"Separation and Wholeness: Notes on the Unsettling Political Presence of the Body of Christ"

William T. Cavanaugh
For the Sake of the World
Swedish Ecclesiology in Dialogue with William T. Cavanaugh

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Separation and Wholeness

Notes on the Unsettling Political Presence of the Body of Christ

WILLIAM T. CAVANAUGH

One cannot do ecclesiology in the abstract, free of context, but any particular ecclesiological context—Roman Catholicism in the United States—is very different from the context of Church of Sweden. We do, however, have in common the fact that both Roman Catholicism in the United States and Church of Sweden have a history of ambivalence about the separation of church and state. It was not until the Second Vatican Council vindicated the work of Yves Congar, John Courtney Murray, and others, that the separation of church and state was officially accepted by the Roman Catholic Church as something more than a necessary but regrettable accommodation to modern life in a liberal social order. As Philip Hamburger has demonstrated, until the middle of the twentieth century, separation of church and state in the United States was championed primarily by anti-Catholic Protestant nativists who opposed any sort of state aid for Catholic schools. More broadly, however, separation of church and state was opposed in official Catholic circles because it seemingly threatened to relegate Catholicism and its aspiration to affect the wholeness of life to a small reservation of private life. Catholicism was not a "religion" but a way of life, a "culture" perhaps, that must be sustained institutionally. The fear was that Catholicism as a whole culture could not be sustained where political institutions were not grounded in Catholic principles.

1. See Hamburger, Separation.
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It has been fascinating for me to watch from afar how Church of Sweden has dealt with the question of the separation of church and state. It seems that the separation of 2000 has been accepted by the majority of active members of the Church. And yet there remains a strong aspiration to wholeness. Church of Sweden is often considered a "folk church," and therefore meant to represent the spiritual dimension of Swedish life as a whole. What this means exactly is of course contested. But entailed in the claim to be a folk church is the idea that the church is not merely a "religion," a privatized set of beliefs, but also in some sense a "culture" that embraces the whole life of its members. How to accomplish this separated from a welfare state that has also aspired to embrace the wholeness of the lives of its citizens remains an interesting question.

In this essay I ponder, from a theological point of view, the relationship between the separation of church and state and the Christian aspiration to wholeness, both of which I think are good ideas, if understood properly. On the one hand, wholeness is written into the Nicene Creed that virtually all Christians profess: we believe in one church that is holy, apostolic, and also catholic. The term katholikos is derived from the Greek kath' holou, "according to the whole." Although the meanings are varied, the term indicates not merely extension but concentration, the integration of all of life in one place into a coherent whole. According to Henri de Lubac, catholicity suggests

the idea of an organic whole, of a cohesion, of a firm synthesis, of a reality which is not scattered but, on the contrary, turned toward a center which assures its unity, whatever the expanse in area or the internal differentiation might be.¹

As Karl Barth says, catholicity is "all-embracing; it speaks of an identity, a continuity, a universality sovereignly asserting itself within all the diversities."²

On the other hand, however, there is a dynamic within Christian practice that tends toward separation and division within the social order. This is what Carl Schmitt referred to as the "typically Judeo-Christian division of the original political unity,"³ a split in which Schmitt found much to lament. Rather than bringing the civil and the spiritual power into one coherent whole, as the pagans had done, the church has tended to remain a somewhat alien body in any social order, either insisting on its independence from the civil authorities or contending for influence against the civil powers.

In this paper I will explore the theo-logic of this separation, and discuss how it is related to the church's aspiration for wholeness. I will begin by showing in what sense the scriptural witness supports Schmitt's contention that Christianity lends itself to political division. I will then briefly explore how in three figures—Augustine, Gelasius I, and Luther—the division of political unity evolved and was tamed. The third section explores the fate of the church in two modern types of regimes, liberalism and social democracy, and argues for the robust recovery of the church's political presence.

THE SUI GENERIS POLITICAL FORM
OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The term "political theology" in the twentieth century was first given prominence by German jurist and political theorist Carl Schmitt in his famous 1922 book by that title. Schmitt's name has forever and rightly been tarred by his stint as favored jurist of the Third Reich before falling out of favor in 1936. But Carl Schmitt remains an interesting figure for political theology, because he understood the nature of ecclesio-political questions so clearly—though he came to conclusions that no Christian theologian ought to accept. Schmitt was troubled by the church's tendency to weaken the state by dividing it from within, something he judged was endemic to Christian social orders. The quote about the "typically Judeo-Christian division of the original political unity" is from Schmitt's book on Thomas Hobbes' image of the Leviathan. One of the primary reasons Schmitt was interested in Hobbes was that Hobbes thought the key political task was the restoration of the original pagan unity of civil and spiritual power over against the Christian splitting of that unity. "The struggle to overcome the Roman papal church's division between a 'Kingdom of Light' and a 'Kingdom of Darkness'—that is, the restoration of the original

