Augustine’s “City of God” describes this phenomenon and clarifies Augustine’s two main presuppositions about the earthly realm, “(1) The unity of the human race, involving, as its corollary, the doctrine of (2) the essential sociability of man.” The first presupposition arises from our being descendants of Adam, which, in brief, refers to the contamination of the nature of humans, subjecting man to desire evil internal lusts. Since we humans are all subject to this “sickness,” we are all unified by it. This explicitly makes clear that, for Augustine, man was original a social creature due to his creation, but now, man is political creature because of sin.

31 Hollingworth. The Pilgrim City. Pg. 90
32 Hollingworth. The Pilgrim City. Pg. 69
33 John Neville Figgis. The Political Aspects of S. Augustine’s City of God London: Longmans, Green, 1921. Pg. 38
The second presupposition has to do with the nature of the human society in which humans live and interact. Robert A. Markus’ *Saeculum* describes the crux of this situation in saying:

> In its coercive machinery the state turns human ferocity itself to the limited but valuable task of securing some precarious order, some minimal cohesion, in a situation inherently tending to chaos.\(^{34}\)

In other words, Markus believes our only option is “to minimize disorder”\(^{35}\) because all other attempts to achieve true order are feeble; true order is meant for the world hereafter. But more importantly, the passage revolves around the subject of the state in a *situation inherently tending to chaos*. This describes the human situation in his present political nature, where he perpetually gravitates towards sin. As Markus explains, Augustine views human history as being beyond the period of biblical revelation, where it is unclear what role God is actively playing. The present situation is as precisely *limited* as Markus says, because man cannot view himself from a divine’s eye view. Hollingsworth says it best when he writes, all of humanity will be “equal in respect of their shared access to the privileged knowledge of what to do in the actual present in order to bring about a complete reconciliation of interests and the manifestation of God’s Will.”\(^{36}\) In turn, human history is unmonitored and fragile to the inevitably insurmountable amount of sin and lack of reason. Therefore, the present world is what Markus calls a *saeculum*, which in English translates as “age.” Markus believes that Augustine understands the present to be part of an age of total human history, where man is degraded to a political creature, compelled towards sin, and the only mediating institution is secular

\(^{34}\) Markus. *Saeculum.* Pg. 95

\(^{35}\) Markus. *Saeculum.* Pg. 84

\(^{36}\) Hollingworth. *The Pilgrim City.* Pg. 90
restraint. And so, for Augustine, “the best we can hope for is a set of arrangements that is less bad that it might be—”\textsuperscript{37} that is, secular government.

Thus, the extractable political theology in the \textit{De Civitate Dei} tends to the secular because it stems from the age of restraint against the unknown calculations of human sin. Hollingworth believes, and I agree with him that Augustine looks upon this fact pessimistically, that “all government is defective because its mechanisms are the devices by which a fallen world is regulated.”\textsuperscript{38} For Augustine, the \textit{respublica} is thus a function of sin, created as a result of man’s sinful condition, working to limit sin in the world, whether through vice or goodness. In order for the \textit{Civitas Dei} to achieve its objective in the earthly realm, it is partially dependent on the \textit{Civitas terrena} and its capacity towards sin.

\textbf{THE QUASI-LEGITIMACY OF THE CIVITAS TERRENA}

The \textit{Civitas terrena} has its concern in the earthly realm, pent up with anxieties and desires for all things temporary, and led impetuously by the thirst for domination, it will always assume an unrighteous image in the eyes of Augustine. But nonetheless, the \textit{Civitas terrena} is a necessary entity as a result of the fall for Augustine in the sense that it functions to benefit the \textit{Civitas Dei} in particular cases where the \textit{Civitas Dei} are led by faith to refrain from action. Such cases include protecting the \textit{respublica} from invasion taking up arms in war and from domestic upheaval of violence and crime through the enacting punishment. The citizen of the \textit{Civitas Dei} is disqualified by his religion from taking part in war and judicial

\textsuperscript{37} Hollingworth. \textit{The Pilgrim City}. Pg. 81
\textsuperscript{38} Hollingworth. \textit{The Pilgrim City}. Pg. 81
punishment if the purpose is for the sake and sacrifice of the present world.\textsuperscript{39}

However, those who admire the ecstasy of war, the glory of victory, the power of making judgments, the fame that accompanies power, and the love of domination are helpful in constructing a temporary peace that the \textit{Civitas Dei} prefers during its pilgrimage. Thereby, the \textit{Civitas terrena} and its secular government is responsible for suppressing the power of the violent in the present world with earthly forms of justice (in war and in courts), which is beneficial both theologically and worldly.

In the two subsequent paragraphs I will use the example of war to demonstrate the quasi-legitimacy of the \textit{Civitas terrena} because the mission for earthly peace necessarily creates evils in its attempt to avoid worse evils. To begin this proof, I would like to make the point, as Augustine does “that just as there is no man who does not wish for joy, so there is no man who does not wish for peace. Indeed, even when men choose war, their only wish is for victory; which shows that their desire in fighting is for peace with glory.”\textsuperscript{40} Simply put, all men desire peace. With respect to the sickly human condition, peace, by definition, is a contradiction. A state of tranquility, a quieting from civil disturbance can only be attained by domination—that is, dominating other people’s bodies and territories as to make them one’s own and subject them to one’s own laws.

For Augustine, war is sometimes necessary for the \textit{Civitas terrena}’s quest for earthly goods, which will, in turn, benefit the \textit{Civitas Dei}. For Christians, in the opinion of Augustine, a just war is when an established earthly peace is at jeopardy

\textsuperscript{39} Hollingworth. \textit{The Pilgrim City}. Pg. 70
\textsuperscript{40} Augustine. \textit{Concerning the City of God against the Pagans}. Pg. 866
of being overturned.\footnote{Augustine. \textit{Concerning the City of God against the Pagans}. See XIX.7, XIX.12, XIX.15} If this is perceived to be the case by the citizens of the \textit{Civitas Dei} that entertain present membership in the \textit{Civitas terrena}, then they can permissibly engage with their earthly counterparts. The reason being that if the earthly peace is not completely held in the balance, then the effort is perceived base and vile, since some lowly lust of the human soul (i.e. lusts for territory, victory, glory, fame, heroism, wealth, perceived happiness, etc.) must be enjoining the mobilization. To make my point, it cannot be ensured that the \textit{Civitas Dei}—or at least the part in its earthly pilgrimage—will always engage in war to either maintain or establish peace because it is not primarily concerned with the happenings of this world. As a result, the functionality of the \textit{Civitas Dei} depends, in part, on the carnal lusts of the \textit{Civitas terrena} to successfully lure its citizens to defend and maintain the earthly peace in the \textit{respublica}, despite whether the motivations for doing so are immoral. Meaning that in no other instance will the \textit{Civitas Dei} bear physical arms because their war is a continual, inner war that uses only spiritual weapons.

\textbf{AUGUSTINE'S CRITIQUE OF THE CIVITAS TERRENA}

One of Augustine’s greatest distinctions in \textit{De Civitate Dei} is that the \textit{respublica} is not the same as the \textit{Civitas terrena}. Figgis points out that a common misconception about Augustinian political theology is that the \textit{Civitas Dei} exclusively represents “the Church,” meaning the Church Militia, and the \textit{Civitas terrena} exclusively represents “the \textit{respublica},” meaning the citizens of a designated geo-political space. But rather, \textit{respublica} is defined by Augustine as “a multitude of reasonable beings,
united in agreement over the things they love”—which is to mean for the purposes of this paper, a political community. The word “love” in Augustine’s definition means two things. One, it is the self-consistency of something immaterial, and two, it is the material value of something. Both represent the division in society between the *Civitas Dei* and the *Civitas terrena*. The *republica* ensures that all of its constituents are able to pursue the things they love by establishing and monitoring “relative and internal justice” through the vehicle of secular rule.

Augustine formulated his definition of the *republica* in response to Cicero’s definition that is overly generous and hopeful for man, as Augustine might have said. Cicero thought true justice was possible in the earthly realm. The recipe called merely for a touch of “common agreement as to what is right and by a community of interest.” Augustine responded with scathing criticism, arguing the impossibility of enacting true justice in an inherently unjust world. This is Augustine’s critique of the *Civitas terrena*. Those who do not cleave to God cleave to the false majesties of the earthly world, expecting completely fulfilling goods and true justice. But again, the *Civitas terrena* is blinded from the truth by resting their hopes and faiths in the wrong place and time.

Augustine explains the gap in the *Civitas terrena’s* logic:

For God is not the ruler of the city of the impious, because it disobeys his commandment that sacrifice should be offered to himself alone. The purpose of this law was that in that city the soul should rule over the body and reason over the vicious elements, in righteousness and faith. And because God does not rule there the general characteristic of that city that it is devoid of true justice.

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42 Augustine. *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*. Pg. 890
43 Figgis. *The Political Aspects of S. Augustine’s City of God*. Pg. 60
44 Hollingworth. *The Pilgrim City*. Pg. 32
45 Augustine. *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*. Pg. 891
Here, Augustine explains that God does not rule over the earthly realm because there exist people there who disobey him. Only in heaven, where man’s soul is no longer turned against itself or its body, does God reign. Hence, the absence of God the Ruler mandates the absence of true justice. Ultimately, the Civitas terrena seek unachievable ends because there is nothing higher than moderateness and temporality in this life.

**THE AUGUSTINIAN RESPUBLICA: NEUTRALITY, TOLERANCE, AND PEACE**

In my opinion, three key principles define Augustinian political theology: neutrality, tolerance, and peace. The respublica should be a neutral society, inhabited by members of both cities with no preference for either because both are unified by a common race. The ruler and constituents of the respublica should be tolerant of Christian practices, and if this proves to be the case, the Christian population will tolerate and abide by the laws of even a non-Christian ruler. The ultimate goal should be establish relative peace, even if it is achieved through immoral means. Analyzing this list of characteristics for an Augustinian respublica, it is easy to call upon words like “democracy” and “egalitarianism,” but this is not the essence of the picture.

Hollingworth characterizes Augustine as a “Christian Realist”46 because Augustine’s political theology prefaced a neutral, tolerant, and peaceful state. For Hollingsworth, this characterization means that though Augustine’s De Civitate Dei marks a “complete separation of politics from [human] history,”47 he remains

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46 Hollingworth. The Pilgrim City. Pg. 65
47 Hollingworth. The Pilgrim City. Pg. 65
interested in a historical view of politics that extends beyond the present world; and
that is, “eschatological politics,” a kind of politics that guides humanity towards eternal salvation. In the context of Hollingworth’s said view of Augustine’s world,
Augustine understands that what he prefers is not always going to be the case—that earthly politics will fully tend to the interests of eschatological politics. So, in order to protect his fellow Christian community, he puts forth a blueprint for a non-theocratic political theology that permits Christianity to exist in the world, but does not necessarily benefit it.

Yet, in theory, Augustine undoubtedly prefers a Christian magistrate, as we see in a section of the De Civitate Dei (V.24) referred to as the “Mirror of Princes.” There he clarifies that God grants all magistrates the power they hold. The difference between Christian magistrates and pagan magistrates who receive the power to rule on earth is that the Christian’s “good fortune was due to the mercy of God” because he “should not demand such blessings from him as if they represented the highest good.” The Christian magistrate should make the best use of this opportunity to be priest-like in the way he rules:

We Christians call rulers happy, if they rule with justice; if amid the voices of exalted praise and the reverent salutations of excessive humility, they are not inflated with pride, but remember that they are but men; if they put their power at the service of God’s majesty, to extend his worship far and wide; if they fear God, love him and worship him; if, more than their earthly kingdom, they love that realm where they do not fear to share the kingship; if they are slow to punish, but ready to pardon; if they take vengeance on wrong because of the necessity to direct and protect the state, and not to satisfy their personal animosity... and if they do all this not for a burning desire for empty glory, but for the love of eternal blessedness; and if they do not fail to offer to their true God, as a sacrifice for their sins, the oblation of humility, compassion, and prayer.

48 Miles Hollingworth. *The Pilgrim City*. Pg. 80
50 Augustine. *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*. Pg. 220
51 Augustine. *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*. Pg. 220
52 Augustine. *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*. Pg. 220
With this we understand the office of a Christian magistrate. We can imagine the relative justice and peace he establishes and works to maintain. Also, the additional lives he directs towards salvation that the pagan magistrate most likely could not.

The Christian magistrate must acknowledge that his pagan counterpart is equally capable of establishing the same relative justice and peace; and in some case, may prove more effective. The only difference is that the Christian magistrate’s ends are better, and more souls will be saved at the Last Judgment.

As peaceful as Augustine's political theology appears, Augustine's religiously motivated political activity against the Donatists in Northern Africa yields heavy scrutiny. Based on the teachings of the bishop of Carthage, Donatus, the Donatists were a schismatic movement, apart from the Catholic Church, in North Africa. They believed that “all outside the Donatist church lack grace,” meaning that they were sinners. This rigorous distinction required strictness on baptism and rebaptism practices. By the time Augustine returned to Africa in 391 CE and became bishop four years later, “the Donatists probably outnumbered the Catholics there.” The Donatists were vigilantes; “often wreaking havoc on Catholic property as they injured, maimed, and even killed Catholic clergy and laity.” At first, Augustine only wanted to use polemical persuasion to convert the Donatists back to Catholic unity because he thought “if force [was] used, Donatists would be reconciled only as a pretense and the Church would be filled with people who were Catholic only by

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56 Bonner. "St. Augustine." Pg. 859
Therefore, from 393 CE to about 412 CE Augustine published many volumes of work refuting Donatist doctrine, but his proselytism ultimately failed. At the height of the dispute, the Roman imperial court scheduled a conference in 409 CE to debate Donatist heresy. Augustine’s legal and doctrinal protestations against Donatist bishops in the tribunal claimed victory for the Catholics, which resulted in an imperial mandate outlawing Donatism. “From the Retraciones it is clear that Augustine, despite the wavering support he gave to the policy of imperial coercion, felt doubts about submitting spiritual questions to secular adjudication and appealing to the civil law to support religious truth.” Nonetheless, I am aware that critics will always call on Augustine’s reliance on secular authority to remedie the North African religious debate in order to indicate the contradiction and invalidity of Augustine’s political theology.

CHAPTER 2: THE CONTINUITY AND TRANSFORMATION OF AUGUSTINIAN MOTIFS IN MEDIEVAL POLITICAL THEORY

St. Augustine died just forty years before the abdicating of the last Roman Emperor in 476 BC, which to one tradition of historical scholarship marks the start of the Middle Ages. Among the evolution of political theory throughout the Middle Ages, from theories of true theocracy to a primitive form of popular sovereignty, Augustinian political theology is always continued but never perfected. Otto Gierke’s Political Theories of the Middle Ages traces the transition from the dominant monarchial theocracy of the time to the beginning stages of popular sovereignty.

56 Bonner. “St. Augustine.” Pg. 859
57 Faul. “Donatism.” Pg. 863
Gierke explains that a switch from Eternal Law-based legislation to Natural Law-based legislation accounted for the change in popular medieval polity.

During the High Middle Ages, Eternal Law was the predominating element from which everything came into being, namely the Human Laws of the respublica. The medieval perception of the universal whole “[regarded] the Universe itself as a single Realm and God as its Monarch. God therefore is the true Monarch.”

Through this structure, all earthly kings were considered limited representations of God’s rule of the world. “Medieval publicists declared a monarchial to be the best form of Constitution” because it viewed the monarch as a servant of ecclesiastical office. Thus, the monarch was merely a ordinary man with an onerous calling, fulfilling his deeds to God’s Universal Whole and to his respublica, as a subject of political rights and duties.

