The Ellul Forum

For the Critique of Technological Civilization

Anarchism & Jacques Ellul

From the Editor

This issue of the *Ellul Forum* deals broadly with Ellul and Anarchism. The first two essays look at various aspects of Ellul's biblical interpretation with regard to anarchism. Thomas Bridges examines how Ellul uses the rise of kingship in 1 Samuel 8, arguing that a close examination of the Deuteronomistic History very much supports Ellul's reading in *Anarchy and Christianity*. Wes Howard-Brook takes a different approach, and draws from Ellul's ideas in *Meaning of the City*. The very idea of civilization—a way of life based on cities—according to the Bible is at the root of much violence and domination in human history. Wes Howard-Brook tries to advance Ellul's analysis further by asking whether the origin stories in Genesis "challenge the agriculture-based imperial assumptions of the Babylonian creation epic" and then asks how this potential challenge relates the holy city of Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation. Ellul's critique of the city and agriculture have not been the focus of much scholarly attention. Howard-Brook thus carries the conversation forward and points in helpful directions.

My own contribution to this volume leaves the biblical studies realm and asks what Ellul thought of the police and how this thought relates to recent work in Christian ethics on "just policing"—the idea that an international police force could replace the system of war and make the world a less violent place. I don't think Ellul would support this, and would have a number of pointed observations. Thus my article is more "Ellulian" than analysis of Ellul's work *per se*.

Finally, Brenna Cussen Anglada — a Catholic anarchist from Dubuque, Iowa — takes up some of Wes Howard-Brook's themes as she examines her own use of the personal computer. She draws on Ellul's analysis of technique, arguing that for her, giving up the use of a personal computer is one small step toward recovering a life focused on things that matter, in ways that matter. Computer manufacturers have exploited the earth, oppressed laborers, and for an anarchist like Cussen Anglada, these are deeply troubling things to be implicated in.

Ellul's thought on anarchism hasn't really received the due attention it deserves. Sometimes *Ellul Forum* readers have dismissed his anarchist claims as naïve and things he really didn't mean. In this issue, we take him seriously and look at what it means for a number of areas. I hope further explorations of this type can be done in the future.

Andy Alexis-Baker, Guest Editor

Yahweh is Still King:
Engaging 1 Samuel 8 and Jacques Ellul
by Thomas Bridges

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Introduction: Ellul's Anti-Monarchic Deuteronomist

In attempting to show how the Bible has an "orientation to a certain anarchism" in *Anarchy and Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991; p. 3), Jacques Ellul places significant weight on the account of the institution of kingship in ancient Israel. In his reading of Judges and 1 Samuel, Yahweh resists the institution of Israelite kingship, so that Yahweh is presented as "an enemy of royal power and the state" (p. 50). Judges narrates pre-monarchic Israelite history, when God was the "supreme authority" and not represented by a human leader (it was not technically a "theocracy" because of this). This "flexible system," which Ellul treats as somewhat of an ideal (Ellul is actually ambiguous on this point, never praising this time period, yet lamenting its demise), ended with the beginning of centralized royal power in 1 Samuel 8, and the warnings from God through the judge Samuel on the dangers of kingship were fulfilled in Israel's subsequent history (pp. 46-55). Ellul argues for a biblical current toward anarchy by way of a "naïve" reading (p. 45)—something of hermeneutical value, for sure—but will Ellul's case hold when a sustained scholarly reading is applied to 1 Samuel 8? It is the goal of this paper to answer that question indirectly, by reading 1 Samuel 8 within its context in the "Deuteronomistic History" (DH).

As Vernard Eller explains ("How Jacques Ellul Reads the Bible," *Christian Century* 89 no. 43 (1972): 1212–1215), Ellul employs a "wide angle" hermeneutic—meaning he tries not to lose the forest by only seeing individual trees. Ellul also utilizes a "continuous reading" of scripture, by reading each scriptural text within the context of all canonical

books. In the spirit of Ellul—agreeing that the current of Christian scripture flows in an an-archic direction—I offer a narrower angled reading of the origins of Israel's monarchy. I argue that despite the establishment of human kingship in 1 Samuel. 8, Yahweh is still considered king, and I will conclude with some insights my analyses have unveiled regarding kingship in the DH, relating them to Ellul's *Anarchy and Christianity*. I will (1) be assuming that the Samuel and Kings books are the work of the same single author/redactor (Dtr), and (2) I will be only concerned with the received ("Masoretic") form of the text.

