

Some Reflections on Church and State

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Professor Donald Markwell prepared this paper as Warden of Trinity College, The University of Melbourne, for the Philip Harris Memorial Address on the occasion of the commemoration of Charles, King and Martyr, Christ Church Brunswick, Sunday 30 January 2000.

This paper represents the fourteenth in a series prepared by Trinity College which focus upon broad issues facing the community in such areas as education, ethics, history, politics, and science.

Thank you for your kind invitation to give the Philip Harris Memorial Address on the occasion of the commemoration of Charles, King and Martyr, on this, the 351st anniversary of Charles's beheading. It is a great pleasure to be with you, and a great honour, but also - if I may say so - a somewhat daunting honour for me, who is neither a historian nor a theologian, but a mere political scientist, to speak on this commemoration. I therefore warmly welcome the suggestion to speak on some broad issues of Church and State, and not to provide a further evaluation of King Charles, which - frankly - I am not competent to do.

And yet, having lived for some 15 years of my adult life in Oxford, where Charles was based for most of the English civil war, I have - perhaps unavoidably - felt some real personal connection with him, and perhaps it may be interesting if, before discussing broader themes of Church and State, I were to say something more about this.

For a little over a decade, from 1986 to 1997, I was a Fellow of Merton College, Oxford. During the civil war, when Charles was living in Christ Church, Oxford, his Queen, Henrietta Maria, was - from July 1643 to April 1644 - living a few hundred yards away in Merton. She took over the then Warden's Lodgings of the College, situated in a quadrangle built earlier in the 17th century, and which had been left vacant by the flight from Oxford of the anti-royalist Warden. My own study, comprising two rooms, was in an attic in that part of the College, looking out across the College gardens to the tower of Magdalen College, and it was suggested to me at the time that my rooms had probably been occupied by a servant of Queen Henrietta Maria's. Some members of her retinue are buried in the College Chapel. Certainly the room downstairs from mine called the Queen's Room, said to have been Henrietta Maria's bedroom, was also a room I often frequented, for it is here that the Fellows of the College assemble for sherry - or not, as the case may be - before processing into dinner in Hall. In the Dining Hall of Merton is a portrait of Charles I, and in the Senior Common Room hangs a portrait of Henrietta Maria. The ghost of a royalist commander shot there for treason is said to haunt a footpath on the river-side of the College - Dead Man's Walk - though I never saw him there. I did, however, see at Windsor Castle the table onto which it is said that Charles's headless body was laid after his execution.

None of this is to say that Merton was a strong royalist College in those times - indeed there were strong Parliamentary sympathies among its Fellows, led by the Warden, Nathaniel Brent, into whose culpable maladministration Charles's ally, Archbishop Laud, had in the 1630s launched a lengthy investigation which the College register said "threatened to rival the siege of Troy". Brent fled Oxford in 1641, and later appeared as a witness against Archbishop Laud in the trial leading to his execution. In 1642, when Parliamentary forces briefly captured Oxford, their commander stayed in Merton. In 1645, the absent Brent was succeeded as Warden of Merton by the King's physician and controversial nominee, William Harvey; but Harvey's Wardenship lasted little more than a year, as he left for London when Oxford surrendered to Parliamentary forces in 1646, and the pro-Parliamentary Nathaniel Brent resumed the Wardenship.

Indeed, Warden Brent was entrusted by Parliament with chairing the University Commission which visited the University from 1648 to 1652, expelling many Fellows of the various Colleges who refused to submit to Parliament's authority. The visitatorial commission made the Warden's Lodgings at Merton its headquarters, and a higher proportion of the Fellows of Merton submitted to Parliament than at any other College. In 1651, Brent was succeeded as Warden of Merton by Cromwell's doctor, Jonathan Goddard. As the College history records, "thus both Charles I and Cromwell saw their doctors wardens of Merton who continued the long-standing tradition of medical heads of the house".

