

A BOOK REPORT

“POLITICS after CHRISTENDOM/Political Theology In A Fractured World”

Title/Name of Book: “Politics after Christendom/Political Theology In A Fractured World”

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Initial Impressions: Wow! Did I really agree to read this book, much less review it? I ask this question, not with a desire to be humorous, but with the intention of warning a potential reader of this book that, if he or she elects to acquire and read and really study this book, then he or she needs to be prepared to: 1) take a lot of time and set aside numerous occasions to really read and study this book (and it deserves very serious study), and 2) engage in some real intellectual gymnastics as he or she reads along in this book, and 3) have his or her political or biblical-theological beliefs or understandings be seriously challenged.

This book is anything but an easy read. It presents tough going. As I read it I asked myself whether the author is just engaged in some wholly theoretical, academic wool gathering or is truly presenting a political theology for Christians who are seeking to understand what they, as Christians, should expect from their civil/secular governments and governmental institutions, or whether or to what extent they should seek to influence or change these governments and institutions. In other words, as one wades through this book is he or she just going to receive some pure academic theological-political theory or is he or she going to boil down what he or she has read into a truly practical understanding as to how modern day Christians should view their governments and how they should hold realistic, theologically appropriate expectations for such governments. I believe that the true “readers” of this book, meaning those who read it carefully over numerous sittings, and who carefully think about and hopefully discuss with others what they have read will come to the conclusion that this book presents a very theologically sound foundation for careful Christian thought about the roles of our civil governments, and about what we should reasonably expect from those governments. So I endorse this book, but I do so with the admonition to our readers that this book is not a “soft read”. It is a “hard read”. It requires time, thought, meditation and really discussion among its readers. In the end you, the reader, might not agree with the author’s conclusions but you will find that by carefully considering his statements of, and arguments for those conclusions you will be provided with a greater understanding of how to approach Scripture (not just with political questions in mind but with a greater understanding of the entirety of Scripture in mind) and with a better grounding for approaching the very important question which American Christians confront today, that being: “To What Extent Should We Seek to Influence our Government and Have It Adopt and Impose Christian Morality and Ethics on All Citizens?”.

Have you ever considered the deep divide that exists between some “Christian Influencers” if you will, who advocate that the role of Christians and of the Church is to “seek to take control of our institutions, including our business entities and our governments, and to bring them “back to true Christian Morality and Ethics” and other “Christian influencers” or Philosophers or Theologians who would hold that the world is going to pot and is doomed and is engaged in incurable Godlessness (to wit, so called “Dispensationalists”) and that the role of Christians and the Church is to withdraw from our Godless society and to seek to evangelize and save those lost souls who can be saved? Is Jerry Falwell right in his post-millennial views which advocate for the “silent majority” and for Christians to retake control of their government, or is a more temperate view to the effect that Christians should recognize that there are correct roles for the government which might well not embrace all so called “Christian Morality” the correct view? Well our author seeks to provide a theological, Biblically based position for Christians, and their leaders and for Christian politicians by which they can seek to approach these questions. I think that, perhaps, the best summary of what one will ultimately find in this book appears in the summary of its contents that appears on the back cover of the book, where the writer of that summary states: *“Many Christians today contend that they should seek to redeem or transform their political communities in anticipation of Christ’s coming kingdom. ‘Politics after Christendom’ promotes a different view. Because God has instituted and rules over political communities, Christians should be active in them, promoting their welfare, yet they do not attain the kingdom within such communities. To use the language of Scripture, Christians are sojourners and exiles in their political communities.”*

If you want to find in this book support for what we today classify as “conservative” politics or as “liberal” or “progressive” politics, then you are going to be sorely disappointed by what you read. Neither Christian Republicans nor Christian Democrats will find theological support for their political positions of today in this book. What the reader will find is a biblically based foundation from which political, governmental issues can be approached.

So, with the admonitions set forth above I endorse this book for Christians who choose to engage in the field of politics, and for Christian pastors and leaders who are seeking to lead other Christians in understanding the ways in which they should approach and have expectations for their civil governments.