Later in the Middle Ages, Natural Law replaced the dominance of Eternal Law in the political realm. All members of the respublica had the potential to know and make use of Natural Law because it is an innate inclination of the human mind. Medieval society began to introduce the “intrinsic and aboriginal rights of the Individual” to mainstream academic dialogue about politics. As a result, the role of the individual in the general political scheme of the Late Middle Ages was heightened.

The goal of this section is to properly gauge how Augustinian political theory manifested itself in medieval political theory. We will begin with St. Thomas Aquinas’ treatise On Politics and Ethics to illustrate the presence of Natural Law in a

59 Gierke. Political Theories of the Middle Ages. Pg. 30
60 Gierke. Political Theories of the Middle Ages. Pg. 31
61 Gierke. Political Theories of the Middle Ages. Pg. 7
mainly theocratic government. Next, we will turn to Marsilius of Padua’s *Defensor Pacis* to illustrate the transition towards popular sovereignty based on Natural Law, which marks as a definite shuffle towards democratic ideologies that enter the political mainstream of the 16th Century. Lastly, we will demonstrate how this transition from theocracy to popular sovereignty occurred by drawing on Norman Cohn’s account of popular religious movements in his *Pursuit of the Millennium*.

**ST. THOMAS AQUINAS: RULE BASED ON ETERNAL LAW**

We first turn to the most important and influential philosopher of the Middle Ages, St. Thomas Aquinas. In the 13th Century he wrote on the relationship between philosophy and theology in his widely circulated *Summa Theologica*, and also on other various topics such as, politics, ethics, metaphysics, law, and society that have been referenced to justify the workings of a wide range of prominent political figures throughout history. Here we will examine his discussion of Eternal, Natural, and Human Laws in his *On Politics and Ethics*.

According to Aquinas, the concept of law is a matter of reason. Aquinas defines law as “a rule or measure of action by which one is led to action or restrained from acting.” Law is bound to action, and we can either take action or refrain from it. But the decision put forth is not so simple because we also have an array of desires that internally work towards swaying us in either of those directions that may cause conflict. Aquinas defines our decision-making process as the measurement of our options and desires against our reason. “Reason has the

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power to move the will”\textsuperscript{63} and if it takes advantage of that power, then it is applying the character of law. Aquinas makes his point that if reason propels a decision to willfully act, then law is created or used. Aquinas’ philosophical conception of law has us understand how law is used in medieval polity, where various types of law vie against and incline support to one another.

Aquinas prefaces his discussion of law with a definition of “Eternal Law.” Aquinas defines it as, “nothing else than the rational plan of divine wisdom considered as directing all actions and movements.”\textsuperscript{64} In this definition he is assuming that the world is governed by divine providence of the Christian God, and the whole community of the universe is thereby governed by divine reason.\textsuperscript{65} In such a world, Eternal Law is a source of wisdom leading all things to an appropriate and preordained end. It has the quality of law not only because it is led by reason, but because it is led by the greatest and highest source of reason, which gives direction to all existing things, even non-breathing things, like other types of law—Natural and Human. I interpret Aquinas to say that Eternal Law is important for directing things towards goodness, but if it fails to do so (as a whole society or the representative of the whole in the case of Human Law), then Eternal Law exists to judge sin that Human Law cannot always account for in the \textit{respublica}. Above all else, we should derive from Aquinas’ perception of Eternal Law that the ideology of medieval polity at the time Aquinas wrote, all laws and actions should be attributed to Divine and Natural Law.

\textsuperscript{63} Aquinas. \textit{On Politics and Ethics}. Pg. 44
\textsuperscript{64} Aquinas. \textit{On Politics and Ethics}. Pg. 48
\textsuperscript{65} Aquinas. \textit{On Politics and Ethics}. Pg. 46
However, none can participate in the Eternal Law if not without the Natural Law that is both a description of the state of affairs as well as a normative prescription for action. Aquinas refers to the Apostle Paul’s allusion to Natural Law in Romans 2:14, saying “since the gentiles who have no law do by nature the things that are of the law, they are a law for themselves.” Here the gentiles obey Natural Law. Though they were subject to various Roman civic laws, the gentiles were capable of obeying unwritten law and justice that was knowable by natural reason. Natural Law is thus the shared or common law that lives in the minds of all men. Aquinas calls it a “natural inclination” that pushes man to act in accordance with reason. Even though Natural law is the same for all men, there will be times when man will not completely know reason, and hence, Natural Law. Still, man will always have the potential to know it. Natural Law, then, serves as “an additional law given by God through which man shares more perfectly in the eternal law” because it is a self-evident proposition for man in the world.

Human Law differs from both Natural and Eternal Laws because it is a type of legislation created by man. Within the jungle of inclinations and immoral instincts, man is capable of legislating both just and unjust laws. Augustine says, "A law that is unjust is considered to be no law at all," which goes to show that Augustine and Aquinas measure the existence, and therefore, the quality of law to the extent at which it is just. Aquinas explains earlier in his treatise that justness is dictated by reason, which is dictated by Natural Law and corresponds with Eternal Law.

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66 Aquinas. *On Politics and Ethics*. Pg. 44
67 Aquinas. *On Politics and Ethics*. Pg. 49
68 Aquinas. *On Politics and Ethics*. Pg. 47
Therefore, every Human Law is to be considered law only to the extent that it derives from Natural Law, while any Human Law deviating from Natural Law is a corruption.\textsuperscript{70} This means that the power of Human Law is not comprehensive of all vice. It has coercive force, where as Eternal Law is reserved for God’s Judgment, and Natural Law merely hints at or pushes towards goodness. As a result, we find that Human Law cannot make perfect Christians.

Otto Gierke demonstrates this in his discussion of “High Church Theory.” According to this theory the Pope functions as both the priest and king of man, but only has the power to use the spiritual sword. The Pope is responsible for appointing a monarch, who is “subject to and should obey the Spiritual.”\textsuperscript{71} The monarch is an instrument of the eternal Church and thus Eternal Law. His job is to use the temporal sword, which means creating and executing Human Law. In such cases, the monarch is above Human Law because he can change it and no man capable of touching it stands above him. This is the case of a corrupt monarch in a truly theocratic respublica.

However, this is not the ideal polity for Aquinas, as we see in his treatment of law. Aquinas believes “all [men] should have a share in the government. In this way peace is preserved among the people and everyone loves and protects the constitution.”\textsuperscript{72} This is to mean that if the Human Law the monarch creates and executes serves true to Natural and Eternal Law, then Aquinas believes men will support the constitution because it will possess the rational quality of God’s Will. He emphasizes a rule where all nobles are eligible to govern, but those who do govern

\textsuperscript{70} Aquinas. \textit{On Politics and Ethics}. Pg. 53  
\textsuperscript{71} Gierke. \textit{Political Theories of the Middle Ages}. Pg. 13  
\textsuperscript{72} Aquinas. \textit{On Politics and Ethics}. Pg. 58
are chosen by the spiritual representation of all to represent God’s Universal Whole. In his point of view, this is the best polity because it “was the form of government established by divine law.”

**MARSILIUS OF PADUA: RULE BASED ON NATURAL LAW**

Marsilius of Padua was an Italian scholar, who lived from circa 1275 to circa 1342. While teaching as a professor at the University of Paris, he completed his major work *Defensor Pacis*. His book was tremendously antipapal, and once it became popular he was forced to flee Paris. From there he was recruited to the court of the German king, Louis IV of Bavaria, who was currently engaged in a dispute with Pope John XXII. In a bout that led to the imperial occupation of Rome in 1328, Marsilius was found accompanying King Louis. Here we will track back into Marsilius’ political theory from his infamous *Defensor Pacis* that he wrote in 1324. In large part, the book represents a move in mainstream political theory away from theocracy and towards a system based on popular sovereignty. His preference for popular sovereignty revolved around the increase notion of Natural Law as opposed to Eternal Law, which we saw in Aquinas’ political theory.

Marsilius constructed his political theory as a critique of the recent pattern of medieval polity in his day. He opposed the hereditary succession of divine-right monarchial power. These types of rulers were immeasurable by the whole body of citizens that were unchecked executive authorities. Hereditary successors do not guarantee to have the same moral virtue that the original divinely appointed ruler

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73 Aquinas. *On Politics and Ethics*. Pg. 59
had. Eternal Law dwindles for Marsilius, and he turns his rationality to argue for egalitarianism in the respective feudal castes and for the innate human rights that Natural Law suggests.

Marsilius suggests his preference for a popular sovereignty. He maintains that “the efficient power to establish or elect the ruler belongs to the legislator or the whole body of the citizens.” He is speaking theoretically when he says the power is invested in the whole body of citizens. He is actually saying that through popular sovereignty, the consensus of some group of citizens, whether it is a house of legislators or the whole body of citizens, vests in the ruler his power. Though many are involved in the decision-making process, there is only one decision. Therefore, the secular magistrate best suited for Marsilius should be elected by a representation of the collective body of citizens. He has no explicit ties to the Church. His only quality is that he ideally has good moral virtue.

In Marsilius’ proposed polity, the Church is a political branch of the state. It is organized the same as the respublica—through collective election. Marsilius describes that “in perfect communities of believers, the election, assignment, and presentation of persons to be promoted to ecclesiastic orders pertains only to the human legislator or the multitude of the believers.” This means the whole of body of citizens of the Church is the population of the faithful. In Marsilius’ ideal community, they would elect the bishops and deacons, who would then elect the Pope. The ecclesiastical ruler, the Pope, is a product of the collective’s decision, and the ecclesiastical laws are a product of an elected general council.

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76 Marsilius. The Defender of Peace. Pg. 259
To quote Alexander D'Entreves in *The Medieval Contribution to Political Thought* summarizes the significance of Marsilius' thought: “For the first time the secular state claims a practical equality, obtainable only by a theoretical superiority. Thus, the church is regarded as a department of the state.” There continues to exist a back-and-forth relationship between church and state that does not concern the direct appointment of the secular ruler because of the inherent rights implied from a polity based on Natural Law. Here, the Church belongs to the *res publica*, and shares the goal of creating a state that makes living well more possible for its citizens.

**THE HEART OF THE TRANSITION FROM THEOCRACY TO POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY: POPULAR RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS**

Norman Cohn’s *The Pursuit of the Millennium* provides an account of the popular religious movements of the Middle Ages, which show how socio-political ferment helped create a transition from theocracy to popular sovereignty. These religious movements (the Joachimite peasants, the Franciscan Spirituals, emperor-messianism, Christian egalitarianism, the flagellants), as Cohn recounts, formed uniformly under the conditions of rapid social change, economic stress, and political oppression. Peasants, who were forced to become beggars and mercenaries in urban centers after having migrated away from the frequent famines and struggles of over-population in their rural lands, experienced further struggle in their new environment. They attempted to deal with their common plight by forming Salvationist groups under a messianic leader, whose eschatological interpretations

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determined the group’s physical and spiritual direction. These groups entered the socio-political ferment of the time with the faith that they were “godsent,” battling the oppression of those whom they considered the ungodly— the social, economic, and political elite. As we will see, popular religious movements used religious justification to battle a secular dilemma that obstructed their inherent human rights and livelihoods. I will focus on one popular religious movement in particular— messianism and the story of the pseudo-King Frederick II.

The story begins with the death of King Frederick I of the Holy Roman Emperor during the Third Crusade. The peasants of the Holy Roman Empire prophesized “a future Frederick, who as Emperor of the Last Days would complete the unfinished work; an eschatological saviour who by liberating the Holy Sepulchre would prepare the way from the Second Coming and the Millennium.”

78 Under this prophesy, the peasants began to praise Frederick II and his son Conrad. Praise heightened into an attack against and expulsion of the clergy and many aristocrats, who opposed the peasants’ zeal. At the time these fantasies were circulating, a monk named Brother Arnold prophesized that the apocalyptic year would be 1260 A.D. Suddenly, King Frederick II died in 1250 A.D. Some peasants expected his resurrection, while others believed his was still alive, “carrying out a long penance as a pilgrim or hermit.”

79 In 1284, sightings of Frederick II were rumored. Soon after, a pseudo-Frederick, as Cohn calls him, appeared in Cologne and was received by the Archbishop of Cologne. Privately he set up a court of men who attested to his years

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79 Cohn. The Pursuit of the Millennium. Pg. 113
of penance as a pilgrim. His return was well received by the peasants and the princes, but for different reasons. The peasants were relieved to see him return because they “were still clinging to messianic expectations.” His return rejuvenated the dwindling hope of the peasants that had been keeping them alive in their terrible living conditions. The princes, on the other hand, saw this as an opportunity to weaken the first Habsburg monarch, Rudolph, and maintain their independence from a strong king as they had done for the past thirty years or more. Officially accepting the pseudo-Frederick embarrassed Rudolph, allowing the princes the opportunity to continue their control of politics and commerce.

Eventually, Rudolph mobilized his army against pseudo-Frederick and executes him. More important than the result were two subsequent matters. One, the townspeople, the German Joachimite peasants, defended pseudo-Frederick on the grounds that he was believed to be their messiah. Two, Rudolph executed pseudo-Frederick by burning him. This was significant because “burning was used not in cases of political insurrection but only in cases of sorcery or heresy.”

Pseudo-Frederick, a believed messiah and accepted ruler, was prosecuted for an ecclesiastical transgression. This goes to show that this fanatic, whoever he was, “regarded himself not merely as the real Frederick II but as an eschatological

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80 Cohn. The Pursuit of the Millennium. Pg. 115
81 The Joachimite peasants were German religious followers of the Apocryphal teachings of Joachim of Fiore, who was an abbot and hermit that found concealed meaning in the Book of Revelation on how to understand history as developmental and partite. Having stretched Joachim’s teachings far beyond their original intent, the Joachimite peasants adopted that teaching to fuel their popular religious movement in the late Middle Ages. They believed that through the success of their religious movement, they would bring the *parousia*—the Second Coming of Christ and the Last Judgment—and thereby, would be rewarded by God with eternal salvation.
82 Cohn. The Pursuit of the Millennium. Pg. 115
saviour sent by God to chastise the clergy and to establish his rule over the whole world."\textsuperscript{83}

The popular religious movement in support of the pseudo-Frederick II represented the eagerness of the peasants to find any plan that could possibly rescue them from distress, no matter how radical. The movement was founded upon Eternal Law—that which guides people to a good end. For the peasants, the end of time was the best possible resolution to their immediate distress. However, the movement is cemented into the socio-political ferment through Natural Law’s suggestion to individual consent to action. The pseudo-Frederick was not elected by popular vote, but was instated by the individual decisions of the collective \textit{respublica} because they saw it as their duty to fulfill the eschatological theology of the masses.

\textbf{THE REMNANCE OF AUGUSTINIAN POLITICAL THEOLOGY IN THE MIDDLE AGES}

While this Heavenly City, therefore, is on pilgrimage in this world, she calls out citizens from all nations and so collects a society of aliens, speaking all languages. She takes no account of any difference in customs, laws, and institutions, by which earthly peace is achieved and preserved—not that she annuls or abolishes any of those, rather, she maintains them and follows them (for whatever divergences there are among the diverse nations, those institutions have on single aim—earthly peace), provided that no hindrance is presented thereby to the religion which teaches that the one supreme and true God is to be worshipped. Thus even the Heavenly City in her pilgrimage here on earth makes use of the earthly peace and defends and seeks the compromise between human wills in respect of the provisions relevant to the mortal nature of man, so far as may be permitted without detriment to true religion and piety.\textsuperscript{84}

The passage above captures the essence of Augustine’s political theology. His political pessimism—the ancestor of Hobbesian gloominess—are absent from it, but his direction and reason are blueprinted elementarily. In this concluding section, we

\textsuperscript{83} Cohn. The Pursuit of the Millennium. Pg. 115
\textsuperscript{84} Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 878
will relate Augustine’s political theology to the medieval polities of Aquinas, Marsilius, and messianism presented in Part II. We will examine what elements of Augustinian political theology were implemented, distorted, or transformed.