2. Dulles, Catholicity of the Church, 14.
3. de Lubac, Motherhood of the Church, 174.
4. Barth, Kirchliche Dogmatik, IV:1, 783, quoted in de Lubac, Motherhood of the Church, 174.
5. Schmitt, Leviathan in the State Theory, 10.
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unity—is, as Leo Strauss ascertained, the actual meaning of Hobbes’ political theory.” According to Strauss, Hobbes blamed the “revolutionary state-destroying distinction between religion and politics” on the Jews, but Schmitt argues that Hobbes’ real concern was the Christian church, especially the pope and “power-thirsty Presbyterian churches.” The problem became acute in the medieval period with claims by the church to power in temporal matters, as in papal claims to be able to depose kings and emperors for the sake of spiritual goods, or in claims by the church to decide when a war is just and when it is not. By the sixteenth century, the church, through Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, was still claiming an “indirect power” over temporal rulers, a claim that Hobbes directly and vehemently opposed. Political authority was always split by the presence of the body of Christ. The Leviathan that Hobbes pictured—the state-body enacted by the will and right of each individual—would constantly have to struggle against this other body. As Schmitt says of the Leviathan, “For every good Christian it became a dread-provoking image to see a great animal juxtaposed to the Corpus mysticum of the man-god, the great Christ.”

According to Schmitt, the reason that the state was entitled to the undivided political obedience of the individual was that the state offered protection through its monopoly on the means of violence. Indirect powers such as the church were deceptive because they laid claim to obedience without providing protection in return. As Schmitt says, they enjoy all of the advantages and take on none of the risks that the possession of political power entails. This division is deadly for the state, for “The wonderful armature of a modern state organization requires uniformity of will and uniformity of spirit.” The great Leviathan needed to be able to act as a unified corporate person, with one will and spirit.

We will return to Schmitt’s solution to this problem, and its relevance to the Swedish context, later. What is interesting for our purposes now is Schmitt’s diagnosis of the inherently divisive nature of the church in the political realm and the importance Schmitt placed on taming that source of division. Schmitt saw clearly as few others have what is at stake in political theology: the contest of Leviathan and the corpus mysticum of the God-man, the state-body and the body of Christ. For Schmitt, the problem of an indigestible “indirect power” in the state-body cannot be resolved until the church gives up its pretensions to embody the same kind of political decision-making that belongs properly to the state alone. He thought it poisonous, for example, that the church could claim the right to decide what is or is not a just war. Schmitt thought the question of “Who decides?” was the key question. As he writes in his key text Political Theology, abstract talk about the superiority of the spiritual power to the temporal power is meaningless, because he quotes Hobbes, “Subjection, Command, Right, and Power are accidents not of Powers but of Persons.”

Political decision-making is embodied not in law but in the person of the state sovereign, who cannot share such decision-making with another body.

Schmitt was exactly right to see that the splitting of the original political-spiritual unity of pagan culture is a fundamental and typical aspect of Christian belief and practice. From a Christian point of view, Schmitt was wrong to try to tame it. The splitting of political order is just the expression of the idea that salvation has a history. The appearance of a chosen people and a Messiah in time—and the continuation of time after the appearance of the Messiah but before the full consummation of his reign—divides creation into two ways of representing rule: acceptance of the sovereignty of Christ over history, and failure to accept Christ’s sovereignty as yet. This does not mean that those who fail to acknowledge Christ explicitly are precluded from some participation in Christ. But beginning with Abraham, the scandal of particularity becomes unavoidable: God decisively acts in history to separate out one particular people from creation as a whole, not because of the virtues of that people—their vices

7. Schmitt, Leviathan in the State Theory, 10.
8. Schmitt, Leviathan in the State Theory, 71.
10. Schmitt, Leviathan in the State Theory, 62.
11. Schmitt, Leviathan in the State Theory, 72–74. Schmitt writes, “If protection ceases, the state too ceases, and every obligation to obey ceases. The individual then wins back his ‘natural’ freedom. The ‘relation between protection and obedience’ is the cardinal point of Hobbes’ construction of state. It permits a very good reconciliation with the concepts and ideals of the bourgeois constitutional state,” 72.
models of monarchy in which a sacral kingship was part of the order of creation. To be "like other nations" was not considered something to which to aspire. The equality and free association of the tribal model were valued by the Israelites, largely because they saw themselves as equally under the rule of God. The later critiques of monarchy can only be understood in light of this tradition in Israelite thinking and practice.

The period of monarchy lasted until the fall of the northern kingdom to the Assyrians in 722 BC and the fall of the southern kingdom to the Babylonians in 587 BC. In the meantime, the people of God were introduced to forced labor, wars of territorial conquest, and the development of pronounced class-based inequality. There was, for the first time, a union of throne and altar, and YHWH became a kind of official "state god." The later review of this period in the deuteronomistic history was mixed, but was on the whole quite critical. The deuteronomistic history does not regard this period as without purpose. The way had been prepared for the later advent of a successor of David who would rule as a direct instrument of God's sovereignty. It would be a mistake, however, to infer that the Davidic monarchy was therefore paradigmatic of the social form of the people of God. To the contrary, as Oliver O'Donovan says, it is the Babylonian Exile that becomes the paradigm of Jewish existence.

