



CITIZENS

OF

HEAVEN



Unhealthy Church-State Dynamics

1. Totalitarianism
2. Theocracy
3. Isolationism
4. Constantinianism



The Temptation

- Bow Down
- Bow Up
- Bow Out



The background features a stylized sunburst with rays in shades of blue and white. In the foreground, there is a large, red, abstract figure that resembles a person or a creature, possibly a bull or a similar animal, with a white shape on its head. The overall style is graphic and modern.

How should Christians relate to government?

¹ Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

Romans 13:1-2 ESV



³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

Romans 13:3-4 ESV



⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷ Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

Romans 13:5–7 ESV



The Christian & Government

I. The Origin of Government



I. The Origin of Government

- a. God sovereignly institutes all governments and authorities.



²¹ He changes times and seasons;
he removes kings and sets up kings;
he gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to those who have understanding;

Daniel 2:21 ESV



¹The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord;
he turns it wherever he will

Proverbs 21:1 ESV



¹¹ Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.

John 19:11 ESV



Implications

1. God's sovereignty doesn't mean he endorses evil



Implications

1. God's sovereignty doesn't mean he endorses evil
2. Submission doesn't mean approval



¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Romans 12:18 ESV



Implications

1. God's sovereignty doesn't mean he endorses evil
2. Submission doesn't mean approval
3. When laws contradict God's commands, civil disobedience is necessary



The Christian & Government

- I. The Origin of Government
- II. The Purpose of Government



II. The Purpose of Government

a. Bring Order



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Romans 13:3-4 ESV



⁶ In those days there was **no king in Israel**. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

Judges 17:6 ESV



“Government is a form of common grace instituted by God where God uses human rulers to provide justice, order, and civility for the peoples governed.”

Michael Bird



II. The Purpose of Government

- a. Bring Order
- b. Promote Good



II. The Purpose of Government

- a. Bring Order
- b. Promote Good
- c. Punish Evil



¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “**Vengeance is mine**, I will repay, says the Lord.”

Romans 12:19 ESV



The Christian & Government

- I. The Origin of Government
- II. The Purpose of Government
- III. The Christian's Relationship to Government



III. The Christian's Relationship to Government

a. Be subject



¹³ **Be subject for the Lord's sake** to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good

1 Peter 2:13-14 ESV



Be Subject

1. To Avoid God's Wrath
2. As a Matter of Conscience



Be Subject

1. To Avoid God's Wrath
2. As a Matter of Conscience
3. Never at all cost



²¹ ...Therefore **render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's**, and to God the things that are God's.

Matthew 22:21 ESV



Whenever laws are enacted which contradict God's law, civil disobedience becomes a Christian duty