The Kingship of Yahweh

Before delving into 1 Samuel, I must clarify that the kingship of Yahweh was not a prominent pre-exilic theme for Israel. The work of Anne Moore has shown that—regardless of pre-exilic sources redacted by later editors, which are surely included in the MT—the only clearly pre-exilic reference to the metaphor "God is king" is in Isaiah 6:1–11 (Anne Moore, *Moving Beyond Symbol and Myth: Understanding the Kingship of God of the Hebrew Bible Through Metaphor* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 87–89). This makes 1 Samuel 8 and 12 some of the earliest developments of the metaphor, alongside Exodus 15:1b–18 and 19:3–6 (Moore, pp. 106-109). The latter are exilic texts establishing that Yahweh became king over Israel, and as such is the divine lawmaker who offers protection, and in return has the right to Israel's praise and obedience to the laws of the covenant. It was not until Israel's and Judah's monarchies had failed that they devoted much intellectual rigor or reflecting on the metaphor of divine kingship (pp. 93-105). Many scholars have mistakenly followed the timelines of the history of religions school, rather than actual dating of Hebrew bible texts, to discern the development of Hebrew thought, and therefore many scholars state that the Israelite view of divine kingship originated from a

common stock ancient near eastern myth in which a deity who combats chaos or the forces of evil with victory, with the result that humans build the deity a house or abode and declare the eternal kingship of the deity with annual enthronement festivals (pp. 44-45).

Correcting this error has two important implications for my project. First, the late development of the metaphor of divine kingship, as well as the fact that it arose in response to failed human monarchy, should prevent over-determining the identity of Yahweh under the category of kingship; as Walter Brueggemann has labored to make clear, there are other metaphor's of Yahweh's governance present in the Hebrew Bible, including judge, father, and warrior (Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology*, pp. 233–39). None of these images of Yahweh's sovereignty adequately represent Israel's Lord, and no human pattern of governance ought to be projected on to Yahweh. Moreover, Ellul argues (*Anarchy and Christianity*, 32–33) that the image of God as king is subverted by images of God creating through mere words, speaking softly in the wind, and self-limits unlike human kings of the time. Second, the kingship of Yahweh is to be seen as originating in the Exodus and the covenant, rather than primarily as a focus on Yahweh as a divine warrior. Yahweh's sovereignty is the result of liberation and protection of Israel as a Suzerain. 1 Sam contains an early appearance of Yahweh's sovereignty in relation to the metaphor of kingship.

1 Samuel 8: The Crisis of Yahweh's Kingship

1 Samuel 8 contains a riddle: it describes the people's request for a king as rejecting Yahweh, yet Yahweh grants the request and even chooses Israel's first king. Some scholars resolve this tension by positing that a redactor pieced together the text from disparate pro- and anti-monarchic sources (See V. Philips Long, "How Did Saul Become King?," in *Faith, Tradition and History*, edited by A.R. Millard, J.K. Hoffmeier and D.W. Baker (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994): 271–84). But rather than a collection of ill-fitted sources, I read 1 Samuel 8–12 as a rich and complex narrative (regardless of the origins of Dtr's sources): Yahweh does not really surrender kingship, but uses human kingship as an office subordinate to divine kingship. Here Yahweh is not a "flat" character but a "round" one, graciously subverting Israel's rejection of divine kingship by giving them a king subservient to Yahweh. Thus, we can understand the claim that Israel rejected Yahweh and Yahweh's response in the following manner:

although the people should not have requested a human king, Yahweh maintains the covenant and Israel's elect status while granting them a gift they were wrong to demand.