After the relatively brief period of the unity of throne and altar, the people of God existed as a sub-society within the larger framework of the imperial powers that dominated them. Under the Babylonians, Persians, Ptolemy, and Seleucids, Israel had limited autonomy and self-government, existing as a foreign body within the larger empire-body. There was no Israelite king, but life revolved around the Temple, and the high priest took on roles that a modern person would consider "political," attending to matters of organization, taxation, and law. Political unity in the empire, in other words, was divided by the distinctiveness of the people of God. Their identity in this period was cemented by the Torah, which, as Lohfink notes, is based in the pre-Davidic stories of creation and liberation and excludes only the Israelite experience as a territorial monarchy. Lohfink believes this omission was deliberate, a statement that Israel's essential character is established not under David and Solomon, but instead

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15. Similar texts include Judges 9:7–15—in which Jotham's parable has the productive trees refuse to become king over the other trees, until the useless bramble agrees to reign—and 1 Kings 12:1—19—in which King Rehoboam's deliberate cruelty is highlighted. The passage in First Kings concludes, "So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day."

17. Lohfink, Does God Need the Church?, 109–12.
18. O'Donovan, Desire of the Nations, 83.
in the memory of a "priestly kingdom and holy nation" (Ex 19:6) liberated
from slavery and living under God's direct rule. Sinai is neither Egypt nor
Jerusalem. The priestly kingdom is not a sacred monarchy, for the priestly
function mediates God's kingship directly to the people, bypassing earthly
monarchs. In the priestly kingdom, there was to be no oppression, and the
poor and the weak were to be taken care of. God was to be the sole ruler
of Israel, in every aspect of life, and God's law was to maintain the identity
of the people of God under whatever earthly regime appeared to rule. 19
The point was not simply to maintain the identity of Israel, however. The
people of God existed for the sake of the world. The echo of Genesis 12:3
can be heard in Jeremiah 29:7: "seek the welfare of the city where I have
sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare
you will find your welfare."

The typical Judeo-Christian division of political unity in this period
took the form of a non-sovereign, non-territorial priestly social body that
obeyed a different ruler within the framework of a foreign political rule.
This social form continued as the people of God became a federation of
synagogues in the Diaspora. The synagogue was more than a place of
worship; it was also a place for judicial assemblies, business transactions,
receiving travelers, feeding the poor, and mourning the dead. The fed-
eration of synagogues was not a polis, but neither was it merely a ko
mon or thiasos, a semi-private club gathered around a particular interest.
The synagogue was concerned with the whole of life, every detail of which
was covered by the Torah. This very concern for wholeness is precisely the
reason that the Jews fit awkwardly into Roman society. They were allowed
exemption from military service and later from the official imperial cult,
in deference to the "customs of their ancestors." 20

As long as Christians were considered Jews, these exemptions ap-
plied to them as well. As Lohfink remarks:

It is important for us to note that the association of communities
discovered by Israel became the formative principle of the early
church. Here appeared with full clarity what the people of God
is: a network of communities spread over the whole earth and yet
existing within non-Christian society, so that each person can
freely choose whether to be a Christian or not; it is genuine com-

21. Lohfink, Does God Need the Church?, 118.
postponement of the Kingdom of God, its deferral until some later time when Jesus comes back and finally gets it right. The cross is the coming of the Kingdom, the inauguration of the reign of self-sacrificial love.24

What is decisive ecclesiologically and politically is that the church believed that it was participating in the Lamb’s rule. The saints sing: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth” (Rev 5:9–10). The church of the book of Revelation did not believe it would assume Caesar’s power and rule like Domitian did, nor that the coming of God’s reign was deferred until some decisive future coming of Christ, wielding the same kind of power that Caesar wielded. Unlike Leviathan, Christ does not offer protection in return for obedience; for Schmitt, this is precisely why the body of Christ cannot be properly political. As John Howard Yoder comments on this passage of Revelation, however, the church’s statement about the slaughtered Lamb was a political statement about the way the world is really governed; despite appearances, the world is not really controlled by the kings and emperors of this world, but by the God who is embodied in the Crucified One.25 The Christian division of political unity is between the way the world appears to be run and the way it really is. The political task of the church is to witness to the way that Christ rules, through servanthood that does not look much like sovereignty in the world’s eyes. The church is meant to make visible to the world what the justice of God looks like. The church claims to be nothing less than the visible body of the slaughtered Lamb. “God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all” (Eph 1:20–23). This claim by the church to be the “fullness of him who fills all in all” should not be an arrogant claim to power, for the Christ that the church is to make visible to the world is the slaughtered Lamb, whose rule does not resemble Leviathan’s.