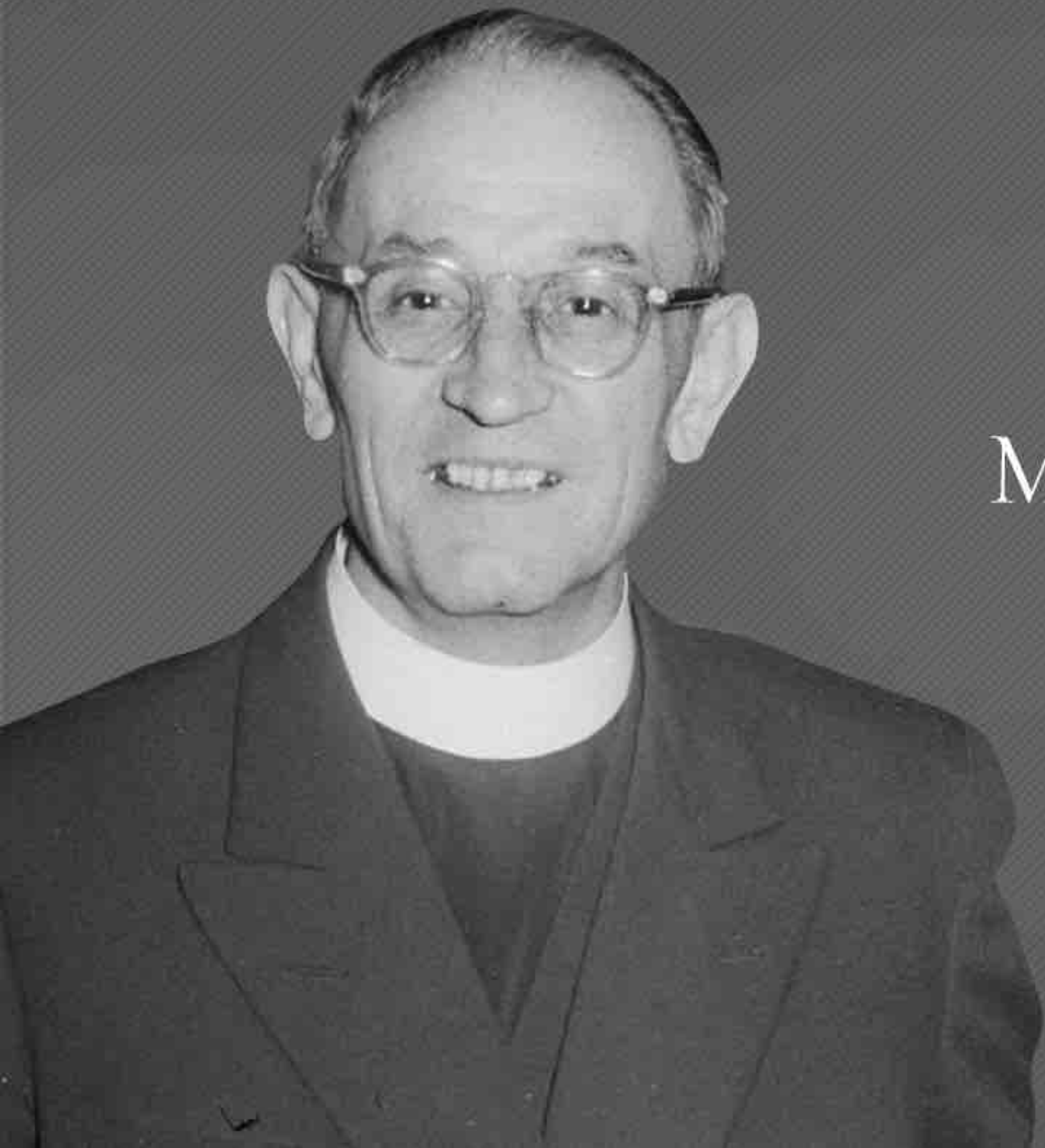
John Stott



²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, '**We must obey God rather than men.**'

Acts 5:29 ESV





MARTIN NIEMÖLLER

1892-1984

III. The Christian's Relationship to Government

- a. Be subject
- b. Be a good citizen



Be a Good Citizen

1. Respect and honor



Be a Good Citizen

1. Respect and honor
2. Pray for those in Authority



¹ First of all, then, I urge that **supplications, prayers, intercessions,** and thanksgivings be made for all people, ² **for kings and all who are in high positions,** that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 ESV



Be a Good Citizen

1. Respect and honor
2. Pray for those in Authority
3. Do Good



⁴ “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶ Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷ But **seek the welfare of the city** where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare

Jeremiah 29:4–7 ESV



Be a Good Citizen

1. Respect and honor
2. Pray for those in Authority
3. Do Good
4. Engage in Politics Biblically and Shrewdly



Engage in Politics Biblically & Shrewdly

- Support the government that best represents God's principles and values.



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- Oppose unjust laws and work to change them when possible.



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- Oppose unjust laws and work to change them when possible.
- In a democratic republic, we have the privilege to use our voice and vote to represent God's values in our government.
- Vote, as your conscience allows, for the government that best promotes human flourishing.



Be a Good Citizen

1. Respect and honor
2. Pray for those in Authority
3. Do Good
4. Engage in Politics Biblically and Shrewdly
5. Remember your true citizenship



²⁰ But **our citizenship is in heaven**, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Philippians 3:20 ESV



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How should Christians relate to government?



Faithful Prophetic Presence