Here is the context: 1 Samuel 4:1–22 narrates a battle in which the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant, which was in Eli's sons care. Though not stated explicitly, the captured Ark is a consequence of the corruption of Eli's sons (David Toshio Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 185). After the Philistines return the Ark to Israel (6:1–21), and Israel defeats the Philistines (7:3–14), chapter 8 informs us of Samuel's old age and his sons' unjust ways (8:1–3). Then the people state that they want a king because (1) Samuel's sons are unlike Samuel (8:4–5), and (2) they want to be like other nations and have a king to govern them and fight their battles (8:20). That they single out Samuel's corrupt sons shortly after suffering a defeat (which is partly blamed on Eli's corrupt sons), suggests the people feared that military defeats would continue if Samuel's sons held leadership positions. Corrupt leadership would surely result in the same consequences, for Yahweh had previously punished Israel for her leaders' sins (1 Sam 4:21. Thus, the request for kingship arises in a context when the Ammonite king Nahash is an imminent danger (12:12 states this retrospectively). This makes sense if we understand defense from oppressors as an integral duty of Israelite leadership, and see that the people had good reason to lack confidence in the leadership of Samuel's sons. Also, Israel's elders were right in their uneasiness about Samuel placing leadership in his son's hands, for, as Ellul notes, the judges had no permanent power, but were roused to the occasion by the Spirit of God—judgeship was not a hereditary role, but a Spirit-guided one (As Ellul mentions, the judges had no permanent power, but were roused to the occasion by the Spirit of God. Cf. *Christianity and Anarchy*, 46–7).

Though we understand Israel's request to relate to her overall safekeeping—a reasonable desire—another reason must be behind this request, for Yahweh interprets it as rejecting Yahweh's Kingship. To understand this rejection, we must remember that Israel viewed Yahweh as their covenantal sovereign. In this regard, two sub-themes of Yahweh's sovereignty are important. First, the Mosaic covenant made the Israelites into Yahweh's subjects—in Deuteronomy 33:2–5, 26–29. If Yahweh ruled as the Suzerain, then any leaders Yahweh established would

by definition be vassals (Anne Moore, *Moving Beyond Symbol and Myth*, 163–9). Earlier in the DH, when Israel sought to institute a dynasty of judges with Gideon and his family, Gideon insists that only Yahweh must rule over Israel (Judges 8:22–23). All political authority was subservient to Yahweh, regardless of the title. Second, although "king" was not a title used early and frequently by Israel to designate Yahweh's role, Yahweh was seated on the cherubim of the Ark, similar to a king seated upon a throne (1 Samuel 4:4) (See also Tryggve N.D. Mettinger, "YHWH SABOATH—The Heavenly King on the Cherubim Throne," in *Studies in The Period of David and Solomon*, ed. Tomoo Ishida (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1982)). If Yahweh is their king and they ask for a king, then they reject Yahweh's kingship—as Yahweh explicitly states in 1 Samuel 8:7.

Therefore, most scholars agree that in requesting a king "like other nations" (8:5) Israel rejected her elect status as Yahweh's covenant people (Lyle Eslinger, *The Kingship of God in Crisis: A Close Reading of 1 Samuel 1–12* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 257; Klein, *1 Samuel*, 76–79; Tsumura, *First Samuel*, 249. Cf. Exodus 19. All quotations are from the NRSV, unless otherwise indicated). In Lyle Eslinger's words, "The request of Yahweh's people to become like the nations in political structure is, therefore, not only a rejection of the theocracy and its judges, but even more it is a rejection of the covenant" (Eslinger, *God's Kingship*, 257). Thus, although the elders are concerned about the Ammonites at their door and about Samuel's sons placing them in peril, the people neither ask for Samuel's intercession (as they had in 7:8, when the Philistines were a threat), nor cry to Yahweh for help. Furthermore, they could have asked for different judges than Samuel's corrupt sons, since judgeship was not a hereditary role. Instead of choosing one of these options, they reject the whole covenantal system, discarding their status as a holy nation. The shift from Yahweh's battles (Judges 4:14, 2 Sam. 5:24) to Israel's battles shows that they rejected Yahweh as their defender, and hence as their king (8:19) (As Ellul points out, the people thought a king would be a better military leader (*Anarchy and Christianity*, 48). Cf. Klein, *1 Samuel*, 78; Tsumura, *First Samuel*, 261). Israel's request for a king was a request for a replacement of this covenantal relationship.

Yahweh tells Samuel that it is not he who is being rejected, but Yahweh (8:7). The people should have

cried to Yahweh for safety from Nahash, based on Yahweh's previous faithfulness in rescuing the people through judges (cf. 12:12), therefore Israel sinned in rejecting Yahweh, which Israel later confessed (12:10, 19). However, Yahweh grants their request, which brings us to our antinomy (i.e., Yahweh says yes to a sinful demand). But if we look closely we can discern how Yahweh undermines their demand and maintains kingship over Israel.