Because the church is the body of Christ, authority in the church is sacramental; this is a point that Yoder fails to fully appreciate. The Eucharist makes the church, as Henri de Lubac famously put it. This means that priestly authority is decisive in the body of Christ. Christ joins the offices of priest, prophet, and king, but the priestly office—in which the laity shares—is that which sacramentally constitutes the body of Christ. Earthly priesthood can never be absorbed by earthly kingship because earthly priesthood directly mediates the divine presence as earthly kingship cannot. Any direct royal claim of divine sanction that is not mediated by the church stumbles on the power of the Eucharist. The Eucharist, furthermore, is the foretaste on earth of the eternal rule of God, the eschatological consummation of the Kingdom of God, the banquet of the slaughtered Lamb.26 The slaughtered Lamb, however, does not offer protection in exchange for obedience, not in Hobbes’ sense anyway; the Lamb offers the crown of martyrdom.

TWO CITIES, TWO POWERS, TWO KINGDOMS

The typical Judeo-Christian splitting of political unity would take a detour with Constantine’s efforts to act as a universal bishop over the church. A blanket condemnation of “Constantinianism” as the decisive fall of the church is not very helpful, however. In the first place, such a condemnation does not take account of the movement of the Holy Spirit in history, and the possibility that God will write straight with crooked lines. If we are not to assume that the church simply went into wholesale apostasy following Constantine’s conversion, then we must see the experiment with Christian emperors as an attempt to bring the Gospel to the wholeness of life. In the second place, a blanket condemnation of Constantinianism fails to appreciate the continued efforts in the medieval period to maintain the typically Christian division of political unity.

Augustine’s image of two cities—the civitas terrena and the civitas Dei—preserves in a significant way the eschatological tension between the reign of God and earthly political rule. Augustine’s image of two cities assumes the paradigmatic nature of the Babylonian Exile; the experience of the civitas Dei in its earthly pilgrimage is that of the People of God in

26. On the importance of the Eucharist as foretaste of the Kingdom of God for the early church, see Wainwright, Eucharist and Eschatology.
Babylon. The two cities do not correspond to sacred/secular, private/public, or church/state dichotomies. There is no division of labor between things that are Caesar's and things that are God's. The two cities use the same temporal goods, but in different ways and for different ends. The two cities, therefore, are not two different spaces but two different sets of practices that correspond to two different times, the already and the not yet of the Kingdom of God. All belongs to God; Christ has already definitively triumphed and the earthly city with its libidus dominandi is passing away. The city of God recognizes that triumph. Resistance remains, and the Kingdom is not yet fully realized, but the not yet of the Kingdom has no ontological status. Although Augustine admitted the possibility and necessity of Christian participation in temporal government, the temporal was only a temporary necessity for the restraint of vice by vice. It had no status in nature, but was passing away before the triumph of Christ over the powers. The Roman republic and empire, says Augustine, had failed to be a true res publica. It is the city of God that is the true public, and the actual performance of the city of God in time is Israel and the church.

According to Augustine, "two cities were created by two kinds of love: the earthly city was created by self-love reaching the point of contempt for God, the Heavenly City by the love of God carried as far as contempt of self." By the end of the fifth century, however, Pope Gelasius I would write "Two there are... by which this world is ruled," a dictum that would come to be deeply influential in the medieval period. Rather than two distinct cities, there was now one city with two powers, priesthood and kingship. Rather than two ways of dealing with temporal goods, one acknowledging Christ's rule and the other seeking its own glory, there was now one city divided into two spheres of influence, and, as Gelasius says, "each sphere has a specially qualified and trained profession." The result of this division of labor was a more or less constant struggle for dominance between the civil and ecclesiastical powers during the medieval period. Ecclesiastical authorities claimed at least an indirect power and often a direct power over the civil authorities—the authority to name and depose rulers, especially—and their own system of courts. At the same time, the eschatological reference became muted, and the temporal power became a constant and natural feature of earthly life, rather than a temporary, stop-gap measure until the reign of Christ was fully realized.

The rise of sovereign territorial states largely put an end to the battles between civil and ecclesiastical power in many European countries, through the absorption of church power by the newly centralizing state. In the late fifteenth century, the civil authorities in England, Sweden, Denmark, and Germany tried—with only partial success—to limit clerical exemptions from civil courts, limit the power of ecclesiastical courts, and transfer church appointments, revenues, and lands to the civil rulers. As Quentin Skinner points out, the Reformation failed in France and Spain, where the monarchies had largely absorbed the church into their clientage systems, and therefore had an interest in maintaining the status quo. As Pope Julius III wrote to Henry II of France, "in the end, you are more than Pope in your kingdoms... I know no reason why you should wish to become schismatic." Where the Reformation succeeded was in England, Scandinavia, and many German principalities, where breaking with the Catholic Church meant that the church could be used to augment the power of the civil authorities. To cite one example, King Gustav Vasa welcomed the Reformation to Sweden in 1524 by transferring the receipt of tithes from the church to the crown. Three years later he appropriated the entire property of the church.

