

## The Power of the Principled Pluralist Perspective

Jason Lee

After reading the five different perspectives presented in the book *Church, State, and Public Justice: Five Views*, I agree most with the principled pluralist perspective because I feel that this view places the mission and authority of the church over that of the purpose of government although Christians are told to submit to the powers of government, the principled pluralist perspective still considers God's law and mandates above that policies of human law and they are to follow the government as long as there is no contradiction to God's law, and that the government is operating out of the best interests of the people it serves where additionally, I believe that the government isn't something that has developed out of a natural need to effectively and efficiently establish laws and policies that reflect a common good then ideally, governments will make these policies that work in tandem with the church. Thus, citizens may not necessarily be Christians, but it is up to the government to ensure each citizen can enjoy the blessings of common grace.

Principled Pluralists ain't not like the view that redemption is more than just a personal process; the sacrifice of jesus christ is society. In the essay written for this view, he writes, As redeemed people work to reconcile structures of public authority to their right condition, such entities may themselves become agents of redemption (not in terms of salvation but of transformation) in the society and world at large, fulfilling their original purpose by bringing about a right ordering of human interrelationships<sup>1</sup>. The focus of the church, then, should be on shaping the philosophies and ethical understanding of each citizen in the nation. Ideally, citizens

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<sup>1</sup> Kemeny 2007, 110 [Author(s), "Title of Essay" in *Church, State, and Public Justice: Five Views* (Publishing City: Publisher, Copyright Date), citation page.]

will shape the laws and policies of the government in ways that will support the redemption of humanity.

This is applies not to government, but all areas of life: Kuyper argued that society was made up of various spheres (such as the family, business and education), and these spheres derived their authority neither from the church nor the state but directly from God, to whom they are ultimately accountable (Kemeny 2007, 112).

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This means that everything falls under the authority of God. This is the heart of the principled pluralist view: all things are for the service and worship of God, and are agents for His redemption of humanity. The focus is not on institutions and systems but the people that are a part of them.

The catholic perspective criticizes this view for not addressing how the poor fit into this view, protecting the common good, and applications for how the government is an agent of common grace. My response to all three is found in the core of principled pluralism: all things are agents for redemption. Thus, governments should use their power to provide channels and opportunities for the poor to meet their needs. This means government programs should equip the poor to contribute to society through education, not simply feed them or give them handouts. Additionally, the view that a government should preserve common grace means that governments should use their power to prevent the corruption of common good. This is also a response to the third issue: governments are an agent of common grace by regulating and enforcing rules that allow all people to enjoy the common blessings of God, such as clean air and water.

The classical separation view points out that biblical messages and verses are not specific about government and its role in society. Thus, it should not be considered an agent of God's

will. “For me, the better way is to recognize that biblical texts are woefully inadequate for the task. I think the New Testament contains none at all. The better method is to approach the subject rationally since God has given us no binding prescriptions” (Kemeny 2007, 134). Still, to approach the subject rationally means that there can be examples that establish some basic principles for people to uphold. The point of government is that it is a collective body that makes laws all people agree to in order to participate in the social realm it governs. Thus, Christians are a part of that body and the government, and should be involved in shaping the policies of the government.

The Anabaptist and the Social Justice views are the least critical. The Anabaptist perspective only finds offense that the views are “uniquely Reformed”, claiming that many of these ideas are shared by Anabaptists (Kemeny 2007, 136). The Social Justice view believes that there is not enough explicit explanation about where common grace begins and ends. This is a minor criticism against the views of principled pluralism; social justice points out policies that it supports because they advocate for what social justice views as basic needs and responsibilities of a government to provide for its citizens. I do not think these policies are against principled pluralism. Policies are an expression of the philosophies that lie behind them. Principled pluralism would support healthcare and option for the poor when it is part of issues that regard common grace and good. The government is a part of all things that serve as agents of redemption for God, which suggest that policies set by the government will serve this purpose.

While all five views are excellent evaluations of the roles of church, state, and public justice in society, principled pluralism is most concerned with fundamental philosophies and integrating theology into how the government works. Classical separation believes that the government and church should have no interaction, and are kept separate to prevent the church

from being manipulated or influenced by the government. The Catholic perspective is not as extreme, but treats the government and **cherch** only at institutional levels. Anabaptist and social justice views are too focused on expressions; they do not directly contradict principled pluralism, but are expression of its philosophies and ideals. Thus, principled pluralism is the most cohesive and consistent view of the presented perspectives.

[It's also super important to pray a lot for good government.]

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*Cherch, state, and public justice: five views.*

*History of Israel*

*Survey of the Old Testament*

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Each reference should have the following information with hanging indent as needed in alphabetical order by last name:

Last name, first name of author(s). *Title of Book/Essay/Article*. Publication City: Publisher, Copyright date.