The discrepancy is only apparent because Yahweh delimits kingship. Eslinger puts it this way: "Yahweh, though not liking the request, does not deny it; instead, he [sic] simply subverts it" (Eslinger, *God's Kingship*, 259). The first thing the Lord tells Samuel is to "protest [ha'ed] solemnly unto them" (8:9, AV), and secondly to show them the mishpat ("ways," NRSV) of the king, which are determined by Yahweh. Eslinger notes that this "king will not be like other kings, but under the stipulation (ha'ed) of Yahweh" (p.268). Samuel takes this stipulation as a bad thing, and adds content to the mishpat—the king will usurp Israel's sons and daughters for military purposes and various forms of conscripted labor, and take Israel's first fruits in agriculture, livestock, and so on (8:11–18)—although Samuel's warning includes words not explicitly attributed to Yahweh in the text. Samuel seems to have added a negative prediction of what would happen with actual kings (p.p. 260, 270). The people reject Samuel's warning: "No! But we are determined to have a king over us, so that we also may be like the other nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles" (8:19b–20). But Yahweh is still in charge, as the Hiphil verbs in verse 22 demonstrate: "stipulate the stipulation" (ha'ed taîd), "declare the manner of the king," and "make them a king" (p. 281). Yahweh has maintained authority over Israel, yet allowed room for a certain amount of freedom in the covenantal relationship.

The account of Saul's anointing solidifies my reading that Yahweh retains rule when Yahweh commands Samuel to anoint Saul as *nagîd* over Israel (10:1). Two things support my reading. First, Yahweh appoints Saul *nagîd* to save Israel from the Philistines. Seeing their need, Yahweh interprets their request for a king as a cry for deliverance from their enemies (p. 307). They make a sinful demand—but a demand for help, and Yahweh offers deliverance. Second, the term *nagîd* does not mean king, but vicariate. The people want a *king* (*mlk*), but God gives them a "regent" (*nagîd*), *mlk* signifying when the power originates in the people, *nagîd* when God

is preeminent (M. Tsevet, "The Biblical Account of the Foundation of the Monarchy in Israel," in *The Meaning of the Book of Job and Other Biblical Studies: Essays on the Literature and Religion of the Hebrew Bible* (New York: Ktav, 1980), p. 93). Although Saul is later called *mlk* (10:24; 11:15), what institutes the "kingship" is the occasion for a human to act on Yahweh's behalf. Thus far in the narrative Yahweh is still king and still responds to the cries of the oppressed.

Next, Saul's kingship is fully consummated as Yahweh empowers him to rout the Ammonites (11:1–11), and Samuel invites the people to Gilgal to "renew the kingship" (11:14–12:25). Samuel gives a speech, and in recounting the recent events he reminds them of how the kingship came about: "But when you saw that King Nahash of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' though the Lord your God was your king" (12:12). He adds that the "wickedness you have done in the sight of the Lord is great in demanding a king" (12:17). But we may observe that as they recognize their sin, Samuel assures them that if they follow Yahweh's command, then Yahweh will not cast them away, but if they act wickedly Yahweh will oppose them and their king (12:19–25). Once again, there is room for play in this covenantal relationship between Yahweh and Israel: Yahweh has given them the monarchy, but the human king will be only a vassal, and whether Yahweh will stand behind the king and the people depends on whether they "will follow the Lord" (12:14). It is conceded that all will go well with the people if the people will serve the Lord (12:14). But this is conditional, based on four requirements: they must fear, serve, listen to, not rebel against Yahweh, or the Lord will "be against" the people and their king (12:15) (Cf. Klein, 1 Samuel, 113). We may deduce that the people will have misplaced their trust if they do not perceive that Yahweh is still king, and the covenant is still intact.

Within one chapter the demise of the first human king begins, and Yahweh initiates a search for "a man after his own heart [sic]" (13:14). Saul performs an unlawful sacrifice, which prompts this search, implying that Israel's human kings are interchangeable, but the Lord is the indispensable ruler over Israel. If the king is only as good as the extent to which Yahweh is behind him, then is it not the case the Yahweh is still the king of Israel? Yahweh appointed the first king, and then searches for a new one, therefore the answer is a resounding "yes."