Martin Luther theorized this shift by denying that temporal and spiritual formed two bodies. To say so, as Luther wrote to the Christian nobility in Germany, was in effect to say that Christ himself has two bodies. Christ has only one body, with a division of labor within it that

27. Augustine, City of God, XIX, 26.
28. Augustine, City of God, XVIII, 54.
30. Although Augustine distinguishes between the visible and invisible churches, the chaff and the wheat, he does say that the city of God is the church in XVI, 3, and says in XX, 9 that "the Church even now is the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of heaven" because it contains the righteous within it.
31. Augustine, City of God, XIV, 28.
34. Skinner, Foundations of Modern Political Thought, 258–64.
corresponds to a division between temporal and spiritual, or external and internal, matters. Luther thereby denies that the church can have any legitimate power over temporal matters, or that the church as a body could split the original political unity. At the same time, the temporal power has direct jurisdiction over the church in temporal matters, and ecclesiastical courts are abolished. 38

Luther’s division between the two kingdoms is not a division between two bodies politic, but a division of labor that runs not only within each polity but through each individual. There exist two kingdoms or governments: one spiritual, by which the Holy Spirit produces true Christians, and the other temporal, by which the un-Christian are restrained and order is kept. “Both must be permitted to remain; the one to produce righteousness, the other to bring about external peace and prevent evil deeds. Neither one is sufficient in the world without the other.” 39 Augustine’s eschatological horizon has been removed; the temporal is a permanent feature of life on earth. Temporal government is necessary “for the world and the masses are and always will be un-Christian, even if they are baptized and Christian in name.” 40 The eschaton is thus indefinitely deferred. The split between the already and the not yet of the Kingdom of God is therefore not a political split, but a split that runs through every individual Christian. The typical Christian splitting of political unity has become a split between a Christian’s obedience to the Sermon on the Mount and his or her responsibility to the state. True Christians should turn the other cheek amongst themselves, but they must be willing to serve the state as soldiers and hangmen to ensure that external order will reign in the world. As Luther writes, “at one and the same time you satisfy God’s kingdom inwardly and the kingdom of the world outwardly. You suffer evil and injustice, and yet at the same time you punish evil and injustice.” 41 Luther’s distinction between inward and outward would be used eventually to support the privatization of religion as belief in liberal social orders.

38. Luther, “To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation,” 15-16.
40. Luther, “Temporal Authority,” 91.
41. Luther, “Temporal Authority,” 96.

THE CHURCH AND MODERN STATES

Carl Schmitt thought that the union of crown and altar in the early modern period brought only a temporary respite to the struggle of the state against indirect powers. According to Schmitt, the kind of distinction between inward and outward that Luther introduced led to the eventual dissolution of political unity. 42 For Luther, the state was God-ordained but remained essentially negative, a protective barrier to allow room for the real life of the Gospel. For Schmitt, this was insufficient.

But when public power wants to be only public, when state and confession drive inner belief into the private domain, then the soul of a people betakes itself on the ‘secret road’ that leads inward . . . At precisely the moment when the distinction between the inner and outer is recognized, the superiority of the inner over the outer and thereby that of the private over the public is resolved. Public power and force may be ever so completely and emphatically recognized and ever so loyally respected, but only as a public and only an external power, it is hollow and already dead from within. Such an earthly god has only the appearance and the simulacra of divinity on his side. 43

The division of labor between inward and outward, soul and body, is unworkable according to Schmitt, not because the church should resist loss of political relevance, but because the state must not and cannot surrender divinity to an interiorized faith. The state god is a jealous god, and it cannot remain contented with only the body; it must have the soul as well.

According to Schmitt, since the nineteenth century the modern liberal state has institutionalized the split between inward and outward, private and public, society and state, thus marking a resurgence of the indirect powers that the absolutist state had quelled. “The old adversaries, the ‘indirect’ powers of the church and of interest groups, reappeared in

42. Although Luther is mentioned as one of those who introduce the inner/outer distinction, Schmitt concentrates on Hobbes’ distinction between inner faith and outer conviction; the individual was entitled to preserve in his or her heart a private judgment contrary to the state’s public confession. In this public/private distinction, Schmitt saw the seeds of the Leviathan’s future destruction. Later thinkers like Spinoza would take Hobbes’ private freedom of thought and make it into the form-giving principle of the state; Schmitt, Leviathan in the State Theory, 57-59; 61.
43. Schmitt, Leviathan in the State Theory, 61.
that century as modern political parties, trade unions, social organizations, in a word as 'forces of society.' The state had become nothing more than a legal framework for the exterior regulation of society. The state in liberalism became a forum for contending interests among the forces of society. Where the theological image of the state has survived in liberalism, it is only as an immanent god: democracy identified the ruler and the ruled. Schmitt cites Tocqueville's observation that, in American democracy "the people hover above the entire political life of the state, just as God does above the world, as the cause and end of all things." This immanent god, however, bears only the simulacra of divinity.

In American-style liberalism, the immanent god of democracy has largely replaced the personal and transcendent element of sovereignty that Schmitt sought to rescue. Belief in a transcendent God is common in the United States, but liberalism aspires to separate that belief from the political life of the state, because sovereignty is derived from popular representation, and not from transcendent authority. American civil religion still invokes "God," but it is not the God of Jesus Christ. The god of American civil religion corresponds to what Durkheim says of religion: it is the divinization of an immanent social process. The church, meanwhile, continues to worship the God of Jesus Christ, but the inward/outward distinction has become a separation of "religion" from "politics." The church has not only come to accept the separation of church and state, but has also learned to separate "religion" from "politics," such that Christians do not tend to see the body of Christ as representing the political sovereignty of God. The body of Christ is rather seen as a "religious" body, and the political life of individual Christians is represented through the platforms of the political parties. The body of Christ does not compete for space with the state-body. The church opines on public matters, such as the question of what is a just war and what is not, but the crucial matter of decision is left to the state.