Archbishop Laud was Chancellor of the University of Oxford, reformer of its Statutes, and generous benefactor of his old College, which I regret to say was not Merton, but St John's. It is said that in 1636 a feast attended by the King and Queen to mark the opening of new buildings at St John's cost the Archbishop over 2,666 pounds - "or rather more than half the cost of the new buildings themselves".

Though there were many Parliamentary supporters within the University, "Oxford remained overwhelmingly royalist from start to finish". In July 1642, the King wrote to the Vice-Chancellor asking that the University, Colleges and individual members of the University lend him money for the war. Charles wrote of himself and the University of Oxford:

... by our perpetuall care and protection of such nurseries of Learning, we have especiall reason to expect the particular care of us, and their extraordinary assistance to our defence and preservation...

Many Colleges, including Merton, lent the King plate which was used to make coinage in a mint set up at Oxford. Needless to say, the loan could not be repaid.

When Charles entered Oxford later in 1642 after the brief Parliamentary occupation of it, in the words of C. V. Wedgewood, “the loyal, resilient University made haste to greet him”. The official welcome declared, and I quote:

Our Oxford hath now thrown off all clouds of discontent, and stands clear, gilded by the beams of
Your Majesty's royal presence.

I have dwelt a little on Charles I and Oxford not only because I find it personally of some interest, but because it reflects some of the issues and complexities of the connection between Church and State in the context of universities. The University of Oxford is in reality a complex amalgam of what may be thought of as public and private institutions, secular and religious foundations, operating under statutes made by law for the University and individual colleges - a complex form of the partnership between public and private sectors, about which I will say more later.

The relationship between Church and State was, of course, central to the reign of Charles I, and to the causes and consequences of the English civil war. Indeed, the very history of this service of commemoration of Charles, King and Martyr, reflects some of the issues: the original authorisation of this service by Convocation, Parliament, and royal mandate in 1662, and its further authorisation by proclamation issued at the commencement of each monarch's reign, until in 1859 Queen Victoria, following addresses from both Houses of Parliament, cancelled the order which she had made when she ascended the throne. The suppression of the Service by Queen Victoria has been described as a “mutilation” of the Prayer Book, and “a violation of the compact between Church and Realm”; and it has been reversed here in Australia, where there is no such compact constraining the Church.

Historically, as J.T.S. Madeley has written, “relations between Church and state have provided a central focus of political argument and conflict in Christendom from the earliest to the most recent times”. The co-operation and, especially, the contests between the holders of political and religious authority have provided many of the landmarks of the history of the last 2000 years. Issues have included the nature of the established Church, the struggle for power in and over it, the religious teachings and forms to which conformity is to be expected by the civil authorities, the demands for and development towards religious toleration, the privileges still to be given to the established Church (where one exists) and the rights to be accorded to those who are not, the place of religion in the curriculum of schools and the public funding of Church schools, and the rights and role of the Church in discussion of such issues as divorce, contraception, abortion, pornography, and homosexuality. In some countries, such as Poland and other eastern European states under communism or in various Third World Countries, the Church has been a focus for political opposition to the established authorities, and a vehicle for protest and mobilisation of demands for fundamental change and social justice.

Needless to say, then, one form in which the issues of Church and State arise is in the question of whether there should be an established Church, as in England still, and if so, what the form of that established Church should be. Should the Queen, or King, be in the United Kingdom “defender of the faith”? In Britain, these are real issues, of course, and there are those who wish to see the disestablishment of the Church of England. Only this month there has been a significant reconstruction of the legal status of the established Church of Sweden and of other Churches there, arising from the growing numbers of non-Lutherans in Sweden. In England, in the years I was living there, it seemed that the most prominent spokesmen against disestablishment were in fact Jewish leaders. Their argument was, of course, not that they agreed with the faith of the established Church, but that having an established Church - with, for example, bishops in the House of Lords - gave matters of religion and of morals a prominence and centrality in public life which they would almost certainly not have if the Church were disestablished. On this, a comparison of Britain and Australia leads me to believe they are probably right.