Summary of the Book’s Contents/What is the Author Doing With What the Author is Saying?:

It is difficult, if not impossible for someone, particularly a non-academic someone like myself, to appropriately summarize the contents of this book. I understand that many readers like to approach a book such as this one by just reading parts of it, such as the Introduction and the Conclusion and Table of Contents, and by then concluding that they have a good understanding of the essential contents of the book. Sorry but that approach will not work with this book. You have to read it in multiple sittings, and you have to try to digest it and meditate on its contents, and then, very probably, you have to go back and review that which you have read. So a fair summary of the book’s contents is not attainable. That said, I do want Christians who are considering the field of politics, and Christian leaders who need to provide some guidance

for the Christians they are entrusted to lead as to how they should approach today's politics and the roles of Christians as to their governments to read this book. They need to read it and digest it, and keep it available in order to provide continual guidance as they approach their roles in dealing with (and helping others deal with) political issues in this hugely divided, fractured political environment. So I will do my inadequate best to provide some summary of this book's contents which, hopefully, will cause those who should read it to read it. I am going to set forth this summary in my words, which are not necessarily the words of the author but which, at least in my understanding, capture what I believe the author's main thesis to be. So here is my summary:

"In the beginning..." (Sorry to use this phrase) God, an active, working, creative God, as a part of His actions of creation made man in the image and likeness of God in order to "let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image....male and female He created them....and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it...' (Gen. 1:26-31) So, in the beginning, God created man (male and female) to increase their numbers in order to fill the earth, and in order to be God's Imagers, God's representatives in going forward with God's creative work for the world, all under the supervision of God. But man blew it. Man decided through the original male and female to sort of "go it alone", and to determine how they would proceed without God's direction as to what is good or bad, or what is good or evil. So things really went badly for God's creation, particularly for mankind, which allowed evil to dominate the affairs of mankind. Therefore, while the biblical descriptions of the circumstances and events which occurred between the Fall, the failure of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3) and Noah and the Flood (Gen. 6) are somewhat sketchy if you will, it is apparent that God was extremely disappointed in the crown of His creative activity (meaning mankind) and that He, in effect, decided to "start over" or "start anew." In starting anew God made the first of the important biblical covenants when Noah and his family came out of the ark and made sacrifices to God and worshiped God. This covenant, which the author refers to as "the Noahic Covenant" appears in Genesis 9 where God made a covenant with "all life on the earth" (Gen. 9:17) that He would never again destroy the earth nor cut off all life by a flood, with the obligations, if you will, of Noah and his descendants (meaning mankind) to be (much as was stated in Gen. 1: 26-31) "... fruitful and to increase in number and fill the earth..." (Gen. 9: 1), with "...everything that lives and moves (to be) food for you..." (but you must not eat meat that has lifeblood still in it). The key passages of the Noahic Covenant of Genesis 9 being, in the author's view, those of Genesis 9: 4-7, to the effect that Noah and his sons and descendants were to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and that God would demand an accounting from each man "...for the life of his fellow man, (with) whoever sheds the blood of a man by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God has God made man..." (Gen. 9:4-8) In the author's view the Noahic Covenant of Genesis 9 provided for God's establishment of, and for the biblical legitimacy of civil governments, while also setting the boundaries for the activities of such governments.

The author sets forth, in substantial detail, his arguments that the Noahic Covenant, as a modification of and read in conjunction with what he sometimes refers to as the "Creation

Covenant” of Genesis 1:22-31 (i.e. the creation of man and mankind’s charge to rule the fill and subdue the earth, in effect continuing God’s creative activity as to the earth, as God’s Imagers/representatives, under God’s supervision) and as being considered and applied in conjunction with the “Natural Law” (which is explained, below, to some extent) is the biblical covenant which provides for God’s establishment of civil governments and for the legitimacy of civil governments. In explaining this position, the author uses what he refers to as a “Covenantal approach to the Narrative of Scripture.” In fact, a substantial part of the author’s book provides for the author’s reasons for reaching his conclusion that the Noahic Covenant, and Genesis 9, together with the “Natural Law” establish the theological essence for the establishment of civil governments and for their obligations and limitations. In establishing such reasons, the author first describes his general approach to the Scriptural Narrative, an approach which he believes helps to provide the best understanding of Scripture. That approach is the “Covenantal approach”. The covenants made by God, as described in Scripture (if we disregard what some refer to as the “Creation Covenant” or the “Social Command” or by other terminology, of Genesis 1:31 (i.e. to be fruitful and fill the earth and subdue it, etc.) are *The Noahic Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and the New Covenant of the New Testament*. The author extensively reviews each of these Covenants and with extensive reasoning comes to the conclusion that the Noahic Covenant remains in place and has not been altered by the others of such Covenants, and that it continues to provide the essential grounding for a Christian, biblically based understanding of the roles of civil governments and for the expectations which Christians should have for such governments.