Liberalism has not been the only way of resolving the Christian splitting of political unity in the twentieth century. The so-called "conservative revolution" associated with Schmitt and others has sought a more robustly theological version of the state, with pernicious effects for the church. According to Schmitt:

All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts not only because of their historical development—in which they were transferred from theology to the theory of the state, whereby, for example, the omnipotent God became the omnipotent lawmaker—but also because of their systematic structure, the recognition of which is necessary for a sociological consideration of these concepts. The exception in jurisprudence is analogous to the miracle in theology. Only by recognizing this truth, thought Schmitt, can state sovereignty be put on a properly theological basis, and political authority take on more than just the simulacra of divinity. Only in this way could the inward/outward, private/public split be healed, and a unity of will and spirit be achieved in a decisive and personal sovereign. The church is to be rigidly excluded from the realm of the political; the church does not mediate between God and the state, but the state has direct access to divinity. Nevertheless, Christianity is not to be simply privatized. Schmitt was a Roman Catholic, and his early work Roman Catholicism and Political Form gave the church an essential legitimating function for the political, based on the church's "absolute realization of authority." However, fellow German Catholics such as Erik Peterson regarded Schmitt's later work as abandoning the true public character of the Gospel in deference to the unity of the state. With Schmitt's appropriation of Hobbes, he saw authority as not preceding the state, but as a creation of the state. "Because state power is supreme, it possesses divine character. But its omnipotence is not at all divinely derived: It is a product of human work and comes about because of a 'covenant' entered into by man." Divinity, in other words, is a characteristic of the state itself, and not a quality conferred by the same God the church serves. As Michael Hollerich notes, Schmitt's comments on Hobbes seem to apply to Schmitt himself: 'Hobbes' displacement of Christianity into marginal domains was accomplished with the intent of rendering harmless the effect of Christ in the social and political sphere;

44. Schmitt, Leviathan in the State Theory, 73.
45. Schmitt, Leviathan in the State Theory, 73–74.
46. Schmitt, Political Theology, 49–50.
47. Schmitt, Political Theology, 49.
48. Schmitt, Political Theology, 36.
49. Schmitt, Roman Catholicism, 18.
50. Schmitt, Leviathan in the State Theory, 33.
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of de-anarchizing Christianity, while leaving it in the background a certain legitimating function."\textsuperscript{51}

The interpretation of Schmitt's Catholicism is a matter of controversy;\textsuperscript{52} at any rate, I am not interested in Schmitt as such, but only insofar as he lays out the alternatives for a theology of the political so clearly. Schmitt interests me as well because the Swedish "Folkhemmet" of the mid-twentieth century has certain affinities with Schmitt's anti-liberalism. In social democracy in Sweden, resistance to the disintegrative effects of liberalism resulted in a strongly organic view of the social order and a personalization of state sovereignty. Indeed, the Leviathan appears in a different form in the work of Rudolf Kjellén, one of the architects of Swedish social democracy and a figure whom Ola Tunander calls "perhaps the most influential Scandinavian political scientist ever."\textsuperscript{53} In Kjellén we find a concern to counter a fliccied liberal individualism and legalism with a view of the state as a "living organism." The state was not a minimal legal framework meant to keep order, but was the expression of the whole life of a people. As Tunander puts it, Kjellén's "organic view of the state was an attempt to regard the state as an independent object of study with its own dynamic and logic, power and will, an organic unity of land and people, an organism with body and soul, a personality on the international stage."\textsuperscript{54} Kjellén analyzed the way that people spoke of corporate entities like "Germany" and "England" acting, judging, fighting, parenting, and so on. He thought it most realistic to speak of the state not merely as a legal framework, but as a corporate body—Mother Sweden or Uncle Sam—striding across the international stage. The state-body was an organic unity of land and people, a combination of geo-politics and ethno-politics. In this sense, nation-states were natural, and land and people had a shaping influence on the "cultural" side of the state, its governemental politics. Ethno-politics is not biologically fixed and stagnant, however, but is always dynamic. As a living organism, the state is itself a "force and will" that is not bound by nature or by legality.\textsuperscript{55} In Kjellén we meet some of the same decisionism, therefore, that is commonly associated with Schmitt and other authors of the so-called "conservative revolution." Both Tunander and Göran Dahl have remarked on the similarity of Kjellén's project with that of Schmitt.\textsuperscript{56}