In Australia, of course, we do not have an established Church; and the Queen of Australia is not styled “defender of the faith” here. But issues of Church-State relations arise in many forms from time to time. They arise when Church leaders contribute to public debate on politically sensitive or contentious issues, and when they comment on, and especially when they criticise, the policies or behaviour of politicians, and when, for example, politicians respond by suggesting that such comments on political issues are beyond the legitimate province of Church leaders. They arise when the Church is itself

involved, perhaps through various agencies, in dealings with government on provision of services - such as welfare, health, or educational services - which are also provided or funded by government, or in which government is naturally interested. They arise on some occasions, not especially frequent but also not unknown in modern Australia, when the question becomes whether or not Christians are bound to abide by the law as it is enforced by the police or other agencies of the state.

These issues necessarily raise broader issues also: Is a Christian necessarily drawn to a particular political philosophy? Is there a single approach to public policy questions which can be rightly described "Christian", with all - or at least some - others rightly characterised as "unChristian"? How should a Christian behave in public life? And does it matter if there is, or isn't, a significant involvement of Christians in public life?

It seems to me clear that, in fact, Christian belief is compatible with a diversity of political philosophies and approaches to public policy issues. The problem of identifying a single, specifically Christian political philosophy is evident in, for example, the radically different approaches which Christians in different generations have taken to the very basis of the polity, the question of what is the legitimate source of authority in a political system. Charles I, even more firmly than his father, believed in a divine right of kings which was, of course, contentious in his own day, and which few Christians in our time take seriously. Even if we did, of course, there is a great problem of how constitutional arrangements based on a religious faith and doctrine which is far from universally shared can be expected to be universally or even nearly universally accepted as legitimate.

There is a closely related question, to which I have already alluded, which also reflects the diversity and difficulties of Christian political doctrine. Is it the will of God that we should always and everywhere obey those who hold the reigns of political power regardless of how they gained it, or regardless of how the power is exercised? Is civil disobedience ever justified? It may be argued that if the authority of the law-making person or body is lawful and legitimate, then the laws - however bad they appear - must be obeyed, but may be disobeyed if the authority is unlawful and illegitimate. But if the individual has the discretion to decide whether the authority by which a law is made is legitimate or not, why does he not have the discretion to decide whether the law itself is just or not, and to obey or disobey accordingly? Some argue that we do have this individual discretion, others that it is the road to anarchy.

There are, then, conflicting Christian answers to these and related questions. One derives from, or draws on, the injunction in Romans 13: "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established." But against this are the words and actions of the apostles recorded in Acts 5. Peter and the other apostles told the Sanhedrin "We must obey God rather than men!" and after being flogged and then released, preached the gospel vigorously despite being ordered not to do so. Jesus said to "give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's". But how do we determine which is which?

Christians through the ages have struggled with this problem, not least those in 16th and 17th century England who were torn between their conceptions of their loyalty to the Crown and loyalty to God. In 1626, when King Charles, after dissolving Parliament to protect Buckingham from it, demanded forced loans from his subjects, there was much opposition. Biblical allusions were used to argue the right of subjects - to quote one Canterbury alderman - "to disobey and refuse an unworthy king's command and request if it be more than of duty we owe unto him", and indeed the *duty* in the circumstances of the day - quote again - "to discountenance and dishearten graceless tyrants". A sermon under the title *Apostolic Obedience*, printed in 1627 on Charles's order, argued:

If a prince impose an immoderate, yea an unjust tax, yet the subject may not thereupon withdraw his obedience and duty. Nay, he is bound in conscience to submit, as under the scourge of sin...

Today we have little sympathy for the defence of the war criminal that he was "only obeying orders"; and many Christians believe, and act on the belief, that unjust laws should be disobeyed and the consequences of disobedience accepted. In Britain a decade ago, echoing 17th century debates, many people - I think wrongly - believed themselves free not to pay the so-called poll tax which they regarded as wholly inequitable. This refusal to pay, and widespread protests, contributed to the downfall of Mrs Thatcher, and the subsequent replacement of that tax. A little over twenty years ago in Queensland, when peaceful protest through street marches was prohibited through instruction of the premier to a compliant Police

Commissioner, many Christians chose to protest by doing the very thing that was prohibited, and many were arrested and bravely took the consequences. I have to confess that, in those particular circumstances, I have both sympathy and respect for their position.

