







Models of Government/Church Interaction



- Secularism – the state imposes irreligion on the state
- Reconstructionism – a single religion imposes law upon the state
- Jeffersonianism – a natural law serves as the foundation for law, but no one religion is ever established by the government

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Secularism



- The state imposes irreligion on the state; the state dominates the church
- Any supernatural guarantee of human value is ruled out
- Civil law replaces the Moral law
- No objective moral basis for government
- No recognition of any natural law

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Secularism - Critiques



- A natural law is clear and undeniable (what secularist is naturally inclined to believe they should have been aborted?)
- A government big enough to give you your rights is big enough to take them away
- No basis for any international law; no way to judge between nations

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Reconstructionism/Theocracy



- "Theos" – God – "arche" – rule of
- A civil form of government is present, but it is dominated by religious leaders
- Law is written specifically from religious teaching
- Example is Islamic shari'a law
- Reconstruct society on a religious basis

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Reconstructionism/Theocracy

THE MIDDLE EAST

Iranian Pastor Sentenced to Death Could Be Executed if He Doesn't Recant, Says Verdict

By Amy Kolleges
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Iranian evangelical pastor Yusef Nadarkhani has been sentenced to death for apostasy, (Christian Solidarity World)

Iran's Supreme Court says an evangelical pastor charged with apostasy can be executed if he does not recant his faith, according to a copy of the verdict obtained by a religious rights activist group.

Christian Solidarity World says Iranian-born Yusef Nadarkhani, who was arrested in 2009 and given the death sentence late last year, could have his sentence suspended on the grounds that he renounce his faith.

Those who know him say he is not likely to do that, for if he were disposed to giving it up, he would have done it long ago.

If Nadarkhani does not recant, his fate is unclear. It's believed his case would then be remanded to lower courts in Iran.

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Reconstructionism/Theocracy - Critiques



- Israel was unique: "He declares His words to Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any nation" (Psalm 147:19-20)
- God never gave the Mosaic Law to the Gentiles for civil law (e.g. 20 reasons for capital punishment, etc.)
- Promotes legalistic attitudes that become Pharisaic
- In a pluralistic society, whose revelation should be the basis of civil law?

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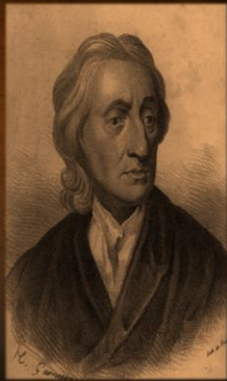
Jeffersonianism



- Affirms the natural law view and opposes denial of divine law
- Allows freedom of religious adherence and worship
- Affirms human dignity and rights as coming from the Creator
- States that there is a natural law written on human hearts that should be followed (cf. Rom 2:14)
- Did not begin with Christianity. Ancient Chinese, Hindi, Greek, and Roman writings showcase an unchanging Logos (reason, truth) that stands behind the flux of human experience

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“The law of Nature [teaches us that] being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions; for men [are] all the workmanship of one omnipotent and infinitely wise Maker.”
- John Locke



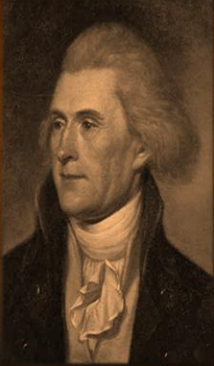
Jeffersonianism



- “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”
- Nothing similar can be found in a statement made by any other nation: **moral well being hinged on a creative act.**
- Moreover, the term “self-evident” communicates the concept of the moral law being undeniable, or objective (so does “truths” instead of “opinions”).

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"God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God?"
- Thomas Jefferson



Jeffersonianism




- Says natural law is the first principle governing human action just as the laws of logic are the first principles governing human thought
- Believes in a divinely prescriptive "ought" vs. a descriptive "is"
- C. S. Lewis shows the imprint of a divine, natural law is found in every culture in the Abolition of Man
- Is necessary for international affairs/law
- "You can't legislate morality" ignores that all laws enforce someone's morality. Further, it is making a moral proclamation

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Virtue is the Necessary Foundation for Freedom

"So true is this, that civil liberty cannot be long preserved without virtue. . . . but a republic once equally poised, must either preserve its virtue or lose its liberty, and by some tumultuous revolution, either return to its first principles, or assume a more unhappy form."
- John Witherspoon



Comparison of the Three Options

	Secularism	Reconstructionism	Jeffersonianism
Nature of State	Secular government	Religious government	Just government
Church/State	Separation	Union	Cooperation
Nature of religious freedom	Freedom from all religions	Freedom for a particular religion	Freedom for all religions
Extent of religion freedom	For none	For a preferred religion	For all
Belief in a deity	Discouraged	Demanded	Encouraged
Basis of civil law	Human experience	Divine law by special revelation	Divine law by general revelation
Example	Marxist China	Iran	Early America

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"Monism is one step away from despotism"
- Isaiah Berlin





"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."
(John 1:14)

Civil Disobedience?