Aquinas describes a medieval polity that is most like a true theocracy. The Human Laws of his respublica find their roots in Eternal Law because the respublica is meant to represent a microcosm of God’s Universe and His overarching providence within it. Thus, he restricts the political process to an aristocracy mediated by Eternal and Natural Laws, even though he hints at the benefits of increased societal involvement. This is something Augustine never does. He gives no preference for a style of polity other than the perfect saint-magistrate description in the “Mirror of Princes” passage that is far from expectable, and also that Christianity is always tolerated.

However, Aquinas does present a non-theocratic political theory because Human Law’s inability to make perfect Christians. However, Aquinas acknowledges that Human Law retains the character and genetics of Natural Law. The same sentiment is visible in Augustine’s political theology. Generally speaking, both polities are directed by the elements of divine wisdom—order, goodness, and reason—rather than the Pope, the visible Church, or Christian scripture. This fact makes their political theories special because they leave doodling space on the pages of tolerance, egalitarianism, and neutrality to sketch the foundations for democracy. While at the same time, they lend their theories the ability to mold into some of the world’s more religious governments (as is the case in modern day United Kingdom and Spain).
It is at this point in Aquinas’ political theory where he really begins to deliver an Augustinian image of the respublica with respect to the presence of religious tolerance in Human Law. Aquinas says Human Law should not force unbelievers, meaning non-Christians, to accept the Christian faith. He even refers to Augustine on this issue, who says, “‘ Suppress prostitution and the world will be torn apart by lust.’”85 This suggests that the evils of unbelievers must be tolerated for the greater good—to sustain an earthly peace, so the Civitas Dei can maintain their focus on the world hereafter. In large part, I find it easy to come down on Aquinas with the feeling that his proposed Augustinianism is the closest we can come to the real thing.

Turning to Marsilius, we see a political theory that is only steps away from democracy. He presents a polity where the secular ruler is not definitely considered a divine-right monarch. The same goes for the Pope. Authority, either secular or ecclesiastical, “derives its political power from a human source, the community, and does not exclude the ultimate divine power of itself which is purely a medieval concept.”86 Thus, legislation and the justification of authority by Natural Law depend on instinctual human rights and individual choices. Though these are essential elements of Marsilius’ political theory that cannot be found in Augustine’s political theology, this does not bar it completely from being an Augustinianism because Augustine is neutral as to how authority is sanctioned.

However, what hinders it from being a solid Augustinianism is that Marsilius’ political theory distorts the role the church in the respublica. The “Priesthood is a

85 Aquinas. Pg. 62
86 D’Entreves. The Medieval Contribution to Medieval Thought. Pg. 58
‘part’ or necessary function of the state [respublica].”87 This means that the church authorities function as a branch of the executive secular authority in the saeculum. Their job is to teach the word of god, administer sacraments, and deal with all spiritual functions. The priesthood’s boss is an elected secular authority that could potentially promote biases through the Church part of the respublica. Thus, the respublica should be Christian for this to work best. This distorts Augustinian political theology because he neither promotes direct affiliation between the Church and the respublica nor necessitates the presence of Christianity for secular politics to function well. The secular governing institution’s only job with respect to the Church is to permit its full existence and practice, without prohibitions. Marsilius tweaks Augustinianism, giving the Church a lawful residence and duty within the respublica. Of course, this could work out if the respublica was structured according to Christianity, but this limits the functionality of Augustine’s very liberal political theology.

Lastly, we turn to how Cohn’s account of messianism in popular religious movements may have adopted an Augustinian understanding of the relation between the Civitas Dei and the Civitas terrena in their political theory. The first term that comes to my mind when I think of the popular religious movements is Cohn’s term, “mystical anarchism”88 or apocalypticism. Anarchism rests in the movements’ zeal for a radical political feat, which in turn accomplishes their mystic view of an insecure, raw, and painful existence in the saeculum. Augustinianism is

87 D’Entreves. The Medieval Contribution to Medieval Thought. Pg. 67
88 According to Cohn, the term “mystical anarchism” originates in The Book of Revolution, which gives suggests that a religious entity should feel Eternal grace and fortitude on its mission.
completely transformed in the case of the popular religious movements, especially in the particular example I explained above.

Foremost, the goal of the popular religious movements is not to establish or maintain the earthly peace that is seen in Augustinian political theology. In most cases, they directly cause socio-political disarray through physically violent escapades. However, a kind of peace is aimed at. Through messianism, peasants aim for a peace that would relieve them from the misery of their lives, and their mission is to accomplish this peace here and now! This peace is perceived to be a palpable sensation that can happen soon.

Cohn presents an image of people who are mad with hope and faith. From the examples of popular religious movements Cohn included in his book, I would say that they are the least bit tolerant of other religions. Their immediate political goals are overcast by religious convictions so strong that they blank out any reverence for others. This is entirely non-Augustinian. Popular religious movements dedicated their secular existence to the bringing about the end of secular existence. Yes, they have their concern with the world hereafter like the pilgrimaging half of the Civitas Dei, but they do not help their cause from an Augustinian standpoint. In all cases, secular authorities halted the violent radicalism of popular religious movements. I concede that maybe they will be perceived as martyrs at the parousia, and will be granted eternity in heaven. But with respect to the present world, they failed in their mission because their behavior threatened the earthly peace.
CHAPTER 3: THE AGE OF REFORMATION

Martin Luther as an Augustinianism

Martin Luther emerged as an important theologian from the University of Wittenberg in Germany. About two decades into the 16th Century, the inauguration of the Protestant Reformation was on the brink of explosion, but was slowed for the sake of maintaining law and order. Steven Ozment describes Luther’s response to the lag in his The Age of Reform 1250-1550: “Luther willingly slackened the pace of the Reformation in Wittenberg at the insistence of Elector Frederick the Wise, who demanded that religious reforms proceed with majority support, preferably a consensus, and no hint of tumult.”

During this period of lag, Martin Luther wrote On Secular Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed in 1523. On Secular Authority was non-confrontational because he did not want to stir up havoc among the secular authorities, but Luther was not completely suppressed from stating his unwavering theological position. Luther “wrote when the tract when Catholic ducal Saxony prohibited and threatened to confiscate his writings.” Luther believed the role of secular government involved the preservation of earthly peace—and Christians took part in this process out of love for their neighbors—but this did not grant secular government the right to “intrude into one’s relation to God with respect to matters of conscience and salvation.” In this section, I will analyze Luther’s stance on the

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91 Hillerbrand. The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation. Pg. 464
proper role of secular government in regard to Christian faith. To accomplish this task, I will focus on thawing out what scholars refer to as Luther’s “two kingdoms doctrine” and its legal implications.

Luther’s conception of secular government concerns itself with the same three key issues as does Augustine’s political theology: neutrality, tolerance, and peace. The structure of Luther’s proposed secular government, however, is more narrowly detailed and defined. A succinct statement from On Secular Authority summarizes Luther’s stance well and provides a firm place to begin our dissection of his political theology:

...God has ordained the two governments; the spiritual, which by the Holy Spirit under Christ makes Christians and pious people, and the secular, which retrains the unchristian and wicked so that they must needs keep the peace outwardly, even against their will. So Paul interprets the secular sword, Romans 13[:3], and says it is not a terror to good works, but to the evil. And Peter says it is for the punishment of evil doers [1 Pet. 2:14].

It is immediately clear from this statement that Luther believes two kinds of governments exist to rule over two kinds of citizens for two different ends. The first kind of government is the spiritual government. Luther might understand the purpose of Augustine’s spiritual government to be the restraint of the pilgrimaging half of the Civitas Dei in order to cultivate pious Christians that are in a good position to be saved by Christ at the parousia. This concept, I think, is relatively straightforward and easily understandable.

However, the secular government, which is the second kind of government, is more difficult to understand, especially given the language that Luther uses to describe its purpose. Luther says secular government is meant to restrain the

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“unchristian and wicked” in order to maintain an earthly peace. The generalness of the term “wicked” is puzzling. One may interpret it to represent the human individual, who does a bad deed by worldly standards. A good example is the man who refuses to pay taxes in a state where paying tax is mandatory. Another example is murder. The reason for this categorization of Christians as partial representatives of the wicked is an important characteristic of Luther’s political theology that distinguishes him from Calvin, who we will discuss in the next section of this chapter. Luther’s stance is that even in a world filled with Christians, neither law nor sword will ever rule “in a Christian and evangelical manner”\(^93\) because of the dire human condition. Luther writes in epic prose, “for the world and the masses are and always will be unchristian, although they are all baptized and are nominally Christian.”\(^94\)

One might conjure that he derives his reasoning from Augustine’s definition of the Civitas Dei, in that the pilgrimaging half is still human— an important point that is not to be forgotten. Since all humans are descendants of Adam and, thus, plagued by sin, those on the path towards salvation, while they are certainly citizens of the spiritual government, are also subjects of the secular government. From this standpoint, the generality of the term “wicked” is intentional, so as to subject Christians as well as non-Christians equally to secular legislation and governance.

Thus it is apparent from this passage that Luther promotes the theoretical separation of church and state, even while he thinks Christians are still subjects of secular governments. Luther’s rationale for this certain kind of church-state relation

\(^{93}\) Luther. “On Secular Authority.” Pg. 371
\(^{94}\) Luther. “On Secular Authority.” Pg. 371
in the *respublica* is based on his conception of man, which reflects Augustine’s conception as well as the biblical ideas they both draw on, in that there are two cities (*Citivas Dei* and *Civitas terrena*), destined for different eternities, and more importantly, preoccupied by two completely different sets of anxieties while in the earthly realm: the needs of the spirit and those of the flesh. Luther explains that when two different cities representing two different concerns are interwoven in a *respublica*, two different sets of laws must be employed to fulfill the needs of both so that earthly peace can be managed. Luther declares, outright:

> In the first place, it must be noted that the two classes of Adam’s children, the one in God’s kingdom under Christ, the other in the kingdom of the world under the state, have two kinds of laws... Every kingdom must have its own laws and regulations, and without law no kingdom or government can exist.95

Augustine’s definitions of the *Civitas Dei* and *Civitas terrena* set the groundwork for Luther’s assertion of the separation of church and state rule.

The two cities are so opposed to one another that their separation by the permission and legislation of Human Law is the only way either can exist and function properly, according to Luther. Any overlap of law would be destructive. Luther explains, “where temporal power presumes to prescribe laws for the soul, it encroaches upon God’s government and only misleads and destroys the souls.”96

This marks the extent of Luther’s backing of Christian obedience to secular law. For no reason should the secular sword legislate a regulation, limitation, instruction, or decree that concerns the commanding of the soul, “unless he can show it the way to

95 Luther. “On Secular Authority.” Pg. 382
96 Luther. “On Secular Authority.” Pg. 383
heaven; but this no man can do, only God. Therefore in matters which concern the salvation of souls nothing but God’s Word shall be taught and accepted.”

We might assume, then, that Luther would permit, or even, require Christians to disobey secular legislation that encumbers true Christian belief or practice. The requirement to disobey anti-Christian legislation traces back to Book XIX of De Civitate Dei, where Augustine writes:

She [the Heavenly City, the Civitas Dei] take no account of any difference in customs, laws, and institutions, by which earthly peace is achieved and preserved — not that she annuls or abolishes any of those, rather, she maintains them and follows them (for whatever divergences there are among the diverse nations, those institutions have one single aim — earthly peace), provided that no hindrance is presented thereby to the religion which teaches that the one supreme and true God is to be worshipped.

Augustine states very plainly that the pilgrimaging Christian of the Civitas Dei is to obey the secular government in order to aid in the establishment and preservation of an earthly peace, unless the secular government tries to achieve its aim by hindering true Christian worship.

Up unto this point, we see Luther constructing an inexplicitly Augustinian structure of the state from distinctly Augustinian conceptions of man and the duty of a Christian citizen in the context of the respublica. So it is certain that Augustinian political theology resonates through Lutheran political theology. But the aspect that resonates most is the principle of religious liberty. Luther believes that because a state and the secular sword should not and cannot control faith, it ought to allow all religions and prohibit none. Luther declares,

...belief or unbelief is a matter of every one’s conscience, and since this is no lessening of the secular power, the latter should be content and attend to its own affairs and permit men to believe one thing or another, as they are able and willing, and constrain no one by force.

97 Luther, “On Secular Authority.” Pg. 383.
98 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 878
99 Luther. “On Secular Authority.” Pg. 385
This statement speaks for itself; religious liberty is an obligation of the secular government. He even attributes his position in this matter to Augustine's original position, who says, "'No one can or ought be constrained to believe.'"  

It is a matter of faith, as Augustine might say. Faith marinates and solidifies in the mind—a place no corporeal member can possibly breach. Thus, it is my understanding that to limit the bounds of faith by Human Laws that derive from God's gift of Natural Law is feeble in its effort, sacrilegious in its motivation, and extralegal in its scope of interest. And so, Luther prohibits it.

In what follows I intend to show that of all political theologies or blueprints for church-state relations that this paper has explained or will explain, Lutheran political theology best resembles Augustinian political theology. Luther directly transfers the Augustinian principles of neutrality, tolerance, and peace to erect a liberal structure for the state, which allows all religions to exist and potentially prosper. Also, from Augustine's conception of the two cities, Luther molds two separate platforms for secular and spiritual governments to govern a group of individuals in a shared geo-political space. By in large, it is important to look at Luther's political theology as a groundbreaking for a new, liberal political outlook that will come to characterize the personality of the Age of Reformation that this paper will continue to cover in the following chapters. From here on, we will encounter political formations that demonstrate an increase in the separation between church and state, and an increase in the number of designs of religious liberty.

100 Luther. "On Secular Authority." Pg. 385
**CALVINIST POLITICAL THEOLOGY**

John Calvin completed his first edition of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in 1536. It was written in Latin as an apology to the French king, Francis I, on behalf of Protestants, namely the Huguenots, in the Catholic nation. Calvin’s almost immediate masterpiece became a major voice of the Protestant Reformation in the western European states, such as France and Switzerland. Just six years before Calvin completed the *Institutes*, Geneva successfully won its independence from Savoy. Organized Protestant riots spawned a mass exodus of Catholics who were unwilling to follow the new Protestant direction of the city. Official Genevan sovereignty and acceptance of the Protestant Reformation was the result in 1536. The mushroom cloud effect of Calvin’s very recently released *Institutes* is understood to be the explanation as to how “almost overnight [he] assumed leadership of the Genevan Reformation.” It was then just a matter of unfolding the blueprint of his “best-seller” into the vacant religio-political infrastructure of an entirely Protestant city-state—that was Geneva.

This section will attempt to elucidate from the *Institutes*, specifically from Book IV, Chapter XX — the last chapter of the last book — where Calvin posits a political theology from theology concepts that lead to a formal shaping of church-state relations. We will look at Calvin’s objectives for the Christian *respublica*. Also, we will survey the duties of church and state governments that have the potential to intersect and in many cases do.