The author declares that biblically understood civil government:

- 1) Is *legitimate*, and is empowered by God to carry out its proper work, such work being to further the goals outlined by the non-specific requirements of the Noahic Covenant;
- 2) Is *provisional*, meaning that it is not permanent, but is temporary being set in place for a limited time and purpose until something greater arises, that something greater being the eschatological government and society established by God at the eschaton;
- 3) Is *accountable*, meaning accountable to God and His standards of Justice (and while not stated until later in his book, these “standards of justice” are largely established by the Natural Law as construed and applied by the “wisdom” of those in authority and of societies in general, as acquired over time);
- 4) Must be *common* in that civil governments are ordained by God to wield authority in political communities for the benefit of the human race in common, meaning for the diverse, plural peoples of a political community, who will include people of every ethnicity, religion and custom.

These four requirements for a civil government are the ones by which, the author concludes, every civil government of every political community (whether that be a municipality, district, state, nation, etc.) is established and pursuant to which its roles are to be defined.

Civil governments are ordained by God in order to preserve God’s creation, and to provide an environment in which God’s *Holy Communities and God’s people* can exist. “Political Communities” are to be distinguished from “Holy Communities”, in that the governments of Political Communities (i.e. the communities of mankind in general) are

established pursuant to the Noahic Covenant while the Holy Communities (i.e. initially Israel and its people and then the Church established by Jesus) are established and governed by the other biblical covenants. That is to say that, in the author's view the Jewish nation, a Holy Community, was established by the Abrahamic Covenant and was subject to the Mosaic Covenant, whereas the civil governments which govern political communities made up of people of every faith and non-faith and of every type, as opposed to people set aside by or to God, are ordained by the Noahic Covenant, with the Church, a Holy Community of only God's people who have faith in Jesus Christ, being established pursuant to the New Covenants of the New Testament. In effect God today governs His creation by way of what the author refers to as "two Kingdoms", the Kingdom of all peoples of every faith and non-faith and of every persuasion, and the Kingdom of God, which is now the Church. Christians, therefore, owe allegiance to two kingdoms, the kingdom of their political community, and the Kingdom of God, the Church. However, their allegiance to the one Kingdom, the Kingdom of their political community and its civil government is tempered by their obligations to God and His Kingdom, the Church. It is, therefore, the author's conclusion that Christians can be fairly characterized as being *sojourners and exiles* in their political communities and as being subject to their civil governments. They cannot fairly (or pursuant to God's biblical mandate of His Noahic Covenant) look to their civil governments to establish God's perfect morality or His perfect relationships among people. They cannot look to their civil governments to establish *perfection*. That is not the biblically established role of a civil government. For a *perfect world*, if you will, Christians must look to God and His Kingdom and the perfect world He will establish at the eschaton. We are truly exiles in this highly imperfect world, which is subject to the consequences of sin, and we cannot expect its civil governments to provide perfection. In fact our author would conclude that God has not ordained civil governments, which are ordained by him and which are biblically legitimate, in order to impose Christian morality (or, formerly, morality as outlined in the Mosaic Law) on the inhabitants of political communities. God's mandate for civil governments, the one which the author finds in the Noahic Covenant, is one which He has established in order to provide for the *preservation* of His creation, not for His desired *perfection* of that creation. That perfection will come at the eschaton, when God's perfect rule is established by Him.

So the author rejects the idea "...that legitimate political institutions should be redemptively transformed and can thereby manifest the new-creation kingdom...(as) civil government and other human institutions can be legitimate without having to bear such an eschatological burden." Christians should, therefore, embrace the *legitimacy of, the provisionality of (meaning the temporary mandate for), the accountability to God of, and the need for commonality of political civil governments*. While they are to actively participate in their civil governments, they are to be *patient sojourners* in such governments, from which they cannot expect perfection and which they must recognize are to be governments established for the good of a plurality of people of many different religions and cultures.