Are we permitted to ever disobey the government?

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Models of Civil Disobedience



- Anarchism – it is always right to disobey the government
- Radical Patriotism – it is never right to disobey the government
- Biblical Submissionism – it is sometimes right to disobey the government

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Radical Patriotism



- God ordains every government: "Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God." (Romans 13:1)
- God expects obedience to every government: "Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient" (Titus 3:1)
- Obedience is necessary, even to evil governments. Paul wrote Romans 13 while under the rule of Nero.
- "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority" (1 Peter 2:13)

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Radical Patriotism – Critiques



- God ordains governments, but not their evil
- Much of the Old Testament has the prophets condemning evil governments
- Obedience to a government is qualified:
 - "But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge"" (Acts 4:19)
 - The midwives disobeyed Pharaoh in Exodus 1 and were blessed by God for it
 - Daniel disobeyed the government and prayed to God
 - Daniel's 3 companions disobeyed the government's command of idolatry

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Key Concept



Christians can obey a government that permits evil,
but not one that commands evil.

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Biblical Submissionism – Disobey when...



- The government commands evil
- The government compels evil actions
- The government negates freedom
- The government is religiously oppressive

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Biblical Submissionism – Examples



- Refusal to murder babies – the Hebrew midwives refused to murder babies under the command of Pharaoh and were blessed by God because of it (cf. Ex. 1:15-21)
- Refusal to kill prophets – Obadiah hides 100 prophets from Jezebel who was murdering all of God's prophets (cf. 1 Kings 18:4, 13-15)
- Refusal to worship an idol – Daniel's companions refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's gold statue (cf. Dan. 3)

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Biblical Submissionism – Examples



- Refusal to pray to a king and not God – Daniel is thrown into the lion's den for refusing the king's (and really those who were jealous of Daniel) request to pray to him and no other god (cf. Dan. 6)
- Refusal to stop preaching the gospel – the apostles refused the leader's requests to stop preaching about Christ (cf. Acts 4)
- Refusal to worship the Antichrist – during the tribulation period, believers will disobey the law to worship the Antichrist (cf. Rev. 12:11)

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Biblical Submissionism – Never Speak Up?

"The commander ordered him [Paul] to be brought into the barracks, stating that he should be examined by scourging so that he might find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way. But when they stretched him out with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?" (Acts 22:24-25)

Christians can certainly invoke the protection afforded them under the government to avoid wrongful punishment when appropriate.



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Revolutions – Ever Right?



"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government . . ."

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Revolutions – Ever Right?



"But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government."

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Revolutions – Ever Right?

"Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she rose and destroyed all the royal offspring of the house of Judah. But Jehoshabeath the king's daughter took Josiah the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons who were being put to death, and placed him and his nurse in the bedroom. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah so that she would not put him to death. He was hidden with them in the house of God six years while Athaliah reigned over the land." (2 Chronicles 22:10-12)

"Now in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took captains of hundreds: Azariah the son of Jeroham, Ishmael the son of Johanan, Azariah the son of Obed, Maaseiah the son of Adaliah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, and they entered into a covenant with him. . . . He stationed all the people, each man with his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the house to the left side of the house, by the altar and by the house, around the king. Then they brought out the king's son and put the crown on him, and gave him the testimony and made him king. And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him and said, "Long live the king!" When Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came into the house of the Lord to the people. She looked, and behold, the king was standing by his pillar at the entrance, and the captains and the trumpeters were beside the king. And all the people of the land rejoiced and blew trumpets, the singers with their musical instruments leading the praise. Then Athaliah tore her clothes and said, "Treason! Treason!" Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds who were appointed over the army and said to them, "Bring her out between the ranks, and whoever follows her, put to death with the sword!" For the priest said, "Let her not be put to death in the house of the Lord." So they seized her, and when she arrived at the entrance of the Horse Gate of the king's house, they put her to death there." (2 Chronicles 23:1, 10-15)

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Prayer for Government Leaders, Not Revolt

"Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves." (Romans 13:1-2)

"First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior" (1 Timothy 2:1-3)

"Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed" (Titus 3:1)

"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right." (1 Peter 2:13-14)

Remember the types of kings and government that Jesus, Paul, and Peter lived under...

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Biblical Submissionism – How to Disobey?

Position of Revolt	Position of Refusal
Revolt against government with violence	Refuse to obey government nonviolently
Change government with force	Change government via legal channels
Fight against government with force	Flee government
Violently reject government's punishment	Accept government's punishments

- Israel fled from Egypt's oppression
- Daniel's companions accepted the punishment of being sent into the furnace
- Daniel accepted the punishment of the lion's den
- Joseph/Mary fled from Herod's government
- Jesus accepted the punishment of Rome

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Conclusions



- Biblical submissionism appears to be the model of civil disobedience reflected in Scripture
- Christians should resist the government when it commands to do evil vs. just permits evil
- Christians should pray for the government authorities, obey the laws, work peacefully to change evil governments, disobey when the government is religiously oppressive, leave if necessary, and accept whatever punishment may come

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