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102 Ozment. *The Age of Reform*. Pg. 361
103 Ozment. *The Age of Reform*. Pg. 361
Before we begin, we should look at the context Calvin’s discussion of church-state relations in the whole of the *Institutes*. The whole of Book IV and, more specifically, Chapter XX have entirely different concerns than the rest of the *Institutes*. The first three books are primarily concerned with solidifying Calvin’s theology into three books, all concerned, primarily, with the knowledge of God and how it ought to shape human life on the internal. The page turns when we get to Book IV, which is about external means. Its title speaks for itself, “The External Means or Aims by Which God Invites Us Into the Society of Christ and Holds Us Therein.”104 Here Christians are on pilgrimage, and along the way ought to make good use of earthly goods that will put them in a better position to devote more of their time towards the true concern, God and eternal life.105

Chapter XX is the last chapter of the last book in the *Institutes*—the caboose of the caboose—it is no surprise that its primary concern is entirely different from what we have seen in every chapter of every book before it—that is, secular government. Calvin acknowledges that although this topic is “alien to the spiritual doctrine of faith,”106 its inclusion is necessary to understand how to keep in check both man’s natural condition of sin that resulted from Adam’s original sin in the Garden of Eden, and “the flatterers of princes,”107 which is to mean those ungodly rulers whose reign blasphemes God and His Laws. And so, Calvin presents secular government as one of those “External Means” by which we humans must participate in as inhabitants of the world, and ought to utilize in a particular way if we are to

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104 Calvin. *Institutes*. Pg. 1011
105 Calvin. *Institutes*. Pg. 1491
106 Calvin. *Institutes*. 4.20.1. Pg. 1485
107 Calvin. *Institutes*. 4.20.1. Pg. 1485
gain access to what Calvin calls in the title of Book IV, “the Society of Christ,” which would seem to be his terms for what Augustine refers to as Civitas Dei. To that end, the following paragraphs will outline Calvin’s very precise model of a good secular government.

Calvin lays out three key objectives of secular government. The first objective, as I mentioned above, “its function among men is no less than that of bread, water, sun, and air; indeed, its place of honor is far more excellent.” For Calvin, secular government is even a more essential earthly good for survival than the basic bodily needs. Without government, we presumably have a Hobbesian anarchic jungle, where no one is assured bread or drink. Similar to what we have seen in Augustine and Luther’s political theologies, secular government is an essential element for Calvin. The second key function of secular government is to “[prevent] idolatry, sacrilege against God’s name, blasphemies against his truth, and other public offenses against religion from arising and spreading among the people.” This theological justification can be understood to mean that civil government is obligated to permit the existence of church government should it become publicly manifested. Earlier in Book VI, Calvin says, “we need outward helps [meaning, the church and its government of bishops, priests, etc.] to beget and increase faith within us, and advance it to its goal.” The church-state relation here is entangled; secular government has its hand in controlling religion. The religious liberty that this study has noted—initially from Augustine and then resurfaced by Luther—is lost in Calvin. Lastly, the third key function of civil government is to

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108 Calvin. Institutes. 4.20.3. Pg. 1488
109 Calvin. Institutes. 4.20.3. Pg. 1488
110 Calvin. Institutes. 4.1.1. Pg. 1011
“[prevent] the public peace from being disturbed.”¹¹¹ Agreeing uniformly with Augustine and Luther, Calvin believes the establishment and maintenance of earthly peace is a defining characteristic of secular government.

In sum, Calvin promotes a form of the Christian church that mandates a certain kind of relation to secular government. Secular government ought to exist, remove its hand in church management, and preserve earthly peace. Within this arrangement, Calvin leaves wiggle-room for the church to become the official public religion, mainly because he assumes the dominance of a Christian majority.

However, an official, publically supported religion for Calvin is not the same as the medieval theocracies. Alternatively, Calvin advises that both secular and church government institutions coexist in a partnership where neither is subject to each other. Certainly this does not eliminate the possibility that some situations require subjugation, but in the language Calvin uses to describe it, this is better understood as a referral or distribution of work.

It seems to me that throughout Chapter XX Calvin is utterly concerned about the potential dangers of secular government, which lies in the prospect of the magistrate. My previous from Chapter II indicates that scholars of the medieval period used magistrate interchangeably with the terms, “ruler” or “king.” In Calvin’s case however, magistrate has a much broader meaning. Calvin is more ambiguous in his definition of a magistrate. Earlier in Book IV, Calvin defines a magistrate as follows:

¹¹¹ Calvin. *Institutes*. 4.20.3. Pg. 1488
those who serve as magistrate are called ‘gods’ [Ex. 22.8, Vg.; Ps. 82.1]... For it signifies that they have a mandate from God, have been invested with divine authority, and are wholly God’s representatives, in a manner, acting as his vicegerents.\footnote{Calvin. \textit{Institutes}. 4.20.4. Pg. 1489}

To this point, Calvin paints a picture of a magistrate that resembles an instrument of God—constructed, delivered, and operated by God’s Will. In one instance, Calvin compares them to biblical kings like Solomon and David, leaders like Moses and Joshua, and judges like Jehoshaphat.\footnote{Calvin. \textit{Institutes}. 4.20.4. Pg. 1490} And in another instance, late in Book IV, magistrates hold the place of administrative counsels to the secular throne and defenders of God’s True Will.\footnote{Calvin. \textit{Institutes}. 4.20.30. Pg. 1517} Unlike the medieval conception of a magistrate Calvin asserts that a magistrate is a general name for any person charged with whatever secular position in government, from a court marshal to a mayor to a prince.

According to Calvin, the magistrate should act faithfully as one of God’s elect deputies.

To sum up, if they remember that they are vicars of God, they should watch with all care, earnestness, and diligence, to represent in themselves to men some image of divine providence, protection, goodness, benevolence, and justice. And they should perpetually set before themselves the thought that “if all are cursed who carry out in deceit the work of God’s vengeance” [Jer. 48:10 p.], much more gravely cursed are they who deceitfully conduct themselves in a righteous calling.\footnote{Calvin. \textit{Institutes}. 4.20.6. Pg. 1491}

This is to say that the magistrate should view themselves in light of their duty to God, and act as if every word spoken and movement made will be considered the work of God. Faithful magistrates should act conscious of the high responsibility God has entrusted to them. As a result, “subjects should prove their obedience toward them, whether by obeying their proclamations, or by paying taxes, or by...
undertaking public offices and burdens which pertain to the common defense, or by executing any other commands of theirs.”116 All-encompassing and without compromise Calvin believes subjects should obey the magistrate’s commands as if he was God himself.

Interestingly, the same code applies to unjust magistrates that Calvin believes subjects ought to view “as insane.”117 However, Calvin has us remember that no matter how tyrannical, murderous, vile, or corrupt a magistrate may be, all magistrates “equally have been endowed with that holy majesty with which he has invested lawful power.”118 This means that subjects must obey all men appointed to the control tower of affairs because God appointed every single one of them. Subjects are to do exactly what their title implies—be subject! If an unjust ruler issues an extra tax on the poor in order to fund a luxurious castle for no purpose other than to enjoy the prestige of owning a huge estate, subjects are to remain subject to that law.

Obviously, Calvin is more interested in describing the theological justifications for church-state relations that ensure the existence of secular and church governments and an earthly peace, rather than suggesting a blueprint for a just and free political structure. To that end, Calvin realizes that he needs to provide a check against unjust rulers. However, this check ought not come from lay subjects. Calvin says, “all ought to try not to... inquire about another’s duties, but every man should keep in mind that one duty which is his own. This ought particularly to apply

116 Calvin. Institutes. 4.20.23. Pg. 1510
117 Calvin. Institutes. 4.20.24. Pg. 1512
118 Calvin. Institutes. 4.20.25. Pg. 1512
to those who have been put under the power of others.”\textsuperscript{119} All people, especially lay citizens, ought to be mindful of their own misdeeds when suffering the lashes of others, even if it is the protector of the state that is holding the whip. In turn, Calvin’s Christian resolution of “humility will restrain our impatience,”\textsuperscript{120} is hoped to suffice in bringing subjects lowly to patience and prayer.

As one might expect, God is the permanent check against secular injustice for Calvin. If God does not correct the injustice himself through miraculous ways, then he will call on his magistrates to do the dirty work, but what is really God’s Work.

\begin{quote}
For sometimes he [God] raises up open avengers from among his servants, and arms them with his command to punish the wicked government and deliver his people, oppressed in unjust ways, from miserable calamity.\textsuperscript{121}
\end{quote}

Here, Calvin speaks generally about the rightfulness of some coup d’état, and goes on to cite biblical evidences of such events. But more specifically, he speaks about the duty of a lawful magistrate\textsuperscript{122} in the subsequent paragraph of section 29.

\begin{quote}
For the first kind of men, when they had been sent by God’s lawful calling to carry out such acts, in taking up arms against kings, did not at all violate that majesty which is implanted in kings by God’s ordination; but, armed from heaven, they subdued the lesser power with the greater, just as it is lawful for kings to punish their subordinates.\textsuperscript{123}
\end{quote}

From this we understand that it is the duty of a lawful magistrate to counsel the king and correct his tyrannical appetite. Furthermore, Calvin burdens magistrates with this duty, exclaiming:

\begin{quote}
For if there are not any magistrates of the people, appointed to restrain the willfulness of kings... I [Calvin] am so far from forbidding them to withstand, in accordance with their duty, the fierce licentiousness of kings, that, if they wink at kings who violently fall upon ad assault the lowly common folk, I declare that their dissimulation involves nefarious perfidy, because
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{119} Calvin. \textit{Institutes}. 4.20.29. Pg. 1516
\item\textsuperscript{120} Calvin. \textit{Institutes}. 4.20.29. Pg. 1516
\item\textsuperscript{121} Calvin. \textit{Institutes}. 4.20.30. Pg. 1517
\item\textsuperscript{122} At the time Calvin wrote, “lawful magistrates” would have been lesser lords or nobility, who had control over certain provinces within the respublica; a similar figure to the modern American governor.
\item\textsuperscript{123} Calvin. \textit{Institutes}. 4.20.30. Pg. 1517
\end{footnotes}
they dishonestly betray the freedom of the people, of which they know that they have been appoint protectors by God’s ordinance.\textsuperscript{124}

By this remark, magistrates who fail to oppose unjust kings are neglecting their duty to themselves, betraying God’s direct Will, and butchering the freedoms of the people.

Above I have shown a number of passages from the \textit{Institutes}, which explain why subjects are to do nothing but endure in the face of an unjust king, but that magistrates, on the other hand, are to do everything in their power to reassemble integrity and tranquility in the state. Though lay subjects ought to refrain from direct opposition, this does not meant they should lie on their backs in instances of injustice against God. In the circumstance where obedience to an earthly ruler leads us away from obedience to God, lay citizens are to disobey because

\begin{quote}
The Lord, therefore, is the King of Kings, who, when he has opened his sacred mouth, must alone be heard, before all and above all men; next to him we are subject to those men who are in authority over us, but only in him. If they command anything against him, let it go unesteemed.\textsuperscript{125}
\end{quote}

Just as in Luther’s \textit{On Secular Authority} and in Augustine’s \textit{De Civitate Dei} (XIX, 17), Calvin reasserts that no secular ordinance ought to trump divine law and retain the same stature as all other laws. God’s Word is the end-all-be-all, no questions asked.

On a separate standpoint, Calvin formed a cabinet called the Consistory in the secular government of Geneva that effectively made possible the positive church-state relations. The Genevan magistrate elected twelve elders, who were secular “commissioners and deputies of the Council to the Consistory—”\textsuperscript{126} very similar to representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives— and were joined by several

\textsuperscript{124} Calvin. \textit{Institutes}. 4.20.31. Pg. 1519.
\textsuperscript{125} Calvin. \textit{Institutes}. 4.20.32. Pg. 1520.
additional church ministers. Together, the Consistory represented most provinces in a large territory. Its objective was to institute discipline in Geneva, both in ecclesiastical and civic spheres. Basically, the Consistory was a legislative cabinet with no limitations on the scope of its ordinances, with control over its own police department, patrol cars, and a juridical court. Examples of some charges issued by the Consistory were “non-attendance at church... deportment during services... hankering after medieval religious practices... drunkenness, gambling, profanity, family alienations, wife-beating, and adultery.”127 Also, it banned prostitution and begging. As you can see, the Consistory tended to ecclesiastical and civic misdemeanors, and interestingly, civic misdemeanors that could be deemed an intrusion on proper Christian ethic like, gambling, family alienations, and prostitution. More importantly, the Consistory represented a means to achieve and maintain both secular and religious grace by way of closing the gap that may have separated church-state relations.

In reflecting on what has just been explained, it is clear that Calvinist political theology differs significantly from that of Augustine and Luther. There is evidence to support the claim that this divide emerges out of Calvin being more wary of human sin than Augustine and Luther have proved to be in their political theologies, thought both certainly appreciate the depth of human sin very much. Throughout Chapter XX of Book IV in Calvin’s Institutes there is a very present, very real, and very perpetual fear and distrust of the potential for human sin to destroy and ravage. Calvin’s three objectives for secular government attest to this point.

127 McNeill. The History and Character of Calvinism. Pg. 163.
First, he demands a definite secular political structure staffed by magistrates, who ought to be frightened before God not to fulfill their secular tasks and religious responsibilities. Also, Calvin provides reason to allow church-state relations intersect to execute a more thorough check on ecclesiastical and civic misdemeanors. Second, Calvin demands a firmly instituted and governed Christian church that is undistracted by false religions. Immediately, this tells us that, as in Luther, separate secular and church governments are desired for, but Calvin’s trust in an isolated secular institution is slender. Even though Calvin desires coexisting secular and church governments, they ought not be as segregated from each other as they are for Luther. Also, contrary to both Augustine and Luther, Calvin does not suggest granting religious liberty. Calvin’s skepticism of the human capacity to fight against the tendency to error in mind and will radiates further into his political views. Thirdly, Calvin demands a reliable earthly peace, in accordance with the beliefs of Augustine and Luther. This is not a shocking similarity; as Augustine puts it:

Anyone who joins me in an examination ... of human affairs ... recognizes that just as there is no man who does not wish for joy, so there is no man who does not wish for peace. Indeed, even when men choose war, their only wish is for victory; which shows that their desire in fighting is for peace with glory.128

Thus, on the whole, more than both Augustine and Luther, Calvinist political theology aims to ameliorate the potential dangers of secular government and human sin, while simultaneously paying tribute to God.

Nonetheless, the unique aspect of Calvinist political theology is his stance on rebellion. For Luther, whether the ruler actually is just, meaning he does God’s Will,
or not, subjects are still bound to obey. On the other hand, rebellion is valid for Calvin. In the case of an unjust ruler, it is the duty of magistrates to mediate and/or work a ruler’s unjust and ungodly policies. Also, lay citizens are permitted to participate in the rebellion if led by one of the lesser magistrates. Starting where Calvin ends, political theology departs from what was considered to be the medieval role of the citizen in the respublica, and we creep, by way of very few but very crucial steps, towards a culture of theologically justified revolution that eventually leads to the foundation of the United States of America.

**BRITISH CALVINISTS**

This section will draw on Michael Walzer’s *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* to follow his account of how revolution became an acceptable method of participating in secular government affairs. In his fourth chapter titled, “The Puritan Clergy: Modern Politics and Radical Intellectuals,” Walzer discusses the history and mood of the return of the Marian exiles to England. Then, in the fifth chapter titled, “The Attack Upon the Traditional Political World,” Walzer seeks to explain how the theological and sociological interaction between the Puritans and the traditional Elizabethan Anglicans contributed to a change in political theory. Ultimately, Walzer uses these two chapters to explain the mass Puritan migration to America.