The type of integrative nationalism found in Kjellén was mediated to the church in Sweden by such figures as Johan Alfred Eklund, who collaborated with Kjellén on the conservative journal Det nya Sverige (The New Sweden). For Eklund the key triumph of the Reformation was the integrated wholeness of Swedish life: "the government of the church and the state now coincide," and "the world of the spiritual life has accordingly become one."\textsuperscript{57} In Eklund's thought, Sweden and its church were one, a collective personality. The nation-church, or folk church, served as the soul of the state, which derived its legitimacy from the nation-church. Eklund was suspicious of the liberal ideas of neutrality, pluralism, and secularity, because they threatened to drive a wedge between "the most intimate union" of church and nation.\textsuperscript{58}

Kjell Blückert's book The Church as Nation has detailed how the church in Sweden assimilated nationalist discourse in the early twentieth century. With the rise of abstract individual subjects, disembodied relationships, and larger communities of communicating strangers in the 19th century, nationalism took on an integrative function that had previously belonged to the church. In the transition from a theocratic monarchy to a parliamentary democracy in the 19th century, the state lost its divine ontological status, church hegemony was questioned, and the people or nation became the ultimate point of reference. For figures like Eklund, "The nation became an ecclesial means to restore an ideal

\textsuperscript{51} Hollerich, "Carl Schmitt." The internal quote is from Barbara Nichtweiss's study of Erik Peterson.

\textsuperscript{52} Heinrich Mei\ss l's The Lesson of Carl Schmitt: Four Chapters on the Distinction between Political Theology and Political Philosophy makes a case for Schmitt's Catholicism having a constitutive effect on his political thought. As Michael Hollerich points out, however, Schmitt's own fellow Catholics thought otherwise; see Hollerich, Carl Schmitt, 118–20. Schmitt's personal relationship with the Catholic Church was strained by the Church's refusal to annul his first marriage in the 1920s.

\textsuperscript{53} Tunander, "Swedish-German geopolitics," 431.

\textsuperscript{54} Tunander, "Swedish-German geopolitics," 453.

\textsuperscript{55} Tunander, "Swedish-German geopolitics," 453–58.

\textsuperscript{56} Tunander is primarily concerned to show how some of Schmitt's geopolitical concerns—especially his idea of a European Grossraum—are anticipated in Kjellén. Göran Dahl makes the connection between Schmitt and Kjellén in his article "Will 'The Other God' Fail Again? On the Possible Return of the Conservative Revolution," 42–43.

\textsuperscript{57} Eklund, Andelivet i Sveriges kyrka, 37, 69, quoted in Blückert, Church as Nation, 175.

\textsuperscript{58} Blückert, Church as Nation, 192–98.
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unity in society, a unity that should be incarnated, or at least summed up, by the church." The danger, however, is that the church would no longer legitimize the common values of the society, but would be legitimized by them. The national church adopted the concept "folk church" as a way to "regain solidarity from the incarnate people." The nation and nation-state would come to replace the church as the bearer of unity. As Blückert puts it, nation as church would come to replace church as nation. "The change is caught in the following illuminating observation: Earlier the church had sacraments in the society, now the church depicts itself as a sacrament for the society."

After World War II, the more overt nationalism became muted, and "society" and "state" more often replaced "nation" as the transcendent point of reference. Nevertheless, the Swedish model of "Folkhemmet" and its attendant folk church continued the quest for wholeness. Some have noticed a resemblance of the Swedish model with Schmitt's attempts to counter the fissiparous effects of liberalism. One author has claimed "The so-called Swedish model was not only the most successful implementation of the ideology of the Conservative Revolution, but also the world's most advanced implementation of a corporatist state." This seems like an odd claim, in that the Swedish model is often associated with the left instead of the right. Nevertheless, an issue of the Swedish journal Res Publica has been dedicated to the influence of Schmitt and the other theoreticians of the German "Conservative Revolution" in Scandinavia. There does not seem to be a lot of evidence of direct influence of Schmitt in Sweden. There are, however, certain homologies between Schmitt's thought and the "Folkhemmet": anti-liberalism, decisionist legal theory, emphasis on national identity, a strong corporatist state, and the personalization of sovereignty. Although the architects of the post-World War II Swedish model shunned "metaphysics" and sought to base their construction of society on a scientific basis, Schmitt would no doubt be able to recognize the "Folkhemmet" as one more secularized theological concept, or, more acutely, a covertly theological concept awaiting full articulation.

My concern is not with Schmitt as such, but with the fate of the typically Christian division of political unity within a state that has such aspirations to wholeness. What happens to the body of Christ when it is incorporated into a state-body such as that envisioned in the Swedish model? The constitution of the church as a "folk church" is meant to resist the kind of privatization to which liberalism aspires. The church remains concerned with the whole of Swedish life. But is the church simultaneously threatened with "rendering harmless the effect of Christ in the social and political sphere"? Does the de-anarchizing of Christianity leave it only "a certain legitimating function" within the state?

