1 Church and State or Religion and Political Life
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MATS 2017

2 Christian Beginnings
- Gen 1: 31 ‘God saw all that he had made, and it was very good’.
- Matt 4: 17 ‘Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand’.
- John 18: 36 ‘Mine is not a kingdom of this world’.
- Creation is good (despite the fall)
- Church’s mission: to bring the kingdom of God to bear
- Ultimately eschatological, but with intimations of its fulfilment in this world.

3 Historical Ways of Dealing with This
- Aristotle: Superintendence of the divine is at the behest of the city
- Early Christianity: small communities on the edge of Jewish community, at times persecuted
- Rome: religion is subject to the emperor, who may claim divinity
- Edict of Milan (313): Constantine legitimises Christianity
- Augustine (354-430): City of God / earthly city
- Gelasius I (492-6): bishop and king – each given authority by God
- Aquinas (1224-74: political life is natural and part of creation; monarchy

4 Christendom 600 - 1600
- Experiment in the subjection of civil authority to religious authority
- West: bishops could not give emperor authority in doctrine
- Gregory VII (1073-1122): supremacy of church authority and the right to appoint bishops and elect popes – investiture crisis
- Innocent III (1198-1216): legal system; ‘plenitude of power’
- Boniface VIII (1294-1303): temporal sword subordinate to spiritual
- John XXII (1316-34): God > pope > ruler > people
- Marsilius of Padua: people > citizens > king > pope; faithful > pope
- Christendom fractured and slowly came undone

5 Aristotelian Beginnings
- Political community comes about according to nature but not by nature
- The best that a country can achieve given its history and culture and its present constitution – achievements of founders
- The political order is always restless
- There are good forms of constitution and bad forms
- Political activity consists in moving towards what is better
- What, therefore, is worked out will be different in different places and different times

6 Papua New Guinea – Constitution
- We, the people of PNG … ‘pledge ourselves to guard and pass on … our noble traditions and the Christian principles that are ours’ (preamble)
- First National Goal: Integral Human Development
- (45) Freedom of Conscience, Thought and Religion
• No compulsion; no entitlement for unsolicited intervention
• (55) Equality of Citizens: ‘All citizens have the same rights, privileges, obligations and duties irrespective of race, tribe, place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed, religion or sex.’
• Christian 96.4%; Other 3.6%; Nil Belief 0%

7 □ New Caledonia – Constitution
• The French people solemnly proclaim their attachment to the Rights of Man and the principles of national sovereignty as defined by the Declaration of 1789, confirmed and complemented by the Preamble to the Constitution of 1946, and to the rights and duties as defined in the Charter for the Environment of 2004.
• By virtue of these principles and that of the self-determination of peoples, the Republic offers to the overseas territories which have expressed the will to adhere to them new institutions founded on the common ideal of liberty, equality and fraternity and conceived for the purpose of their democratic development.
• There are no provisions apart from the Declaration of the Rights of Man for the protection of human rights or religion
• Catholic 60%; Protestant 30%; Other 10%; Nil 0%

8 □ Solomon Islands – 2011 Draft
• God Creator, Sovereign, Supreme and Almighty, accepting your grand design for these archipelagic isles and existence in social human habitation of tradition, clans and tribes;
• We the people of Solomon Islands, Confirming the existing federalism of our original social order;
• Experiencing the incompatibility of our autonomous federalism within the colonial gift of unitary system of government for political independence;
• Departing from the 1978 Independence Order;
• Recognizing, Acknowledging and Reaffirming our original roots to formulate our home grown order for a federation of nations;
• Reasserting the noble heritage and worthy customs of our ancestors, the freedom they enjoyed since time immemorial;
• Respecting and being Mindful of our diversity but conscious of our common destiny and solidarity;
• Pride in the maintenance of our identity, enabling us to renew our freedom, autonomy and worthy customs;
• We the citizens of Solomon Islands, now with the guidance and blessings of the Creator, commit this Federation for Solomon Islands and by Divine help;
• Christian 95.9%; Other 4.1%; Nil 0.03%

9 □ Fiji – Constitution (2013)
• WE, THE PEOPLE OF FIJI,
• RECOGNISING the indigenous people or the iTaukei, their ownership of iTaukei lands, their unique culture, customs, traditions and language;
• RECOGNISING the indigenous people or the Rotuman from the island of Rotuma, their ownership of Rotuman lands, their unique culture, customs, traditions and language; RECOGNISING the descendants of the indentured labourers from British India and the Pacific Islands, their culture, customs, traditions and language; and
• RECOGNISING the descendants of the settlers and immigrants to Fiji, their culture, customs, traditions and language,
• DECLARE that we are all Fijians united by common and equal citizenry;
• DECLARE that we are all Fijians united by common and equal citizenry;
• RECOGNISE the Constitution as the supreme law of our country that provides the framework for the conduct of Government and all Fijians;
• Christian 64.5%; Hindu 27%; Muslim 6.3%, Sikh 0.3%; Other 0.3%; Nil 0.8%

10 □ Samoa – Constitution
• 2017 (2) Amendment: Art 1. ‘Samoa is a Christian nation founded on God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit’ – Body not preamble
• PM: ‘Perhaps our ancestors were not thinking about it at the time’
• At the same time: new taxation of the clergy
• Art 11. Freedom of religion
• Art 12. Rights concerning religious instruction
• Congregationalist 31.8%; Catholic 19.4%; Methodist 13.7%; AoG 8%; SDA 3.9%; Mormon 15.2%; Worship Centre 1.7%; Other Christian 5.5%; Other 0.8%; Nil 0.1%.

11 □ Church as a Community of Believers
• In all these countries, there is freedom of religion
• Pacific peoples are fundamentally religious
• Some were hurt by early missionary conflicts
• Bringing the Kingdom to bear:
  • A ministry of civilisation
  • A ministry of evangelisation
• Bringing the good to light
• Fighting for justice for all

12 □ Church as an Institution
• Not just the spiritual – bricks and mortar
• Churches have economic roles – tax
• Provision of services
  • Education
  • Health
• Gathering of people – political
• There is need to come to terms with the government – engagement
• What are the arrangements in place for this to happen?
  • Do they work? Well? Does the Church become compromised?

13 □ The Action of Ministers
• Christian ministers have great influence; politicians are often jealous
• Short comings of ministers:
  • A limited view of the whole country (know their own religious community)
  • Lack of understanding of political structure and process
  • Lack of understanding of policy (esp. implications of an action)
• Strengths of ministers:
  • Close knowledge of their own people and their concerns
  • A vision of what life might be like – the good
  • A prophetic sense of justice – Amos and Hosea
• Education and support of the faithful
Exercise of Authority

• There are competing authorities and so likelihood of conflict
• Constitutive principles of the country
• Constitutive principles of the churches (with differences)
• Genuine holiness should be respected
• Accommodation
• Boundaries – setting the limits, e.g., profanation
• Settlement – slow but constant; convention rather than law
• Luck: actors and events; disruption

What Can the Church Say?

• Unless there is persecution, almost anything, but only if it is said well
• Mode of the homily or sermon; essential parts:
  • Articulation of the Gospel
  • Engagement with the concerns of the people
• The person of the preacher: does he ring true
• Ways in which the churches might help:
  • Investigation and promulgation of the good
  • Identification and denunciation of injustice
  • Clarification of and encouragement to moral good
• Whoever speaks in the public forum will be held up in the light