Thus this section will survey Puritan history from about the late 16th Century to the mid 17th Century in order to ascertain what theological reasoning the Puritans employed in order to justify political and ecclesiastical revolution. We will first
review the history and mood of the Marian exiles’ return to England, which will explain why revolution appeared to be the only reasonable route for them. Next, we will explain how the Puritans utilized Scripture to legitimize their part in the spiritual warfare on earth. Lastly, we will survey the theological reasoning that the Puritans employed to justify a move from the Lutheran and Calvinist stances of non-rebellion to invent a theory of rebellion. To do so, Walzer points to two Puritan theories from Puritan sermons of the time that were used to make alterations in the “great chain” model: (1) Puritanical covenant theology and (2) two kinds of analogical reasoning.

To begin, we will briefly cover the historical setting and disposition in England from a Puritan perspective to explain that Puritan lifestyle was, from the start, incapable of adapting to the ways of or converting the ecclesiastical situation in Elizabethan England. Foremost, the Puritans were, in all respects, a minority: British Calvinists in an Anglican state church. “The Puritan minority ... was characterized by a refusal to submit religion to either civil law or national allegiance.”129 This originally emerged in response to King Edward VI’s Uniformity Act of 1549, which made the Book of Common Prayer, also known as the “Edwardian prayer book,”130 the only legal form of worship in England. But that was only the prologue to the story of Puritan hardship.

“In the years after Catholic Queen Mary came to the throne [in England], some 800 English Protestants went into exile on the continent”131 to escape the brutal executions. This group of exiles became known as the Marian Exiles. During

130 Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 96
131 Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 92
the period of Mary's reign, the Uniformity Act was repealed. But when Mary I died and Queen Elizabeth I ascended to power, the Uniformity Act was revived in 1558. In 1559 the exiles returned after years of living quiet, pious lives in small social theocratic orders in places like Geneva and Zurich–Germany and Switzerland–to a similar situation in Edwardian England. However, having become accustomed to an ecclesiastical environment where the Puritan ministers "drafted the constitutions of their tiny independent churches," and social power "depended largely upon intellectual talent, upon the ability to manipulate Scripture, to interpret the Word," readjustment to England's "traditional church with its hierarchical system of authority" was unlikely.

As a result, Puritan attitude toward Anglican Church hierarchy was aggressive and unfaltering. Because many Puritans refused to fade back into English traditions that they knew to be wrong, their main goal "pointed toward the overthrow of the traditional order." They attacked "the dregs of popery," which they viewed as an encouragement of feudalism and idolatry, they laughed at Elizabethan priests, who neither knew how to interpret scripture nor deliver a proper sermon, and they demanded the replacement of such preachers. The Puritans saw themselves as "'advanced intellectuals,' committed representatives of a Cause," led by piety and zeal. It was a matter-of-fact pretentiousness that the Puritan clergymen held about their own methods.

132 Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 117
133 Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 117
134 Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 118
135 Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 118
136 Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 118
Unfortunately for them, however, they were a small, isolated, and relatively poor group of intellectuals that had no legal political route. “The politics of free assembly, mass petition, group pressure, and the appeal to public opinion”\textsuperscript{137} were all illegal political methods in Elizabethan England. Puritan reformers needed support from converts and wealthy aristocrats, which could catapult them into the societal mainframe. Puritan clergy established a social hierocracy run by the Puritan, clerical third estate on the periphery of established English society. Basically, they were an underground, priest-run, social order. Walzer comments on how “the political activity of the ministers was marked by an extraordinary carelessness about the established channels and procedures of Elizabethan government.”\textsuperscript{138} The unconventional brotherhood of Puritan clergymen reemphasized both feelings of being spiritually “at home” and the overarching “unsettledness”\textsuperscript{139} that characterized their return to England.

Eventually, what started out as a struggling exilic population of some 300 Puritan clergymen soon turned into a following of more than 20,000, which accounted for the many aristocrats that bought into the Puritan theology. Puritan clergymen applied their theological talents to secular careers, mainly in tutoring the children of wealthy aristocrats and teaching in the universities. The Word spread through the youth and out into mainstream society by way of John Milton’s poetry and Oliver Cromwell’s political career. In the end, Puritan popularity successfully shook the foundations of English society, but failed to revamp it. Instead, the

\textsuperscript{137} Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 125
\textsuperscript{138} Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 129
\textsuperscript{139} Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 133
persecutions of the 1630’s caused another exile, except this time, away from Europe altogether. And so, the Puritans crossed the Atlantic Ocean and landed in America.

In Walzer’s point of view, the Puritan rebellion was a spiritual one; a “Revolution of the Saints” as Walzer’s title dictates. Walzer speaks at length about this change in the traditional conception of rebellion:

The saint was a new political man, different alike from the feudal officer and the “providential avenger.” His duty did not stem from constitutional office nor from divine inspiration; his activity was neither resistance nor assassination ... The saint, however, was a revolutionary; a private man in the old order and according to the old conventions, who laid claim to public status upon the basis of new law. He would not resist the king, but overthrow him; he would not assassinate the king, but put him on trial. His activity was systematic and organized; in some fashion he was already obedient to the discipline of the new order he envisioned ... By calling himself elect, the saint specified his exclusive allegiance to God’s Word and (presumably) to the community of the future, when men would live in fellowship on the “Lord hill.”

The Puritan revolution opposed a medieval-like theocratic rule that denied religious liberty, even though it gave them the religious liberty to exclude religious error from their respublicae. Calvin forbids laymen from rebelling against a ruler’s ordinances (as he promotes in Chapter XX, Book IV of the Institutes), but the Puritans saw this as a different kind of rebellion—a rebellion on the internal. The weaponry was theological and the trial courts were covert congregational gatherings that sought theological nuance. Their goal was to invent theological justifications for a revolution against the Anglican Monarchy, but they first needed to find a way to legitimize the use of spiritual warfare in the earthly realm that would not sound like they were madly obsessed with their present standing on earth.

Obviously, the Puritans turned to Scripture to find a theme that paralleled their present condition. Walzer explains how they drew an analogy between the Puritan conception of angelology and the human being based on what Arthur

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140 Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 110
Lovejoy has dubbed the “great chain of being”\textsuperscript{141} model. This model has it that the cosmos is ordered in a hierarchical chain based on being. God sits at the top, angels rank below Him, and humans fall to the bottom rung, though they are the highest of the animal realm. Thus every human shares the same being as all other humans, namely because they are all descendants of Adam.

This model is beneficial for us to understand because Puritan angelology demonstrates that just as there is a rank among angels, the same too applies to humans. The Puritans called on Scripture to emphasize their point. “When god used Angels in the spiritual warfare, he chose them without reference to any preexisting hierarchy... he appointed their offices.”\textsuperscript{142} Some angels were not chosen, but the one’s that were chosen, were renamed “archangels” because they “were sent in message in God’s greatest matters.”\textsuperscript{143} Thus, disparity between angels existed. For angels, hierarchy depended on the status associated with one’s employment, not one’s being. For the Puritans, as Walzer ascribes, “the chain of being had been transformed into a chain of command,”\textsuperscript{144} assuming that if one human is commanded by God to do something that no other human is commanded to do, then the appointed human (also chosen by God) is of a superior being than the non-appointed one. This became the model for Puritan theological justifications to revolt.

Of the two kinds of justifications that the Puritans employed, the first kind Walzer calls “covenant theology,”\textsuperscript{145} which is the borrowing of the model of the relation between God and Israel and taking it to apply to the relation between God

\textsuperscript{141} Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 150
\textsuperscript{142} Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 165
\textsuperscript{143} Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 165
\textsuperscript{144} Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 166
\textsuperscript{145} Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 170
and Christians. Walzer’s interprets Calvin to believe “it was the constant tendency...
to turn the theology of salvation into a sociology: ‘holy societies.’”\textsuperscript{146} We saw this
happen in Geneva, Zurich, and in the many tiny underground social circles of
England. The cumulative result was the creation of a spiritually-led political
contingency among Puritans, which attributed to the fact that “personal salvation
and national reformation were both aspects of that divine politics that sought to
establish order and discipline among men.” Thus, the Puritans saw themselves as a
unified group of saints, chosen by divine command to instruct spiritual justice in
England. Believing they were particularly chosen to enact God’s “divine politics,” the
Puritans felt justified to combat the secular authorities, in the image of a faithful
mass revolting against the unjust rulers with divinely-gifted spiritual swords, even
though some years later they felt empowered to raise the real sword against the
king in the English Civil War.

The second kind of justification Walzer calls, “analogical reasoning.”\textsuperscript{147}
Walzer recounts two analogies the Puritans drew in order to justify their role in
spiritually revamping 17\textsuperscript{th} Century England. First, the Puritans tied the Anglican
government to the image of a human body—an image originally found in the Pauline
Epistles to the Corinthians and Ephesians, and hence the common political term,
body politic. The common logic is that without a head, meaning a ruler, the body
falls, or the \textit{respublica} falls. But the Puritans viewed this scenario as a kind of
disease rather than a fatal decapitation. Walzer recounts Puritan sermons that use

\textsuperscript{146} Walzer. \textit{The Revolution of the Saints.} Pg. 170
\textsuperscript{147} Walzer. \textit{The Revolution of the Saints.} Pg. 158
medical imagery to refer to themselves as “physicians of the state.”\textsuperscript{148} But they never wanted to heal the body. They needed a new body because the disease was incurable; the Puritans wanted to conduct reconstructive surgery, and so, they directly turned to the “theme of reconstruction,”\textsuperscript{149} adopting the image of the “rebuilding of the temple by the returning Babylonian exiles.”\textsuperscript{150} Walzer quotes a Puritan minister of the time who said, “‘Take heed of building upon an old frame, that must be all plucked down to the ground’ … ‘take heed of plastering when you should be pulling down.’”\textsuperscript{151} The imagery was very clear and even closer to home; some of these Puritans were once exiles, most of which had rebuilt their own homes and temples, and now they felt commissioned by God to reconstruct the temple of the \textit{respublica}. In effect, one might say scriptural prophetic imagery helped fuel their religio-political revolution.

The second analogy adopted by the Puritans was the “ship of state” imagery, which one finds in Augustine, Jerome, and the ancient Greek playwright, Sophocles in his, \textit{Antigone} (line 180). Walzer explains that the Puritan “ship of state” analogy is slightly different from the organic one used in Greek mythology, where the crew (the marginalized group in society) mutinies against the drunken captain (the ruler) to take hold of society’s metaphorical direction. The difference lies in the fact that the mutiny has already taken place. For the Puritans, various mariners are at the helm that represents the Puritans. In one direction, there is a potential for safe

\textsuperscript{148} Walzer. \textit{The Revolution of the Saints}. Pg. 176
\textsuperscript{149} Walzer. \textit{The Revolution of the Saints}. Pg. 177
\textsuperscript{150} Walzer. \textit{The Revolution of the Saints}. Pg. 177
\textsuperscript{151} Walzer. \textit{The Revolution of the Saints}. Pg. 177
shores, which Walzer depicts as “peace and prosperity.” The obvious choice, but not in this case. The ship steers in the other direction, not towards destruction, but towards “the place where the Lord will create a new heaven and a new earth, in new churches and a new commonwealth altogether.” The latter direction resembles reform, movement, and continued progress in a new setting, similar to what “reconstruction” meant in the first analogy.

Walzer assumes, just as I do, that the mariners must have mutinied against the captain on reasonable grounds. If the captain was incapable of steering, drunk, or mad, then mutiny seems not only justified but also necessary. Walzer supports this assumption saying, “For if the body could not make war upon its head, the mariners of a ship could certainly depose a captain drunk or mad. That might be mutiny, but it was justifiable mutiny and conceivably the very opposite of suicide.” The mariner-saints, like the carpenter-saints, willfully perform the commands of God, believing that “revolution was their political calling” in terms of the political hierarchy of the ship.

At the end of chapter 5 in The Revolution of the Saints, Walzer makes a problematic comment:

It [the analogies] suggested that there were goals quite apart from the preservation and health of the body politic, goals that made men into instruments and changed politics itself from a self-sufficient organic existence into a means, a method, and a purposive discipline. For the Puritans these goals would be fixed by God, just as the terms of the contract to which they consented had been drafted in heaven. So the member of the body politic, like the link in the great chain, when he became a saint, was freed from his old connections and yet not set free.

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152 Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 180
153 Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 180
154 Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 180
155 Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 181
156 Walzer. The Revolution of the Saints. Pg. 182-183
Walzer explains how the Puritans used religious goods, goods that are traditionally not of this world, to rectify secular injustices. The Puritans freed themselves from secular injustice, but remained tied to a project of reconstructing the present world. Contrarily, we never find this in Augustine, Luther, or Calvin. Augustine explains the sheer opposite: that earthly goods may be used to ensure earthly peace—not the other way around. From this we realize that the Puritans introduced something foreign to the political theologies we have seen in this study by converting a religious good into a real and tangible earthly good through the deliverance of a divine order.

Upon reflection, it should be acknowledged that the Puritan theological justifications for revolution had two secular implications. For one, the Puritans evoke the importance of the citizens' right to preserve the health of the secular government, even if the injury concerns religion. For the other, the Puritans required citizens to view themselves as instruments of God in the secular political framework, which hints at what Max Weber would later illustrate in *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism*. Ultimately, through Puritan theological inventions, religion has extended its reach into secular political life through which individual liberties have increased for all.

**Chapter 4: Calvinism in America**

*The Massachusetts Bay Colonies*

Because their societies were tightly organized, and above all because they were a highly articulate people, the New Englanders established Puritanism—for better or worse—as one of the continuous factors in American life and thought. It has played so dominant a role because descendants of the Puritans have carried traits of the Puritan mind into a variety of pursuits
and all the way across the continent ... Without some understanding of Puritanism, and that at its source, there is no understanding of America.\footnote{157 Perry Miller. The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956. Pg. ix.}


The Puritan journey to America, as Miller describes it, picks up right where Walzer left off in the late 1620s, just a decade before the English Civil War. According to Miller, John Winthrop initiated the bulk of the Puritan migration to New England. Back in England, Winthrop was born of a wealthy family, whose father was a successful lawyer that could afford to send him to study at Trinity College and Cambridge. Winthrop was appoint “justice of the peace, and was admitted in 1628 to the Inner Temple,”\footnote{158 Miller. The American Puritans. Pg. 36} a real parliamentary branch that would later become part of the Long Parliament in England. But when King Charles came to power in 1629, Winthrop “was deprived of his attorneyship”\footnote{159 Miller. The American Puritans. Pg. 36} because of he was a Puritan, and agreed to migrate west. Soon after, Winthrop was elected to be governor— “the chosen Moses of a new and even mightier Exodus.”\footnote{160 Miller. The American Puritans. Pg. 36} He and many others would land in the Massachusetts Bay Colonies in 1630, close to where the Plymouth Plantation had already existed for a decade.
The Massachusetts Bay Colonies of the 17th century were Congregationalist\textsuperscript{161} Puritan communities. Congregationalism was a Calvin form of church that completely rid churches of anything resembling Catholic ecclesiology, bishops, and general councils altogether. Congregationalists were basically “entirely self-governing”\textsuperscript{162} churches. They were different from the Presbyterians,\textsuperscript{163} a less radical faction that also rid their churches of bishops, but maintained a general council of clerical leaders, based “on the model of Calvin’s system in Geneva.”\textsuperscript{164} Although, both Congregationalists and Presbyterians agreed that the church should be “national ... that it should include the entire population, and be made up of geographical parish units, with membership and attendance enforced by the state.”\textsuperscript{165} The most radical Congregationalists and Presbyterians cut off connections with the national Anglican church, and so cleverly called themselves “Separatists,”\textsuperscript{166} who would generally live amongst the legendary American “Pilgrims” in the Plymouth colony. Thus, those who came to the Massachusetts Bay Colonies around Boston were unlike the Pilgrims that were non-separating Congregationalists. Rather, the Puritans in the Massachusetts Bay Colonies intended to set up a theologically correct Protestant church-society.