The point of this unavoidably inconclusive discussion of disobedience to the law is simply to show how Christians disagree about fundamental political issues. Certainly there are devout Christians in all major political parties in this country, as in all western and many non-western countries, and devout Christians of no party advocating a wide range of conflicting public policy approaches. Biblical authority and Christian doctrine are used to support a wide variety of approaches. It seems to me entirely possible for a Christian to be a democratic socialist or a social democrat or a liberal or a conservative, none of these philosophies being required by, and none ruled out by, Christian belief or Biblical teaching.

Before the 1987 British general election, a book entitled *Faith in Politics* was published, in which leading figures - committed Christians all - from each of the Conservative and Labour Parties and the then Liberal/Social Democrat Alliance argued the Christian basis of the philosophy and policies of their parties. Throughout the 1980s, Prime Minister Thatcher sometimes found her policies sharply criticised by prominent Church leaders, and it was sometimes said or implied by others that her policies were "unChristian". This led her to respond in 1988 with a significant address to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in which she argued that her stress on the right and responsibility of the individual to use his talents and to provide for himself and his family, was deeply rooted in Biblical teaching: that Thatcherism was not unChristian, and indeed was entirely compatible with, even drawn from, Christian doctrine. Not surprisingly, one clergyman present denounced her address as - I quote - "a disgraceful travesty of the gospel". If Mrs Thatcher and others of similar mind can draw sustenance from the Parable of the Talents, or from a particular reading of Paul's motif of individual freedom, and - I might add - from her systematic reading of the Old Testament, then the Christian socialist can make much of the account in Acts of the believers holding everything in common, selling their possessions, and giving to anyone as he had need.

While I would argue that the Bible and Christian doctrine do not prescribe a single political philosophy, there are certain things they do prescribe, at least as understood from the Christian perspective of our day. One of these is respect for each person as an individual. And another is respect for community. But what should be the balance between the individual and the community? To what extent should our approach be individualistic, and to what extent communitarian? To what extent, that is, should the individual be responsible for his or her own welfare, and to what extent should the community be? To what extent should the individual be free of state regulation of his or her behaviour, in all fields including the economic, and to what extent is the community, through the state, entitled and right to regulate the activities of individuals, and to what ends - of justice, equality, or otherwise?

These are, of course, among the central questions in political philosophy around which both academic and practical political debate takes place. The popularly desired balance between individualism and communitarianism shifts over time. We have seen this in western societies in recent decades. The Keynesian consensus of the immediate post-war decades, with its emphasis on government intervention and the so-called "welfare state", gave way in the 1970s and subsequently to a much greater emphasis on reducing the role of government. This has led in various western countries in the 1990s to some reassertion of the importance of government, albeit more modest in its ambitions than in the 1960s and early 1970s, nonetheless acting to facilitate movement towards greater social justice and welfare. This is at the heart of the amorphous so-called "third way" that leaders such as Tony Blair have sought to promote.

I do not think that Christian belief means that, in liberal democracies, one must necessarily favour one balance between individual and community over other quite different balances. Which balance is favoured will depend on other factors, including economic theory and judgement as to which approach will in the actually existing circumstances work most effectively to achieve, say, higher economic growth or lower unemployment and thus the better promotion of social well-being. And, of course, one's approach will also depend on how one weighs other issues on the public agenda, such as concern for the environment and also gender issues.