So what can Christians legitimately expect of, or require from their governments, if not an enforcement of that which we Christians might believe to be Christian Morality? At this point in the author's extended book he does get into a lot of political, albeit theologically political thinking. For that reason I am a reluctant to go into much detail about what the author's views as

to the appropriate roles, under the Noahic Covenant and Natural Law, of civil governments and their institutions as I fear that some readers of this Review, who hold strong political views, might be turned off to the idea of even reading this book. For such a situation to occur would be unfortunate because, as noted above, the author does not endorse (and in fact would be critical of) the basic political philosophies of the modern day Republican and Democratic parties. I don't think that our author is "political" from a political party point of view. He is simply trying to state (and he does so in a marvelous manner by way of extensive discussion which is heavily supported by biblical references and by citations to the works of other learned people) a basic, theological position for what he would submit is a "Christian Political Theology" which should biblically guide Christians who are engaged in politics or who are seeking to help other Christians to deal with today's political discourse (which is heated to say the least). Frankly, I am persuaded by the author's views, but that does not mean that you have to be so persuaded. That said, if you have any reasonably strong interest in trying to determine just what "Christian Politics" might look like, you need to read this book, and, hopefully, discuss it with others who have read it.

With these expressions of my concerns let me make a very limited attempt to set forth some of the author's more important assertions. They are:

1) Basic Requirements of the Noahic Covenant: The Noahic Covenant obviously does not set forth a detailed set of rules for or detailed guidelines for what God's ordained civil governments should seek to achieve. The author proposes that such Covenant requires that:

-humans be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and provide for the nurturing and upbringing and teaching in wisdom of children,

-humans provide, individually and in community with others, for food, shelter and basic needs of subsistence,

-humans rule over the earth and its creatures,

-humans provide for justice among its people, particularly including retributive justice as generally described by the phrase "whoever sheds the blood of man by man his blood shall be shed" (meaning that God has delegated His justice administration to man).

2) Conforming with Noahic Covenant Requires the Formation of Human Institutions: The performance of these functions of humans and of their civil governments requires that several types of institutions or entities come into existence since "...procreation, spreading throughout the earth, and establishing a justice system are obviously not individual endeavors... "

Furthermore, "...procuring and preparing food usually involves cooperation too, and cooperation is necessary to meet the broader range of humanity's material needs, including housing, clothing and medical care..... ." "Since the Noahic covenant thus requires communal activity the question arises as to how this cooperation and coordination should occur in a way consistent with the Noahic ethic..... .One critical part of the answer to this must be that people form *institutions* and *associations*.... ." Such institutions and associations include:

-*Familial* institutions, which will provide for the care, nurturing, training and education of children, which, obviously, will include families but also will include schools and other entities which provide for a part of these familial functions.

-*Enterprise* institutions or associations which will coordinate human efforts in exploring, farming, building and technological innovation, and which develop a variety of intellectual disciplines that promote such activities.

-*Judicial* institutions which strive to fulfill the *justice* portion of the Noahic covenant.

-*Authority structures* or institutions which will govern and coordinate the activities of the others of these institutions and of people generally since there must be some way to cause people who have many and varied diverse opinions, insights and motives to act, in some respects, as one in order that the common good can emerge.

3) How Does God Communicate the Requirements of Morality of the Noahic Covenant to Common Political Bodies which have no Knowledge of Scripture?/Relationship of *Natural Law to the Noahic Covenant*: Since the Noahic Covenant applies to what might be called the *common political community* many of the participants in which, and many of the leaders of which have no knowledge of Scripture, including knowledge of the Noahic Covenant, how are they made aware by God of the requirements of His covenant? “Most common political communities through history have lived in ignorance of the Old Testament.....” The author proposes “...a classical Christian answer: “All human beings know their moral responsibilities before God through the *natural law*....(and since)....God now sustains and governs the created order through the Noahic Covenant, God’s communication of the natural law in the present world is a covenantal act. Because of this, the moral requirements of the Noahic Covenant are not unfamiliar to human beings or political communities. Rather they resonate with what human beings are by nature, as they live in the kind of world they do. The natural law, therefore, ensures the just accountability of common political communities under the Noahic Covenant.”

4) What Is Natural Law?: By *natural law* the author “...refers to the idea that God makes known the basic substance of his moral law through the created order itself. Human beings therefore know this law simply by virtue of being human, even apart from access to Scripture or other forms of special revelation. They know it through their natural capacities as they live in this world.... . The natural world is well-ordered, intelligible and morally instructive. In other words, at least part of the reason why human beings have moral knowledge apart from special revelation and are accountable to God for how they use it is because creation itself communicates moral truth to them..... .” In Romans 1 Paul grounds universal accountability before God in humans’ moral knowledge gained through the world itself. “What can be ‘known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them....(Rom. 1:19)....People ‘are left without excuse’ for failing to honor and worship God (Rom. 1:20-25)....and for falling into a multitude of other wrongs (Rom. 1:26-31).... .” The author contends that Genesis 9:1-7 (the Noahic Covenant) summarizes the natural law, and provides substantial argument for this contention.