This section will aim to sketch an image of church-state relations through the lens of religious liberty in the Massachusetts Bay Colonies. We will draw on Miller’s book with its vast collection of sermons, poems, social commentaries, and letters written by some of the most influential and well-known American Puritans of the

\textsuperscript{161} Miller. The American Puritans. Pg. 2
\textsuperscript{162} Miller. The American Puritans. Pg. 2
\textsuperscript{163} Miller. The American Puritans. Pg. 2
\textsuperscript{164} Miller. The American Puritans. Pg. 2
\textsuperscript{165} Miller. The American Puritans. Pg. 2
\textsuperscript{166} Miller. The American Puritans. Pg. 3
mid to late 17th Century, who spoke on the issue. Among them were John Winthrop who was the second Massachusetts Bay Colony governor; John Cotton and Thomas Hooker, two leading Boston clergymen and theologians—Hooker, the liberal preacher, and Cotton, his more orthodox counterpart; Nathaniel Ward was a clergyman, who wrote the first North American constitution, *The Body of Liberties*, in 1641.

Before we begin examining texts by these authors, I would like to clarify the background and topic of each. First, Cotton’s “Limitation of Government” is what Miller refers to as the best exposition of a New England social compact, which he explains “was not so much the creation of a society by mutual agreement among men as it was a covenant, an agreement to particular terms, between rulers and people.” Nonetheless, this excerpt is primarily definitional of Human Laws. Second, Hooker’s “Hartford Election Sermon” is an extract of the surviving notes from the first Connecticut Valley election in 1638. Miller states that the contents summarize the popular Puritan position against the Stuart regime in England. Third, in Winthrop’s “Speech to the General Court,” delivered in 1645, explains that the Puritan adoption of secular government and its law through social compact implicates “democracy or equalitarian individualism.” Fourth, Nathaniel Ward’s book-turned-pamphlet, *The Simple Cobbler of Aggawam*, was published in 1647. It stood for “an absolute uniformity, for a rigorous suppression of all dissent, by capital punishment” in New England.

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167 Miller. *The American Puritans*. Pg. 85
168 Miller. *The American Puritans*. Pg. 94
Since there is very little linearity within the excerpts, I will use a series of general questions to structure this section. Though the questions may appear elementary, the subsequent answers will unravel complex impacts of religious liberty from the Massachusetts Bay Colonies. Ultimately, we will evaluate the extent at which religion was used to give secular political validation.

Question 1: Who can grant liberty to men?

God and man when he follows God’s revelation can grant liberty to men. The distinction lies within the types of law—Divine, Natural, and Human Laws. Hooker explains, “God hath given us liberty.”169 In this case, “liberty” does not resemble the naïve notion of free will. But rather, as Cotton asserts, just as Romans 2:14 suggests, God’s gift of liberty is seen in Natural Law—“the bounds which the Lord hath set.”170 God grants liberty to man through the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong. However, Augustine reminds us that man may not always be able to choose “right” over “wrong” because man is a creature of lust.171

But man can also grant liberty through Human Laws, where in this case, liberty means tolerance. Hooker discusses the legislator’s ability in a secular government to make laws, granting civil liberties. Hooker evidences existence of representational secular government and elective politics, when he writes, “They who have the power to appoint officers and magistrates, it is in their power also to set the bounds and limitations of power and place unto which they call them.”172

Thus, elected representatives have the liberty, vested in them by a population of

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169 Miller. The American Puritans. Pg. 89
170 Miller. The American Puritans. Pg. 86
171 Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 575
172 Miller. The American Puritans. Pg. 89
privileged voters, namely property owners, to give and take additional liberties through legal means. Suffrage was crucial to the construction of secular government, but the Puritans equally agreed that “the institution itself [was] from God”\(^{173}\) and the publicly appointed officials were “elected into an office that [had] its warrant from heaven.”\(^{174}\) Hence, the Puritans believed secular government was for them to use and operate, but only as an earthly good given to them by God.

**Question 2:** What types of liberties did they legislate through Human Law?

Cotton discusses the liberty of speech, and Ward discusses religious liberty. Both express a desire for these freedoms as long as each liberty is tolerated reasonably, or in Ward’s terms, “That state that will give liberty of conscience in matters of religion must give liberty of conscience and conversation in their moral laws.”\(^{175}\) This reflects the main concern of all the Puritan figures I discuss: that the threat of disrupting the earthly peace increases when an increase in personal liberty increases. Puritans believed that if men “have liberty to speak great things, you will find it to be true, they will speak great blasphemies.”\(^{176}\) Ward expresses the view that the secular government ought to diffuse that threat by defining what is morally reasonable to say and do. Balance is sought, and an earthly peace is the fragile antique held in the balance. Ward refers to Augustine in this matter, who says, “No evil is worse than liberty for the erring.”\(^{177}\) In other words, speaking on behalf of the Puritans, Ward believes that an excess of unrestricted liberty will, eventually, result

\(^{173}\) Miller. *The American Puritans*. Pg. 90

\(^{174}\) Miller. *The American Puritans*. Pg. 90

\(^{175}\) Miller. *The American Puritans*. Pg. 100

\(^{176}\) Miller. *The American Puritans*. Pg. 85

\(^{177}\) Miller. *The American Puritans*. Pg. 100
in abuse of that liberty to disrupt the earthly peace by blaspheming Christ. In essence, the Puritans value religious conformity more than free speech.

Question 3: How do the Puritans mediate the dilemma of eliciting the freedom of speech that still grants freedom to speak without increasing society's threat to earthly peace?

Miller's sources explain that the solution is twofold. On one end, the civil authorities must moderate or limit liberties granted to themselves and their subjects. Cotton states this quite clearly: "It is therefore most wholesome for magistrates and officers in church and commonwealth never to affect more liberty and authority than will do them good, and the people good."^178 This means that Natural and Human Laws are meant to be the swords of this limitation, while a judicial system will be the law's axe-man.

But on the other end, it is the responsibility of the subjects to know the limitations that God presents in all laws, whether Divine, Natural, or Human. Again Cotton states very clearly for us, "It is therefore fit for every man to be studious of the bounds which the Lord hath set: and for the people, in whom fundamentally all power lies, to gives as much power as God in His word gives to men."^179 In other words, Puritan subjects are expected to act mindfully of the fact that they are indeed pious Christians, who, by definition, ought to appreciate the liberty God granted to them by His Plan, and "to choose in God and for God"^180 when making use of it. Thus, the law of love and faith in Christ ought to control church-state tensions when legislating liberties.

^178 Miller. The American Puritans. Pg. 86
^179 Miller. The American Puritans. Pg. 86
^180 Miller. The American Puritans. Pg. 89
As we have seen, the church-state relation in the Massachusetts Bay Colonies was not significantly different than the situation in England that the Puritans frantically fled. The key difference in New England was that the secular sword favored the Puritan church. Of course, the political structure had changed. An elective democracy formed on from colonial divisions of popular sovereignty. All in all, the Massachusetts Bay Colonies continued to move us away from the medieval divine right monarchies, and the Puritans sailed across the Atlantic to install something more Calvinist than was found in England.

**ROGER WILLIAMS – THE DISSENTER**

Roger Williams was an English-born Puritan theologian, and to some a political theorist, and to many more in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, he was heretic and outlaw. He was born of a wealthy merchant family in London. He won a scholarship to attend Pembroke Hall, Cambridge where he studied Bible, and was later “ordained and settled as chaplain in the household of Sir William Masham, a leader of the Puritans.”\(^{181}\) Williams is important to this study in how he pioneered a church-state relation philosophy that would later become the celebrated American way.

In Edmund S. Morgan’s *Roger Williams: The Church and the State*, the author lays out the nuances Roger Williams would have most likely proposed for the governments of the Massachusetts Bay Colonies. Morgan’s presentation of Williams’

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thoughts are only “conjectural”\textsuperscript{182} because Williams’ surviving thoughts have been extracted from “brief and biased reports written by his opponents at the time.”\textsuperscript{183} A reconstruction of Williams’ intellectual development on politics is only possible when compared to the preexisting church and civic governmental structures of the Massachusetts Bay Colonies. This section will describe what nuances Morgan believes Williams would have made in regards to church-state relations in the Massachusetts Bay Colonies. But ultimately, we will see how Williams’ religious orthodoxy results in a secular conception of politics.

Morgan begins his examination of church-state relations by comparing the para-theocratic Massachusetts Bay Colonies to what the constitutionally-run United States would become. The Massachusetts Bay Colony passed laws establishing Puritanism and prohibiting the free exercise of heretical versions of Christianity, which the First Amendment would outlaw approximately one hundred years later. Suffice it to say, “New England stood at the opposite pole from the strict separation of church and state subsequently practiced in the United States.”\textsuperscript{184}

When Roger Williams arrived in New England on February 5, 1631, he “indicted Massachusetts for mingling church and state.”\textsuperscript{185} The common Puritan belief held, “both church and state received authority directly from God, and both were charged with upholding His laws and worship. But though their duties thus overlapped, He had ordained them for different purposes and had endowed them

\textsuperscript{183} Morgan. \textit{Roger Williams}. Pg. 5
\textsuperscript{184} Morgan. \textit{Roger Williams}. Pg. 63
\textsuperscript{185} Morgan. \textit{Roger Williams}. Pg. 63
with different powers.” This meant, just as Calvin suggests in the *Institutes*, the secular government possessed the sword and the ability to tax, among other goods that were meant to sustain an earthly peace—a distribution of duties Augustine would agree with; and the church possessed “non-coercive spiritual powers,” in which the goal was to guide the saving of souls. However, this distribution of earthly goods and powers was interpreted in two ways.

One way was through the skepticism of the Massachusetts Bay Colony that thought church-state relations ought to overlap to protect church affairs, even though they were already taken care of by God’s appointments. The other interpretation was Williams’ perspective, which read Calvinist theory with strict orthodoxy. Williams believed “that the church must not interfere with the state,” finding his theological rationale in the example of Christ commissioned by the Father to not extent into worldly things; “Christ would not, must not goe beyond his Commission, received of the father. Now the Father gave him no such commission of a temporall Jurisdiction, no not so much as in small causes.”

Williams thought he could help untangle the church-state relationship in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Morgan recounts some strides the Massachusetts Bay Colony made in the short time Williams lived there. In one instance, the civic court passed legislation that banned church discipline from having civic consequences. When representatives of the town of Gloucester tried to dismiss an elected official

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186 Morgan. Roger Williams. Pg. 65
187 Morgan. Roger Williams. Pg. 65
188 Morgan. Roger Williams. Pg. 65
189 Morgan. Roger Williams. Pg. 65
because he “got in trouble with the church,” the Gloucester Court overruled the dismissal and ordered his return. In another instance, the Massachusetts civil government ruled marriage as a secular occasion— and as a result, “civil officers were authorized to marry couples.” On one occasion, when a certain couple had requested and arranged for a reverend to preach at a wedding service, civic magistrates forbade the sermon.

However, Williams was unsatisfied; the theoretical separation of church and state was not the same as practical and complete separation. Church and state remained expressly entangled, as was the case in 1631, when a new legislation limited the rights to vote and hold office for secular governmental positions to church members. Williams staunchly opposed this bill, but this provision, like many others, nonetheless remained intact with minimal opposition. This was not the official breaking point, but the weight of his disapproval eventually led to his banishment from the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1635. Morgan recounts “that he had been turned out of Massachusetts because the government considered his ideas seditious as well as heretical;” a ruling Williams would think his jurors had no right to make.

A separatist of the most conservative echelon, Williams wanted to erect a living place that “demanded the separation of the state not merely from the church but from God.” Williams “fled to the Narragansett country beyond the boundaries of the Massachusetts patent, where he purchased land from the native peoples and,
with a group of his followers, formed the colony of Providence Plantations (1636),” which became more popularly known as the Rhode Island Colony.

In Providence, he implemented a secular government that was completely disbanded from church affairs, including religious liberty. At one point, Morgan paraphrases Williams saying “a society which wrongly attempted to enforce Christian religion might gain some incidental benefits in civility,” which shows that despite his intolerance of other Christian denominations, Williams would have accepted them in Rhode Island. Also, the removal of the religious rationale for obedience to rulers did not shock the public because at the same time it removed the religious rationale for rebellion. As a result, the public would be obliged to obey and support the secular government based on its ability to perform its proper function—the preservation of earthly peace. Morgan explains the dynamic well, writing,

If rulers were not God’s vicegerents, if their religion had nothing to do with their fitness to rule, they could command the unquestioning obedience of all their subjects simply by virtue of the fact that they protected all their subjects’ lives and property.

As we have seen, Williams was revolutionary in reconceptualizing church-state relations. Ironically, his religious conservatism resulted in the creation of secular government. To summarize his exploits, Morgan expounds,

While the very concept of a wholly prudential, secular state could have been a liberating one in Puritan thought, and proved to be so in later centuries, Williams carried the concept further than the bare denial of religious purposes and the identification of bodies and goods as the objects of governmental protection. He also considered the way government should do its job...
Williams’ political theology allows the state to make good use of earthly goods. As Augustine says, “it would be incorrect to say that the goods which this city desires are not goods, since even that city is better, in its own human way, by their possession.” In my opinion, I think Williams cherished the role of government more than any other political theologian this study has covered because he believed it could more competently achieve an earthly peace if left to its secular resources, where the rest are skeptical that secular government can achieve anything really good apart from divine guidance.

This marks the turn in the study, where the religio-political environment is separated, each part left to its respecting resources. For the sake of making the best use of the time that this study permits (an earthly good, one might say), we will leap approximately 200-plus years from the mid 17th Century, landing in the 20th Century, where this study continues.

CHAPTER 5: LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL THEOLOGIES IN 20TH CENTURY AMERICA

During the early modern period in America (1900s-1930s), the visible church became reduced to a “human possession,” a secular tool, that American culture used to fuel both ecclesiastical and political machines. H. Richard Niebuhr in *The Kingdom of God in America* seeks to explain, the bond between American Christianity and American culture tightened, forming a reciprocal relationship H. Richard Niebuhr often calls “the revolution.” Unlike the revolution of the popular movements of the late medieval period or the theological inventionism of the

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Puritans, H. Richard Niebuhr’s so-called “revolution” was figurative, a representation of the American regeneration in the character and hope fostered in emerging liberal church-state relations in politics.

In a sweeping generalization, H. Richard Niebuhr claims American society reached a point where the vast majority shared a common belief about the way the world ought to be based on the dominant Protestant tradition because American had not yet been exposed to the substantially different worldviews of Catholic, Jewish, and Anabaptist minorities. In H. Richard Niebuhr’s poetic words, “Though it began with forewarnings of doom a strain of hope lifted itself out of the morbid sounds and grew in power and completeness until it dominated the great polyphony of New World Life.”

Religious institutionalization combined with the spread of secular liberalism to turn religion into secular institutions through the use of law. H. Richard Niebuhr expands on this transformation of religious thinking: “To live under the sovereignty, as these church leaders seem to conceive it, is to live not in relation to divine being but in obedience to law.” Hence, according to H. Richard Niebuhr, religious leaders believed that God’s universe was made to be a world populated by free agents whose obligation was to live obediently to the laws of the world—those hard laws of science and moral laws of government—which were all plotted out in the Bible. When God’s Law became a law mechanically unrelated to the dialogue between God and man a secular institution founded on religious principles formed, wherein the prospect of divine determinism is reduced to fate, and institutionalized faith is measured by ones ability to obey Human Laws. The

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200 Niebuhr. The Kingdom of God in America. Pg. 165
201 Niebuhr. The Kingdom of God in America. Pg. 173
character of American Christianity became the character of secular political society (hope, faith, and love). Thus, the growth of the statist religion of humanism manifests itself.