But I do suggest that certain political philosophies are *ruled out* by Christian belief. While this is of little practical significance in modern liberal democracies, it is or has been of immense importance in, say, the totalitarian regimes of both far left and far right which dominated much of the world, including of Europe and Asia, for much of the twentieth century. It seems to me impossible to reconcile Christian belief with, say, support for the practice of Soviet communism, which was

desperately repressive of individual freedom, or indeed, for all that is insightful in it, with Marxist theory, which is explicitly anti-Christian: though there are some Christians, more philosophically subtle than myself, who believe it is possible to be a Marxist and a Christian. Similarly, it seems to me impossible to reconcile Christian belief with support for Nazism or similar doctrines or practices. These statements may seem obvious to most of us, but they have not always been obvious to all Christians, some of whom have had the fate of having to deal with or live under such regimes.

I have suggested that the Christian in a liberal democracy may legitimately favour any of a wide range of different balances between emphasis on the individual and emphasis on the community. Does this mean that the Church leader should be silent on public policy issues on which Christians may reasonably disagree? I do not think so. If the Christian seeks a balance between individual and community, then as the balance favoured by government - and perhaps by public opinion - is shifting in one direction or the other, it may be helpful for the Church leader to remind us of the importance of the value which is becoming less favoured. If, for example, public policy moves sharply towards a reduced emphasis on public provision of services and towards a sharply greater emphasis on individuals providing for themselves, then it may be helpful for Church leaders to remind us that the ideal is an appropriate balance between individual and community, and that we should not lose sight of the importance of community. Indeed, it seems to me important that Church leaders draw attention to the fact that economic and social policies in some western countries, while perhaps promoting greater prosperity and opportunity for the majority, also contribute to the growth, and worsen the plight, of a poor and often homeless underclass.

Our secular age is not very receptive to political commentary based on theology. Church leaders in Australia do not have the same - one might say 'privileged' - position in public debate generally accorded to leaders of the established Church in England. Moreover, if last year's referendum campaign is an accurate guide, Australian public opinion is in a strong mood of anti-elitism, and Church leaders are likely to be seen to belong to the elite. But people of faith must say what they believe; it is essential that there not be, as there so often seems to be, a moral vacuum in our public debate; and it may be that the particular distrust with which Australians view their politicians gives to Church leaders, elitist though they may be, a real opportunity to provide moral leadership in public debate. It may be that there is an increasing receptiveness to the notion of community which many Church leaders stress.

The comments of Church leaders on public policy issues should, I think, generally avoid the implication that only one view may reasonably be taken of the issue by Christians, because it seems to me that this is rarely true. But it seems to me also to be legitimate and valuable - even if at times irritating to politicians - for Church leaders to say that Christian insight requires that this or that significant value not be lost to sight, and also to contribute to public debate the insights that come from the involvement of the Church in the realities of our social life. Thus, to take another contemporary example, while Christians may legitimately disagree about the morals of gambling and about what forms and levels should be permitted, it seems to me entirely legitimate and valuable for Church leaders, drawing both on Biblical teaching about the love of money and on their experience with the victims of excessive gambling, to draw attention to the morally and socially corrupting effects of the rapid growth of gambling and, especially, of "problem gambling".

Sometimes when Church leaders comment on public issues in ways that are unfavourable to them, politicians respond that Church leaders should confine themselves to the saving of souls and not interfere in the realm of politics and public policy. Is this a reasonable response? I do not think so. The Church, like Jesus, has a proper concern for the whole person, the body as well as the soul, and cannot be indifferent to questions such as justice and welfare. Charles would not have doubted that the Church and the world are one.

The fact that the Church leader can bring to public debate a capacity and inclination to stress important moral values seems to me to be immensely helpful to our public debate. Indeed, I would argue that at times Church leaders and other Christians have a *responsibility* to contribute to public debate. This seems to me most crucial when significant moral or ethical issues are at stake, for example when there is a serious or sustained abuse of power and injustice. Dante said that the hottest places in hell are reserved for those who in moments of great moral crisis maintain their neutrality.