5) The Natural Law is not a Holistic Moral System or a Collection of Rules, But is Simply a *Moral Order*/Knowledge of Natural Law Acquired Through Maturity in Wisdom: The natural law is not a legal code. It is not a collection of rules. While some of its requirements are set forth in Scripture or are illuminated by Scripture (e.g. the Ten Commandments), “....Scripture

does not portray God as creating human beings to execute a bunch of specific, atomistic rules. Instead, God designed humans to accomplish certain good purposes. God made them in his image to occupy the whole world and to have benevolent dominion over it (Gen. 1:26-28), and ultimately to rule the world to come (Heb. 2:5). God also made people in his image to be a certain sort of creature-righteous, knowledgeable, and holy (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10)-that is virtuous. In other words, God designed human beings as image-bearers for the goal of virtuous dominion over the whole earth now and over the new creation to come. This is the natural human moral vocation... . The natural law, then is a moral order directing people to ways of life that promote and attain the purposes for which God designed them. Rules cannot exhaust the content of this natural law, but they do help us learn and describe it in concrete ways.” So the natural law is relatively indeterminate. One learns, and societies and communities learn the natural law and how to apply it and use it through a process of maturity in wisdom, much like that which is exemplified in large parts of the Book of Proverbs. This kind of wisdom is “...attainable, at least in part, through experiencing and reflecting upon the natural order of this world.” It is rooted in *natural revelation* as opposed to *special revelation*. The author characterizes “wisdom” as “...a moral and intellectual power by which people understand what courses of conduct are good and bad and become able to put this knowledge into skillful practice.”

5) Religious Liberty and Pluralism: Since the Noahic Covenant is universal in scope, it “...prescribes that the human community protect diversity among its members to a maximal degree....(since)...God entered this covenant with the human race as a whole. Accordingly, this covenant sets a low bar for participation in the broader community and thus welcomes people (with exceptions) to join in the activities and institution-creating work of the covenant.” Race, which is a totally artificial means of distinguishing among peoples and truly has no intellectual or biological justification, is a completely illegitimate basis for excluding people from participating in social institutions and treating some differently from others in the administration of justice. While the goal of bringing people of different religious persuasions together into a peaceful political community with some shared vision of the common good presents seemingly intractable intellectual and practical problems (giving reason for the meandering nature of First Amendment jurisprudence in the United States), this is a goal to which the Noahic Covenant mandates achievement. Therefore the author makes the cases for religious liberty, both in *establishment* and *free exercise*, asserting (somewhat surprisingly) that there is a *natural right* to religious liberty in a common political community. To summarize the author’s positions on pluralism and religious liberty he states: “The Noahic covenant ordains that ordinary human activities and institutions be open to all people, and thus that the human community be broadly pluralistic, held together by a substantive but modest common good. This entails a pluralism that unambiguously rejects racial discrimination and promotes a broad and generous (if often not unambiguous) religious liberty. This in turn implies that governments should be limited in scope and modest in ambition.....” (Emphasis added)

6) Limited Government: It is at this point that I approach some of the author’s political theology with some concerns, as stated above; those concerns being that an outline of this theology, in some detail, might cause potential readers, who have strong political convictions,

to shy away from reading this book. That said, it must be stated that the author's basic theological political theory, as grounded in the Noahic Covenant, is that the role of civil government should be a rather narrow and restricted one. His general theory is that: "The more areas of life into which government intrudes, the more crises of conscience-and thus religious-liberty dilemmas-it is likely to provoke in a diverse society.... ." "...Does the fundamental family pattern emerging from the Noahic covenant also indicate that government should be limited? Yes it does.... . Were the government's jurisdiction all-encompassing other institutions could not claim their own spheres of authoritative jurisdiction, or could do so only with the government's permission. The mere fact that there are multiple kinds of legitimate authority necessarily constrains government authority.... ." (Note: With some misgivings I would respectfully suggest that we can find some justifications for the author's concerns about expanded governmental authority in our current political climate where, rightly or wrongly depending on your point of view, we see a lot of political and societal strife arising from the governments intervention (or intrusion depending on your point of view) into areas of family life, children's education, etc. This is just a side note which can be debated, but if the author's views about the restrictions on governmental authority imposed by the Noahic Covenant are accurate, then we can see violations of these restrictions in our current political environment.)