Secular institutionalization of American Christianity presented itself as a cultural revival, where numerous social groups with varying interests, prejudices, and convictions emerged out of a unified American society. American social denominations “confused themselves with their cause and began to promote themselves, indentifying the kingdom of Christ with the practices and doctrines prevalent in the group.”202 Thereby, a whole network of nonreligious influences replaced the once unified Protestant tradition on the socio-political front. The result, as H. Richard Niebuhr beautifully puts it, “Christianity, democracy, Americanism, the English language and culture, the growth of industry and science, Americans institutions—these are all confounded and confused... [Americans] readily identified it with the righteousness of God.”203 It is through this lens that secular society simultaneously retains ecclesiastical and political infrastructure.

H. Richard Niebuhr sets up an entrance into two different views of political thought based on theological principles. Niebuhr’s *The Kingdom of God in America* describes a pluralistic American society where the character of mainstream American Protestantism is secularized and institutionalized. The quasi-Christian secular structures which replaced the more full-blown Christian versions of early American culture attempted to establish a more egalitarian *respublica*, which Martin E. Marty, the author of the Introduction to the Wesleyan Edition of Niebuhr’s book,

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202 Niebuhr. *The Kingdom of God in America*. Pg. 177
203 Niebuhr. *The Kingdom of God in America*. Pg. 179
describes as how “one may be anti-Darwinist but still must be somehow post-Darwinist.” This modernist liberalism aims to put faith and hope in the government’s ability to suppress the sinful tendencies of selfishness by instituting protective policies; for instance, President Roosevelt’s Social Security Act or some of President Obama’s Medicare policies like the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. But on the other hand, many Christians organized around political philosophy have rejected the secularization of American Christianity. As a result, their laissez-faire economic and conservative social policies reflect a kind of return to naturalism and proto-theocratic rule. Opposite of the liberals, modernist conservative politics aims to prevent government interference in the sinful tendencies of selfishness, with notable exceptions, in what seems like a promotion of social Darwinism.

This section will examine two case studies on both liberal and conservative political theologies that are arguably interpretations of a Calvinist version of Augustine’s theology. H. Richard Niebuhr’s brother, Reinhold Niebuhr, from his Moral Man & Immoral Society (1960), will represent the liberal stream of thought. Born in 1892 in Missouri to a first generation German-American family, Niebuhr became an American theologian. He finished his theological education at Yale University and was ordained in 1915. His provocative Immoral Man & Immoral Society, first published in 1933, is “largely of social and political analysis, with hardly any theological content.” It had a profound and disturbing impact on the residual optimism in American society because in it, Niebuhr challenges the impression that

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though “individuals act with seeming morality, this does not mean that as members of their social groups—in class, racial, economic, or political matters—they in any way escape doing and supporting injustice.”\textsuperscript{207} Thus, we will see how Niebuhr posits a political method for society to improve moral Christian relations.

On the other hand, Rousas John Rushdoony’s writings from his 1965 publication of \textit{The Nature of the American System} will represent the conservative stream of thought. Rushdoony was an American theologian of Armenian descent, born in 1916 in New York City. He received his undergraduate and master’s degrees in English at the University of California, Berkeley, and then with his seminary degree from the Pacific School of Religion he went on to enter the Presbyterian ministry, where he was sent on several missions in the West.\textsuperscript{208} His writings are characteristic of a strain of dominion theology, specifically to the promotion of Christian Reconstructionism. As we will see from \textit{The Nature of the American System}, Rushdoony supports a return to Christian naturalism and modernistic-Darwinism, where the rule of Christ replaces the state, and individual conviction defines social structure. I have chosen Rushdoony because he is among the few respected New Christian Right political theologians, who constructs his arguments with reasonable knowledge of intellectual history.

\textbf{REINHOLD NIEBUHR}

Reinhold Niebuhr’s \textit{Moral Man & Immoral Society} is devoted towards analyzing and critiquing the ideas of human nature as posited by Christian idealism,

\textsuperscript{207} Gilkey. "Introduction." pg. xiv
in order to designate their varying influences on individuals and human groups, particularly in 20th Century America. For Niebuhr, the sinful human tendency to selfishness is vital to understanding human nature at all. Niebuhr expresses the commonly held view in Judaism and Christianity that Adam's original sin in the Garden of Eden was the primary cause of man’s selfishness, as Augustine also thought. Moral insights become twisted when dampened by selfishness—interests divide into vehicles to gain psychological or physical power over others in society. But Niebuhr argues that man’s sinful condition experienced as an individual body or soul, is “clothed by religion in garments of divine magnificence and given the prestige of the absolute.”209 I interpret this to mean the individual is biologically faulty in his selfish genes while on earth, but because of grace he is consciously aware of his own behavior in an attempt to be perfectly moral, with the hope that in the life hereafter he can become what he struggled to be what he knew he could never become on earth.

However, Niebuhr claims that selfishness does not hold the same position when considering the character of society, which is what the thesis of Immoral Man & Immoral Society aims to explain: that man is capable of some morality alone, but society cannot rise to the same level. Given this view of reality, the objective ought to be the establishment of the highest level of morality among men in society, and also among societies in relation to other societies. Thus, Niebuhr’s goal in his book is to introduce political methods that, according to his view of religion, human history, and human nature, offer the best chance of achieving “an ethical social goal for

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society”\textsuperscript{210} that best advances morality among men. In this section, through a focus on Niebuhr’s third chapter, “The Religious Resources of the Individual for Social Living,” we will examine how Niebuhr thinks the Christian ideas of love and hope can be employed to improve ethical relations in American society, though never absolutely and never before human selfishness and sin causes religiosity to recoil, allowing ethical standards that are neither totally political nor totally religious to arise.

To begin, Niebuhr states that the individual’s mission should be to weed out his own selfishness so to realize absolute morality. Of course, this mission is futile. Man would have to cease being human or a descendant of Adam to realize absolute morality on earth. But Christianity does give off three byproducts that makes this possible: to do the most possible to figuratively destroy one’s humanness while still remaining alive; to do the most possible to make oneself as moral as humanly capable; and to do the most possible to overcome reality and attempt the impossible. These “resources,” as Niebuhr calls them, are asceticism, love, and hope.

The ascetic man desires to suppress his desires, even the good desire for eternal paradise.\textsuperscript{211} It is for this reason that Niebuhr believes asceticism involves “every kind of absurdity in [its] attempt to root out the selfishness”\textsuperscript{212} of man’s consciousness. Man’s desires are retracted, but he remains fueled and hypnotized by them.

Love fairs similarly with Niebuhr, though he does not think it is as absurd because “unlike the spirit of asceticism, [love] manifests itself in more rationalized

\textsuperscript{210} Niebuhr. Moral Man & Immoral Society. Pg. xxxii
\textsuperscript{211} Niebuhr. Moral Man & Immoral Society. Pg. 54
\textsuperscript{212} Niebuhr. Moral Man & Immoral Society. Pg. 55
forms of religion.”  

Hence, the idea of love is not considered fanatical. Niebuhr defines love as: “the sentiment of benevolence... it gives transcendent and absolute worth to the life of the neighbor and thus encourages sympathy toward him,” at the expense of the lover’s concern for himself. Hence, one abandons oneself entirely for another. “This experience condemns selfishness more readily than it encourages love,” which results in “disinterestedness” with benevolence. The only religious resource that might purge egoism we see drowned in the flood of ulterior motivation implicit in man’s quest to avoid selfishness.

Hope arises from man’s struggle to erect a loving and just society amid realities of the present world. The emergence of modern society, its industrial economics, its secular attitude, and its socio-political injustice, evokes despair of the impending catastrophe, as Niebuhr might describe it. The religious man employs “hope for the redemption of society through the increase of religio-moral resources.” By clinging to the old society characterized by religious morality, man finds the courage to overcome despair and confront the problems of the present. Man’s reliance on hope is a fallback done in vain— to rejuvenate courage from “the will-to-live and the will-to-power by bringing [himself] under subjection to an absolute will.” Therefore, Niebuhr suggests that man’s religious resources never grant absolutism to humans, because one way or the other, man’s actions, no matter how well-intentioned or religiously-motivated, will always represent the character of man’s sinful condition.

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213 Niebuhr. Moral Man & Immoral Society. Pg. 58
214 Niebuhr. Moral Man & Immoral Society. Pg. 57
215 Niebuhr. Moral Man & Immoral Society. Pg. 60
216 Niebuhr. Moral Man & Immoral Society. Pg. 60
217 Niebuhr. Moral Man & Immoral Society. Pg. 63
218 Niebuhr. Moral Man & Immoral Society. Pg. 63
These three resources are the best tools that man, as an individual, has in his artillery to cloak him and the society he populates in the best possible approximation that can be made, given human selfishness and the constraints of social action in a democratic society. Asceticism, love, and hope represent the maximum thrust and extent of man’s potential to become (in oneself) or construct (in society) perfect justice. As I have explained above, even the functionality of man’s religious resources are tainted by sin.

As a result, a problem emerges between the moral ethic available through man’s individual religious resources and the human ethic needed to improve society. An individual’s moral ethic is not fully translatable or applicable to societal human ethic. Niebuhr critiques describes this relationship based on a Christian trajectory that is not his own:

The individual, and more particularly society, are regarded as too involved in the sins of the earth to be capable of salvation in any moral sense. Usually the individual is saved by the grace of God, while society is consigned to the devil; that is, the social problem is declared to be insoluble on any ethical basis ... The injustices of society are placed in such sharp contrast with the absolute moral ideal, conceived by the individual conscience, that the religiously sensitized soul is tempted to despair of society. Religion thus degenerates into an asocial quest for the absolute.219

Religio-moralistic perfection is defined, in both instances, by individual units. The unit of analysis can never seep into the realm of society as a whole because religious resources are not applicable to the whole of society in an equalitarian way. In society, religion recoils and human interests—those rooted in selfishness and miscellaneous desires for power or gain—rule society.

Therefore, Niebuhr stresses that where religious resources are weak (as they are in society), the difficulties among larger social groups become “increasingly

219 Niebuhr, Moral Man & Immoral Society. Pg. 70
apparent.”

Society is condemned to sinful association, but the individuals that make it up might retain a religious imagination. That religiously-imaginative individual is tempted to embrace either religious “defeatism” or religious “sentimentalism.”

On one hand, defeatism will result in the same social indifference that our previous interpretations of religious resources demonstrated. Religion will be uninterested by both politico-moral perfectionism and disaster. What horrible and unrelenting social customs will surface when a society of religious men turn their backs and shrug unemotionally to slavery, economic oppression, and corruption! It is at this point where the politico-moral dilemma turns away from religious resources for answers. On the other hand, sentimentalism will result in the complete opposite: hypocritical concern will replace staunch indifference. Imagining the present world as living biblical history, where the parousia is “just around the corner,” sentimentalists will promote Christian conversion as “the only safe method of solving the social problem.” When this need for religious enlightenment “remains unrecognized,” the efforts and the role of religion becomes hypocritical. Very fairly, secular society will convict religion of being illusionary and non-instrumental to what are perceived to be the real socio-political issues. Ultimately, both defeatism and sentimentalism demonstrate that full-fledged religious faith will never aid in the construction of a just society because its concerns are confined to the individual conscience, prevented from transforming society in the way it can transform the individual.

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220 Niebuhr. Moral Man & Immoral Society. Pg. 74
221 Niebuhr. Moral Man & Immoral Society. Pg. 80
222 Niebuhr. Moral Man & Immoral Society. Pg. 80
This is not to say that the type of individuals populating a certain society cannot have dramatic influence on the type of justice achieved by that society. Niebuhr mentions, for example, “intimate religious communities,” which I imagine to be a kind of social commune, maybe a monastic community, rather than a city like Rome. Here, Niebuhr admits, and I agree, when there is a high concentration of individuals with the same religious identity and imagination, “individual ideals achieve social realization but do not conquer society.” Human nature will always trump religious resources, thereby subjecting society to, at the very least, some amount of greed. When the tiniest root of injustice seeps through the cracks of piety, previous knowledge of injustice will entice fear that will undoubtedly steamroll until the point at which “the religious spirit recoils.” At the same time, no society will be so just that humans can escape the injustices in their hearts.

However, for Niebuhr, religion does not present itself as a useless resource for ameliorating social problems. Niebuhr explains that there are few resources to solve social problems from a political standpoint at all, but among them, Christian philosophy is most effective in the promotion of “non-violence,” which is to mean a diplomacy or avoidance of any kind of attack or offense—not just physical, turbulent revolt, violent warfare, or imperialism. Like any controlling mechanism on earth, “The technique of non-violence will not eliminate all these perils [those travesties of the world]. But it will reduce them. It will ... achieve a degree of justice which
neither pure moral suasion nor violence could gain.\textsuperscript{226} The desire for earthly peace and toleration resonates tenfold in this statement.

It is no surprise to find Niebuhr claiming that Christian morality is best suited to administrate this government program. Niebuhr writes,

These attitudes of repentance which recognise that the evil in the foe is also in the self, and these impulses of love which claim kinship with all men in spirit of social conflict, are the peculiar gifts of religion to the human spirit. Secular imagination is not capable of producing them.\textsuperscript{227}

Niebuhr’s liberalism promotes the use of Christian moral standards to limit human injustices as much as humanly possible. He is not claiming that for America to achieve a relative earthly peace Christianity must be the flagship of politics with a devout Christian at the helm. But rather, his logic points to the objective position that if political decision-makers were to adopt the Christian ideology of love to preemptively dissuade strikes, discrimination practices in corporations, non-payment of taxes, and unfair trade sanctions, among many possible uses, then they might create more justice than there otherwise would be.

But Niebuhr reminds us of the fact that, in the modern American political environment, Christian insights have become absorbed by “the more comfortable and privileged classes.” This is to suggest that the kind of morality needed to combat social injustice is unavailable to the government, because it is being used for other ends. To conclude his study he appropriately references St. Augustine to bring perspective to his observations:

To the end of history the peace of the world, as Augustine observed, must be gained by strife. It will therefore not be a perfect peace. But it can be more perfect than it is. If the mind and the spirit of man does not attempt the impossible, if it does not seek to conquer or to

\textsuperscript{226} Niebuhr. Moral Man & Immoral Society. Pg. 254
\textsuperscript{227} Niebuhr. Moral Man & Immoral Society. Pg. 255
eliminate nature but tries only to make the forces of nature the servants of the human spirit and the instruments of the moral ideal, a progressively higher justice and more stable peace can be achieved.\textsuperscript{228}

Almost summarizing Augustine’s thesis of Book XIX, Chapter 17 in \textit{De Civitate Dei}, Niebuhr exploits the trend in American politics that I hoped to find when I first decided to take on this study. He asserts that if Christian religious resources are at the cusp of political policy-making in the American secular government, then the use of government, as an earthly good, peaks and a greater degree of justice can be implemented. Niebuhr’s liberalism presents religion as a useful tool—an earthly good—for politics, but not the most useful tool. It is at this point where I believe religion should find its home in society.