Church leaders, of course, should not disregard research and learning about the topics on which they wish to make public comment. In this year 2000, there is considerable promotion by Church leaders of the desirability of forgiveness of the international debts owed by Third World countries. Arguing that there *may* be a strong ethical and practical argument and

Biblical precedent for such debt forgiveness may be one thing. But some Christian economists argue powerfully that such widespread debt forgiveness would over the longer term actually harm those Third World countries, to whom lenders would be reluctant again to lend, and that it would be a better model of Christian self-sacrifice for others, including concerned Christians, to repay the debts in place of the impoverished debtors. It is not clear to me that Church leaders, who should be alert to economic and other reality as well as to the moral insights of their own tradition, should simply disregard this economic and indeed theological analysis.

There has in the last two decades been a significant shift in the role of the state in many countries. The form and timing have, of course, varied between countries, but some of the underlying ideas are these: that government either should not or cannot play all the roles of service-provider and regulator which it did previously, or that the growth in demand for government-provided services cannot be met by government alone; that *within* the public sector, efficiency and effectiveness will be enhanced by a clearer distinction between policy advice and service delivery, by service delivery by government agencies being exposed to competition from non-government agencies or contracted out to non-government agencies and, at least, subject to the usual disciplines and approaches of private sector business management; that the private sector, including profit-seeking companies and not-for-profit bodies, should be encouraged to provide such services, either instead of or alongside or in partnership with government; and indeed that the role of government should be, not in general to provide all desired services, but to act as *facilitator* of desirable social outcomes achieved in partnership with non-governmental bodies. Out of such ideas as these we get the policies and rhetoric of privatisation, competitive tendering, contracting out, corporatisation of government bodies, seeking "efficiency gains", public-private partnerships, a "social coalition", and much more besides.

Many Christians regard such policies as anathema, a repudiation of the essential role of government in enhancing social well-being and protecting the weak. Others regard them as the means to a better and more prosperous society. At least for the most part, it seems to me that these are issues on which Christians may reasonably disagree, and on which Church leaders may nonetheless reasonably contribute their moral insights and practical experience. Beyond this, I would identify both an opportunity for the Church and a danger.

The opportunity is that in this age of limited, "facilitating" government, there is, or at least may be, a greater role for the services which the Anglican and other Churches have long provided as part of our Christian mission - services in welfare, including housing, for the poor, homeless, and aged; health care; education at all levels, including kindergarten, school, and university; and so on - and indeed in services such as help to job-seekers. Churches have both a continuing and in some areas an increasing opportunity to be partners of the state in service provision. In some cases, this is restoring the role of Church and other not-for-profit agencies to roles they had before the major growth in the role of government in the middle decades of the 20th century. Whether we welcome or lament the new approach to government, I hope that Churches will be dynamic - in the modern word, "pro-active" - in seizing the opportunity. I know that various agencies and parts of the Anglican Church are indeed dynamic - for example, in the development of Anglican schools in some areas.

But there is a catch, a real danger. This is that Church agencies may become un-Church-like and that their work may cease to be a form of witness to the Christian gospel, and be instead just another form of de facto secular service provision. The danger sometimes comes from within: professionals in a field, be it welfare services or education or something else, for whom the Church institution or agency is merely one of many places in which they could pursue their profession, the one in which they happen to have got a job, and who wish the *Church* attributes of the institution or agency not to get in the way of their fundamentally secular conception of their profession. The challenge to Church agencies is to be *both* professionally excellent *and* witness to the gospel. These are not mutually exclusive, and can indeed be mutually reinforcing. The Anglican educational institution that provides both first-rate tuition and extra-curricular activities *and* a real stimulus to spiritual reflection and to focus on Christian values should be a better provider of education than an institution that merely focuses on tuition and secular extra-curricular activities. In Charles's time, there was, of course, no such distinction between secular and religious.

A variant of this threat - that Church agencies may become un-Church-like - is that of managerialism: that the management of Church agencies, and indeed other institutions in our society, may become so focused on their operating in a business-like way that the fundamental values for which they were founded are obscured and lost to sight. Again, an Anglican school or college should operate in a business-like way, all the better to achieve its educational goals, but should not become so

focused on the idea of being a business, or the remorseless pursuit of efficiency, that its concern for individual students, their all-round education and pastoral care, is compromised. There is a balance to be struck, and some Church institutions may be in danger of not striking a healthy balance. The values and methods of the corporate sector are not universally applicable.