7) Noahic Liberalism, Noahic Conservatorism, and Conservative Liberalism: The author seeks to expand on his basic thesis that the roles of civil, political governments should be limited by defining what he ultimately refers to as "conservative liberalism". In evaluating the authors theme of limited government and of conservative liberalism the reader should be mindful of the basic thesis of this book, which is that God, through Christ, governs the common political communities through the Noahic Covenant, which gives those in authority only certain roles which are required for the preservation of God's creation, not its redemption which will be authored by God at the eschaton. The roles of civil institutions and governments are those of *preservation* not *perfection* or *redemption*. Keeping these facts in mind, the author argues for a political philosophy which he refers to as *conservative liberalism*. But, first, he defines what he refers to as *liberalism* and what he refers to as *conservatism*, in the classic sense, which are not the senses in which these terms are used in current day American politics by Republicans and Democrats, parties, the philosophies of which are not shared by the author, and in fact are severely criticized by the author. The author finds much to like and much not to like in classic liberalism, a political philosophy which forms the basis for the founding of most Western Countries. He also finds much to like and much to not like in classic conservatism. So he merges the two philosophies into *conservative liberalism*, a political philosophy which upholds the dignity of man and of each human being, and which provides for civil institutions with limited roles, as described above. I will have to leave it to the reader to read and more fully understand the author's arguments for *conservative liberalism*, arguments which make a great deal of sense to me, but with which you might disagree. Just seeking to understand these arguments provides a very valuable intellectual exercise, and a greater understanding of the manner in which Christians might view, from a theological perspective, the proper roles of the

political institutions to which they are subject and the expectations which Christians should have for these institutions and the extent to which they should seek to influence these institutions and their roles.

8) Just a Brief Summary: The numbered paragraphs which appear above contain but a very brief summary of the very extensive, frankly complex but very learned and well stated arguments of the author for the roles of Christians with respect to their civil institutions and governments. Boiled down to their essence, these arguments are a very cogent, eloquent defense of a position that the role of Christians with respect to civil, political institutions and governments is to be responsible citizens of same, but not to seek to *transform* same in order to bring same into conformity with what Christians (or some Christians) might view as being conformity with all of God's desires for human beings. Christians are citizens of *two kingdoms*, the common, political kingdom, the governments and institutions of which are constituted by God through the Noahic Covenant and the kingdom of God, which God will bring to glorious perfection at the eschaton. The first kingdom, the common political kingdom is a temporary, provisional one, the Godly role for which is the preservation of God's creation. It has legitimate roles, which are provisional (meaning temporary), and which are intended for the good of all mankind, believers and non-believers and people of every faith, with the authorities of that kingdom being accountable to God for maintaining God's basic morality as established by the *Natural Law*. So, in the author's view those Christians who seek to "take over" or "transform" the common political and civil institutions to which they are subject are engaged in biblically, theologically wrongful thinking. We are simply *sojourners* in and *aliens* in the first kingdom, the civil, political kingdom.

Readership or Audience to which this Book is Directed: This book is obviously not intended for a general public readership. It is obviously not directed to most Christians. It is, at least in my view, intended for, and directed to Christians who are engaged in political life or are considering engaging in such a life, and for pastors and leaders who are confronted with questions of or arguments of those who are seeking to understand the proper roles of Christians as citizens in their political systems. Those who would assert that Christians have a role to take over governments and to transform those governments so as to bring them into conformity with their perceived "Christian Vision" should read or at least be confronted with this book or the author's arguments.

How to Read This Book: This is a difficult question to answer. In my judgment you are either very interested in questions surrounding Christianity and Politics and Christian roles in Politics, in which case you need to read (and you will struggle with) this book, or you are not so interested in which case just read the book's Introduction and then peruse its Table of Contents, which should be an exercise that will tell you whether or not you want to read the book.

Can This Book be Used in TEI/ECLI or one of its Classes?: In my opinion, NO. It is too complex to be so used. It is, however, a great TEI library resource. It is also a resource which can be pulled off the shelf in order to deal with questions relating to the relationships of Christians to political governments and institutions. If TEI had a class of very diligent students who are

interested in delving into the relationships of Christians and Politics and Civil Governments, then this book could be used as a text, or one of the texts for such a class.