\textbf{ROUSAS JOHN RUSHDOONY}

Rousas John Rushdoony’s \textit{The Nature of the American System} begins with the claim that American history holds as interpreted by liberals contains an outstanding misconception about the implications of \textit{The American Revolution}: that the Declaration of Independence and the ratification of the United States Constitution called for the secularization and independence of the American colonies from the English crown. According to Rushdoony, this is was not at all the case. Instead, Rushdoony purports that “the Constitution was designed to perpetuate a Christian order”\textsuperscript{229} and that the early framers were hardly preoccupied by the English crown because they never imagined themselves subject to it to begin with. However, overtime, a radical change occurred—a “second American Revolution has taken

\textsuperscript{228} Niebuhr. \textit{Moral Man & Immoral Society}. Pg. 256
place.” A mystical eruption, in the various agencies and politic machines, flogged by the evils of sin and too easily penetrated by what Augustine called the *libido dominandi*, power, for Rushdoony, has become the primary function of the federal government—not human welfare, charity, or the family! In turn, Rushdoony believes that socialist-democratic American institutions that advanced property rights and educational systems really resemble pleasure-producing technologies, indulging American megalomania.

In his book, Rushdoony explains how the putative Christian roots of America’s Constitution, its three branches of government, its institutions, its law, and history have been literally washed out or disguised by a rampaging secular current. This section will examine several of these instances, but will mainly focus on what Rushdoony calls “The Attack on Religious Liberty.” However, Rushdoony’s book is not just a piece-by-piece analysis of American socio-political evolution, but it is a call for revolution—one characterized by a return to the “old order,” “to Europe”—that is, medieval or early modern Europe. Rushdoony calls for the restoration of the Christian faith and the Protestant “feudal” emphasis on the local county unit and its intimate elements. In effect, proclaims “a rebellion against liberty and its responsibilities,” the essential proponents of democracy, wherein the spirit of the first decades immediately following the writing of the Declaration of Independence and the ratification of the Constitution ought to be reinstated.

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231 Rushdoony. *The Nature of the American System*. Pg. 22
233 Rushdoony. *The Nature of the American System*. Pg. 23
Rushdoony’s fourth chapter, entitled, “The Attack on Religious Liberty” discusses what he believes have been the two forms of attack on American religious liberty. The first form is the secularization of the state in the name of freedom. This occurred by way of philosophical and legal justifications. The goals of the state were made secular, and therefore, were divorced from the Christian faith. This assumes that the goals of the state, those implied in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence, were originally religious goals, and more generally, endowed by Christianity. Rushdoony suggests, therefore, “The United States, in its inception as a constitutional government, was not a secular state.”

True, says Rushdoony, it abstained from any particular form of Christian order, but that is due to the fact that the reformed Protestant framers did not dare reproduce the religiously centrist federal government that had once enticed their mass exodus from England. But his point is that “each of the constituent states was a Christian republic, and the federal government was restricted from making any laws interfering with their settlements.”

The French Revolution, as Rushdoony maintains, created a wave that challenged this idea in American law. The Enlightenment understanding of the human being suggested that the role of government involved the subjugation of man to reason rather than to God. Rushdoony believes this “humanism” became the new religion, or what he calls, “the religion of humanity.” George Washington’s Farewell Address illustrates the “shock” of the Enlightenment’s challenge to God. Accordingly, “as Washington saw it,” and as Rushdoony agrees, “the state is a form

234 Rushdoony. The Nature of the American System. Pg. 46
235 Rushdoony. The Nature of the American System. Pg. 46
236 Rushdoony. The Nature of the American System. Pg. 66
of moral order, and moral order rests on religion. Morality cannot be maintained without religion,”\textsuperscript{237} and for Rushdoony, law is not law unless revealed by an absolute source. It is obviously true, then, that religious law promotes morality. Rushdoony has us consider the commandment, “thou shalt not steal,” for example. In a democracy where man is subject to man, the majority brackets and puts limitations on what it means to “steal.” Rushdoony probes rhetorically, “Is confiscatory taxation directed at the rich social justice, or is it immorality?”\textsuperscript{238} As the majority opinion changes, any strong definition of theft expands its meaning where even taxation is theft, poking holes in moral order. As a result, we are left with a kind of moral order that is empty of theological order, which creates an “illusion productive of only anarchy and decay.”\textsuperscript{239} This kind of secularism asserts a theologically destructive political moral order.

The next step involved the secular attack on religious liberty to hit the American legal front. In 1940, almost a century after the Fourteenth Amendment and approximately 150 years after the ratification of the Constitution, “did the U.S. Supreme Court ‘restrict State action respecting religion.’”\textsuperscript{240} Rushdoony never mentions what case he is specifically referencing, but he must have meant the landmark ruling in \textit{Cantwell v. Connecticut} (1940), where the Hughes Court held that the First and Fourteenth Amendments protected license-free proselytizing. This shows that the Constitution prior to this decision meant the opposite of what it restricted— that states could and did establish religion. If that had not been the case

\textsuperscript{237} Rushdoony. \textit{The Nature of the American System}. Pg. 47
\textsuperscript{238} Rushdoony. \textit{The Nature of the American System}. Pg. 47
\textsuperscript{239} Rushdoony. \textit{The Nature of the American System}. Pg. 47
\textsuperscript{240} Rushdoony. \textit{The Nature of the American System}. Pg. 48
beforehand, Rushdoony argues, then there would have been no reason to make a
decision on whether it was constitutional or not.

From there on out, the second stage of the attack formed. “The religion of
humanity disguised itself in terms calculated to arouse the simple evangelical
adherents of the religion of Jesus Christ to a feeling of guilt unless certain political
goals could be attained.”241 In the years following World War II, there was a steady
attempt to legally secularize the states, starting with legal movements “to prohibit
tax exemption to churches, abolish ‘under God’ from the Pledge of Allegiance, and ‘In
God We Trust’ from public documents and from money.”242 The terms of legal
secularization are unique, such that, if religion is going to exist as an institution
within the respublica, then it must submit to the legal requirements of the secular
government as a particular property of that respublica. For instance, American
churches are not required to pay tax because they are non-profit organizations.
Despite this privilege, Rushdoony emphasizes the ridiculousness of the church’s
“annual... requirement”243 to pay a “filing fee”244 for the tax exemption papers. The
price is not the issue, but the disguised implications of the dues are aggressive,
making submission—even menial financial submission—a requirement for
institutional Christianity to exist. Similar rules apply to church zoning requirements,
bell ringing, and public broadcasting rights.

The remainder of the book goes on to highlight similar grievances
Rushdoony has with American secular socio-political economy. He insists, fervently,
that the spirit of everything that is “American” was originally meant to be Christian
or promote Christian morality. Based on this viewpoint, he holds that the United
Nations is primarily a religious (but non-Christian) institution and that the
American conspiracy view of history (namely the plots and meanings surrounding
the deaths of Presidents Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy) is primarily a
conservative Christian way of making sense of the world. Because “struggle” is
central to both the United Nations and conspiracy, Rushdoony believes both hold
the character of religious agenda.

Reminding his audience of this “profound truth” underlying all American
action, he warns, “Christianity is being disestablished in the several states of the
United States of America only to make way for the savage establishment of the
religion of humanity.”245 As I previously mentioned, the “religion of humanity”
signifies a secularism of all kinds. For Rushdoony, the monster of that “new religion”
is thick with the blood of sin. It will give those “other religions” a part in this earthly
world, only if they fall down on their knees and praise the “new religion.”

Secularism, democracy, liberty, represent tyranny for Rushdoony, which
“[subordinates] the moral order to man rather than to God.”246 The end result is
chaos and anarchy, leaving the church behind as a negligible building.

Hence, Rushdoony’s holds a political philosophy that does not accept the
secularization and institutionalization of Christian moralism we have seen in
Niebuhr, where the promotion of egalitarianism is paramount. Rather, his modern
conservativism promotes a vital role for Christianity moralism in the American legal

245 Rushdoony. The Nature of the American System. Pg. 63
246 Rushdoony. The Nature of the American System. Pg. 66
system to meet the needs of its natural design. Rushdoony’s Christian authoritarianism denounces the social, economic, and political liberties advanced by American democracy in order to assign proper allegiance to God’s Law through diligence and struggle in the individual.

We see how Rushdoony’s exhibition of modern conservatism puts earthly peace second to individualistic endeavor, supplemented by Darwinist-like struggle. Within that frame of mind, the importance of a “return to Christian faith, a faith that not the state but Christ is the Savior and Mediator, and ... a return to the Protestant restoration of feudalism, to the centrality and importance of the local unit, the county and its elements”\textsuperscript{247} are stressed. Therefore, he believes that the rules of free market capitalism should reign over the industries (like health insurance, banking, and social security) that have been managed as a socio-economic safety-net to counteract man’s sinful tendency toward selfishness. By doing so, an earthly peace might not be as easily assured, but earthly forms of justice will.

This theologically motivated Darwinism shows how the political Christian Right moves away from this study’s interpretation of the elements of Augustinian political theology—peace, tolerance, and neutrality. In effect, Rushdoony redefines peace, tolerance, and neutrality, such that peace is relative to the individual rather than the respublica, tolerance is of the effects of human sin rather than other religions, and neutrality is seen in the scope of God’s Law rather than Human Law. Earthly justice, then, becomes a measurement dependent on political realism, where desire and interest are motivated by sin and defined as power, where the goal is to

\textsuperscript{247} Rushdoony, The Nature of the American System. Pg. 23
dominate others in a world free of the constraints once imposed by the *respublica*. In the end, one’s material resources, one’s attainment of earthly goods, designates how religiously successful or righteous one has been in the world. All the while, God’s Law reigns supreme in the minds of men, as some recline in their marbled mansions and some in their aluminum shanties.

Thus, my point is that Rushdoony falls into Niebuhr’s category of sentimentalism. Very clearly for Rushdoony, justice means having Christianity in the majority and, more importantly, in the individual. In his *Law & Liberty*, Rushdoony quotes Augustine from *De Civitate Dei* (IV, 4), to make his point: “Justice being taken away, then, what are kingdoms but great robberies?”248 He believes when the religious enterprise is removed from the consciousness of the state, as he believes to be the case in America, then the state will decay into “a band of robbers or a criminal syndicate.”249 Thus, his Christian Reconstructionism promotes increased Christian involvement in all worldly activities, so that Christianity plays a dominating role in the individual and social consciousness as a whole. However, as Niebuhr would categorize it, this plan will make religion a hypocritical tool for society to achieve justice because it may transform the individual, but not society in the same way.

**CONCLUSION**

In Book XIX, Chapter 17 of *De Civitate Dei*, Augustine best summarizes his political theology:

While this Heavenly City, therefore, is on pilgrimage in this world, she calls out citizens from all nations and so collects a society of aliens, speaking all languages. She takes no account of

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249 Rushdoony. *Law and Liberty*. Pg. 90
any difference in customs, laws, and institutions, by which earthly peace is achieved and preserved—not that she annuls or abolishes any of those, rather, she maintains them and follows them (for whatever divergences there are among the diverse nations, those institutions have one single aim—earthly peace), provided that no hindrance is presented thereby to the religion which teaches that the one supreme and true God is to be worshipped. Thus even the Heavenly City in her pilgrimage here on earth makes use of the earthly peace and defends and seeks the compromise between human wills in respect of the provisions relevant to the mortal nature of man, so far as may be permitted without detriment to true religion and piety. In fact, that City relates the earthly peace to the heavenly peace, which is so truly peaceful that it should be regarded as the only peace deserving the name, at least in respect of the rational creation; for this peace is the perfectly ordered and completely harmonious fellowship in the enjoyment of God, and of each other in God.250

This study shows Augustine to be a pioneer in modern political philosophy a millennium and a half before our time. His exegesis of the Garden Story in the Book of Genesis paved way for the development of his political theology. Discerning the degradation of human nature from its original social state to a lower, sinful political state, Augustine shows that political structure is not natural to this world, but rather a byproduct of Adam’s original sin. Nonetheless, in the present, politics are effectively natural. It is important to see human nature as it is now as a product of sin because it allows us the opportunity to monitor our corporal selves for earthly peace in a similar context to the way we monitor our spiritual selves for heavenly peace.

Despite the evil residue of its formation, the political structure represents for Augustine an earthly “good.” In the same way that currency is good for trade, shoes are good for walking and protecting one’s feet, and words are good for communicating, the political structure is good for establishing and maintaining an earthly peace, which benefits both the Civitas Dei and the Civitas terrena. As Markus mentions, and I agree, Augustine takes somewhat of a detached view of the effects of

250 St. Augustine. Concerning the City of God against the Pagans. Pg. 878
the political structure. The passage quoted at the beginning of this conclusion evidences this detachment, or what I consider to be a hasty indifference because he quickly wants a political structure that will ensure an earthly peace so that he and other Christians can devote their time to loving God rather than earthly things. He cares so little and so much at the same time that Augustine cares less what ruler is in power. Augustine asks rhetorically in Book V, Chapter 17 of De Civitate Dei, “As for this mortal life, which ends after a few days’ course, what does it matter under whose rule a man lives, being so soon to die, provided that the rulers do not force him to impious and wicked acts?” As long as the ruler promotes a policy of earthly peace and does not prohibit the existence of the true religion, then the Civitas Dei should be content, says Augustine.

Continuing along the lines of the issue of religious liberty, Augustine’s political theology provides a justification for the religiously pluralistic state—again, as long as Christianity is among one of those religions included. The passage above seems to celebrate plurality in only a mildly cautious tone. Augustinian religious liberty in an English translation of his writing, especially in the clause from the second sentence of the passage above, “She takes no account of any difference in customs, laws, and institutions,” sounds similar to the language from the Establishment Clause in the First Amendment of the United States Bill of Rights: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

Aside from the wording, the ideas of both promote a transnational humanist body, where the church is a non-national entity, even

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though Christian or deist consciousness mediates the state’s construction. The sentiment of Augustine’s Enlightenment-like formation of church-state relations give tribute to what one might call a liberal democracy.

But as this study shows, there has been a broad spectrum of Augustinianism, where each permutation signifies a relic of the culture they inhabited. In the Middle Ages, Augustinianism was detained in the monarchy and its despotic institutions at the national level so much so that no conception of a secular state could be imagined, as Aquinas explains. When we move into the Age of Reformation, the expansion of state rule apart from the church occurs. Luther, who is most similar to Augustine in political theology, thought the church should then influence state rule only to aid in the general increase in social Christian morality: hence, it ought to struggle to find its way into state procedure, but exist as a good for the pilgrimaging *Civitas Dei* and those who might be converted to the Word. Where as Calvin saw a church triumphant that could directly influence state procedure on the local level, like what we saw in Geneva. The British Calvinists tried to expand on this concept by converting the Anglican throne, and when they failed, they turned to Consistory-like Augustinianisms in the New World. As the American state developed further, the effects of religious liberty influenced the emergence of a secular state. The Christian Church divides into its moralistic elements that can be found in American Law. In this permutation, from my point of view, Augustine’s desire for a general increase in society’s morals is most complete.

To conclude, this study demonstrates that political theorists ought to consider Augustine as a legitimate thinker in the understandings of church-state

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relations. The state should have no influence in the church because each has its own ends, just as *the Civitas Dei* and the *Civitas terrena* “each has its own very different end in making use of them.”252 By tending to its interests, Augustine believes the general morality of the state can rise. Certainly, the church militia may truly separate from the state, pursuing only spiritual goods through asceticism or monasticism, but this will not help the *respublica*. Thus, what we must take away from Augustine is that both earthly and spiritual goods can be used in beneficial ways for the two cities.

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252 St. Augustine. *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*. Pg. 878
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Lastly, I would like to acknowledge sin. That man is a creature of sin, lusting and pillaging in one’s own body, and against others in a world where everyone is perpetually warring against one another is an awful, hopeless scenario. Though, in light of this dire, catastrophic phenomenon, man ought to feel obligated to delight in any degree of peace, stability, or order established and maintained amidst the great mess of it all. For that, I would like to thank all those religious and governmental institutions of the world that aim for some kind of relative peace and order on earth.