There is another variant of this threat which is that governments will only be willing to engage as “partners” in service-provision those agencies which strip themselves of their Church-like attributes. Some people would appear to want it that only agencies that employ people regardless of their religious views or anti-religious views may be engaged by government as partners in providing employment services. If so, what makes that agency anything other than a wholly secular operation in some meaningless notional sense belonging to the Church? Is, for example, government funding never to be provided to Church schools giving preference in employment to those of their faith? Surely a more liberal approach to partnerships between government and non-government agencies would be to welcome the involvement of a *diversity* of private agencies, some of diverse Christian denominations, some perhaps Jewish or of other religions, and some no doubt secular. To make it a condition of an agency’s having a contract to do work for the government that it not give any effective expression to its Christian foundation is to say that only secular agencies can do work for government, and that seems to me to make a mockery of the idea of partnerships involving the not-for-profit sector with government and wrongly to repudiate the place of the Church in our society.

There is a great tendency among wielders of power to demand conformity. It often takes a considerable maturity to tolerate and even celebrate diversity. Such maturity is essential in political leaders - one of the attributes we should encourage in those in public life. Politics is about the struggle between competing individuals, interests, and ideas to have the power to shape public policy. The pursuit of power often leads individuals to compromise their integrity and their capacity to think independently of what is in their own short-term interests. It has been rightly said that power corrupts; and the arrogance of power - the tendency of those with power to use it arbitrarily and selfishly - is very real. It is because there is a natural human tendency for all this to be true that so much care needs to be taken within societies to devise and uphold constitutional arrangements that limit power, providing checks and balances on its exercise; and it is for this reason also that, in international affairs, a balance of power and other forms of constraint on the untrammelled power of single states or coalitions of states are necessary.

But the personal *character* and *values* of holders of power will also help determine how well or badly they exercise power. The Christian will not necessarily be a good holder of power, but should at least bring to public life attributes of character and values which enhance it. Here there is much to be learnt from the character and life of King Charles I. Bishop Grant, speaking here exactly 21 years ago, said that Charles’s “blameless life … was in its private aspects one of high moral purity and beauty, and in its public aspects one of devotion to God and the Church”, but was “marred in his political career by indecision, fickleness and stubbornness”. Personal virtue is no guarantee of political success. But Charles also had public wisdom which should not be lost to view. He wrote to his eldest son, as he contemplated the possibility of his own execution, that he would rather the younger Charles should be Charles the Good than Charles the Great: it was better to be good than great. Charles wrote:

The true glory of princes consists in advancing God’s glory, in the maintenance of true religion and the church’s good, also in the dispensation of civil power with justice and honor to the public peace.

The traditional order of service for morning prayer in commemoration of Charles’s martyrdom contains the prayer:

Let his memory, O Lord, be ever blessed among us; that we may follow the example of his courage and constancy, his meekness and patience, and great charity.

These and other Christian virtues, such as integrity and humility, are certainly to be commended not least to those who serve in public life.

And yet here too there is a danger. Charles, who was hardly detached in this matter, wrote of “the mask of religion on the face of rebellion”, and of “the rough horns of private men’s covetous and ambitious designs” being “wrapped up and hidden under the soft and smooth pretensions of religion”. Sometimes the politician who feels himself called to public

office by God, or fulfilling there the will of God, is a great danger, and I for one have a well-developed scepticism about such claims. Was Cromwell right when he was “convinced that it was the will of God, so clearly demonstrated by the Army’s victorious progress, that Charles must die”, and in his belief that *Charles* was the man of blood who had wrought untold suffering?

It will be obvious to you that I have raised far more questions than I have answered in this consideration of Church and State stimulated by the example of King Charles, whose commitment to establishing a right relationship between Church and State demanded of him the ultimate sacrifice, and whom we commemorate today. I hope that this modest discussion may be in some small way fitting to his memory, and to the memory of Philip Harris, whose name is given to this address.