The story of the church's adaptation to the welfare state is told in different ways. One way is to describe the welfare state as simply the outworking of the Gospel imperative to form community and care for the weakest members. Bishop Gunnar Stålsett of Oslo has written "The texture of the Nordic welfare state is unambiguously Christian." In a similar vein, the former chairman of the Danish parliament, Erling Olsen, said that "the very idea of the welfare state is the secularized idea of 'love your neighbor' in Christianity." I am sure that similar sentiments could be found expressed in the Swedish context. Urban Claesson's study of Church of Sweden pastor and Social Democratic member of Parliament Harald Hallén, for example, shows how Hallén interpreted the Kingdom of God in terms of the creation of a righteous socialist society. The story of the church's encounter with the welfare state, however, can also be told in a more melancholy way. As Björn Ryman tells it, optimism about the Christianization of society gave way in the post-World War II period to fears about the secularization of the church. As Ryman and Peter Lodberg point out as well, the welfare state has had a tendency to increase individualism rather than organic solidarity. With each person able to rely directly on the state, older forms of communal solidarity have

59. Blückert, Church as Nation, 21; also 142-43.
60. Blückert, Church as Nation, 143.
61. Blückert, Church as Nation, 143.
63. The issue is "Tema Konservativ revolution," Res Publica 23 (June 1993).
64. As Arne Rasmusson writes "In the 1920s to the 1960s everyone seemed to accuse everyone else of being 'metaphysical.' There was an agreement that metaphysics was a bad thing, but there was no agreement about what it was"; Rasmusson, A Century of

Swedish Theology," 131.
65. Stålsett, "Foreword," x.
67. Claesson, Folkhemmets kyrka.
been replaced or weakened. The church as a common social network has suffered as a result.69

The ecclesiological question that arises in this context is whether the church can rely on the state-body to carry its corporal presence into the world, or whether, instead, the church must be a social—even political—body in its own right, the body of Christ. In other words, the question of the church’s encounter with the welfare state is never simply a matter of identifying which social values are truly Christian and judging whether or not they are put into practice by the state. For example, “take care of the neighbor,” “equality,” “personal freedom” and so on are often identified as Christian values, and then the state is judged on these criteria. But the question cannot simply be one of abstract values; it must be a question of concrete social bodies. It is always an ecclesiological question, a question of what kind of social bodies are formed and how authority is mediated through those bodies. The church cannot content itself with being the putative soul of society, while delegating its body to the nation-state. Schmitt rightly implied that the state cannot content itself with the body; it must have the soul as well.

Schmitt was also correct when he said that the key question of church/state relations is “Who decides?” In the United States, we have seen how, in the face of strenuous opposition to the launch of the Iraq War in 2003 by most major church leaders, most Christians were content to let the President decide what counts as a just war. While the Pope, through his envoy to the U.S., called the upcoming war “illegal” and “unjust,”70 Catholic conservatives were calling for Catholics to leave the decision to George W. Bush.71 Catholics in the military, with few exceptions, accepted the president’s judgment. The distinction between religion and politics allows American Catholics to consider the opinion of the church on the war, but claim that the crucial decision is beyond the church’s area of competence. Confidence in the immanent sovereignty of a democratically-elected government effectively negates the sovereignty of Jesus Christ in the realm of the political.

69. Lodberg and Rymar, “Church and Society,” 118–19.
71. Weigel, “The Just War Case for the War,” 7–10 and Novak, “War to Topple Saddam is a Moral Obligation.”

In Sweden, the homogeneity of the “Folkhemmet” has given way to a more diverse population, and economic liberalism has made inroads. Ecclesiologically, the separation of church and state in 2000 has opened a space to reconfigure the church as a distinct body, and allow the church to be an independent channel of Christ’s politics. The question of “Who decides?” remains most acutely, perhaps, in questions about the way that church leaders are elected, and the role that political parties play in those elections.

I have limited specific knowledge about the challenges facing the church in Sweden. I do think, however, that the separation of church and state allows for some creative rethinking about separation and wholeness. On the one hand, the church is called, I think, to live its vocation as the unsettling political presence of Christ’s rule in a world that desperately needs the good news that the Kingdom of God has already begun. The church needs to live out the politics of Jesus Christ in ways that will sometimes be in tension with the politics of the world. Gerhard Lohfink says it well:

The Church could not be the space for redemption and liberation opened by Christ if it were unworlidy and saw itself simply as an agency for conveying truth. It must not surrender more and more of its tasks to the state so that, in the end, it is reduced to a watered-down separate department of society responsible only for the rites of passage and marginal situations, or acts as guarantor of the hope for life beyond. The church is about the wholeness of everything there is.72

On the other hand, the church’s vocation to wholeness means that it cannot become a separate enclave that stands apart from and judges the world from without. The very fact that Christ’s rule is cosmic means that the Holy Spirit of Christ blows freely outside the boundaries of the church, and all that is good and true and beautiful there may be held up by the church and made the material for the one all-embracing cosmic Eucharist. At the same time, the church is sinful, and stands under Christ’s judgment. But we cannot therefore refuse to avail ourselves of Christ’s judgment in the sacraments. To put ourselves under the judgment of the Eucharist is to see political questions in the light of the Kingdom of God, to see, that is, that it is the slaughtered Lamb who rules, and that sovereignty is servanthood.

72. Lohfink, Does God Need the Church?, 290.
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