I have attempted to show that the account of the rise of kingship in Israel need not be seen as an ill-fitted composite of pro- and anti-monarchic sources. The apparent contradiction between the request for a king being wicked, and the fact that Yahweh responds to this request, ought to be uncovered: Yahweh answers this request by generously subverting it, accommodating the demand without sacrificing the divine kingship, or the covenant. Yahweh selects a nagîd, who is subservient to king Yahweh. As the philosopher Martin Buber concludes concerning this passage, this political solution means, "that, nevertheless, it will not be a monarchy such as all the nations have, but rather might style itself as a vicariate of God, not simply reporting to heaven, but really a government held accountable to the higher authority and so replaceable by it" (Martin Buber, "Der Gesalbte," *Werke* II (München: Kosel; Heidelberg: Lambert, 1964), 738; quoted in Eslinger God's Kingship, 268). Yahweh responds to their demand without annulling the covenant.

Some Further Issues with Kingship in the Deuteronomistic History

Thus far in this essay I have tried to show how Yahweh graciously subverted Israel's request for a king, and now I will take a brief look at the final Deuteronomic assessment of human kingship.

The DH ends with Judah in exile and the last Davidic heir in prison; whatever Dtr's view is of kingship, the following claim from Brueggemann seems irrefutable: "One defining mark of Israel's life is that the royal system was not finally effective in sustaining Israel" (Buber, 614). However, the hope for Davidic kingship did not die out, even with the ambiguous ending to 2 Kings. As we saw in 1 Samuel 12, it will only go well for a king if he meets certain conditions, and as we saw from analyzing the meaning of nagîd, the purpose of an Israelite king is to serve the higher king. David's line is guilty of sin in the DH, and this results in political disaster for Israel: Solomon's heart turns from Yahweh, therefore all the tribes but one will be torn from his son (1 Kgs. 11:9–13); Rehoboam intensifies his father and grandfather's forced labor policy and the northern tribes secede (1 Kgs. 12:1–19); and a final blow comes with Manasseh, who causes all Judah to sin, drawing Yahweh's judgment (2 Kgs. 21:10). Amon did evil in the sight of Yahweh, (21:20), as did Jehoahaz (23:32) and Jehoiakim (23:37). The reign of Josiah was a high point in the DH sandwiched

between the evil kings, but, as Brueggemann puts it, "it was too little too late" (Brueggemann, "Ancient Israel on Political Leadership: Between the Book Ends," *Political Theology* 8.4 (2007), 464). Because of the sins of Manasseh, Nebuchadnezzar razes Judah (24:4), and Judah enters exile (25:21). Dtr makes it clear that certain conditions have not been met (proper worship, monotheism, and so on), and exile is the proper consequence.

2 Kings 25 is intentionally ambiguous regarding whether there is hope for Israel to return from exile, and whether the monarchy will be restored (Walter Brueggemann, *1 & 2 Kings* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 606; David Janzen, "An Ambiguous Ending: Dynastic Punishment in Kings and the Fate of the Davidides in 2 Kings 25.27–30," *JSOT* 33.1 (2008): 39–58). The northern dynasties are said to be permanently deposed for causing the people to sin, and this could also be the case with Judah's kingship, but, on the other hand, Yahweh never explicitly annuls the promise made to David in 2 Samuel 7:13—to "establish the throne of his kingdom forever." David Janzen's verdict is worth quoting at length (Janzen, "Ambiguous Ending" 58):

> *In the light of the earlier specificity of dynastic punishment, Dtr seems intentionally to create ambiguity at the end of Kings in regard to the future of the Davidides. Writing in the exile—or possibly in the early post-exilic period—Dtr simply wishes to hedge his or her bets. The ambiguous fate of the Davidides suits a time frame when it was impossible to tell what the fate of the Davidide would be. This intentional ambiguity does not commit Dtr to any one outcome for the Davidides, and provides the Historian with flexibility to cover various possible eventualities.*

I also find helpful Brueggemann's suggestion that there is a hint of hope in Evil-merodach's kind treatment of Jehoiachin in 2 Kgs. 25:27–30 (Brueggemann, *1&2 Kings*, 606–7). What is not said is important here—there *may* be hope. But whatever the case, surely Hans Walter Wolff is right in saying that the people are to *turn back* (*shûbû*) from their evil ways (Hans Walter Wolff, "The Kerygma of the Deuteronomistic Historical Work," in *Reconsidering Israel and Judah: Recent Studies on the Deuteronomistic History*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and J. Gordon McConville (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), p. 71). Solomon prayed that if the people go into exile, that they would repent and

be forgiven, and that their captors have compassion on them (1 Kgs. 8:46–53). The Dtr may be daring Judah and Israel to hope, but, once again the royal system was unable to sustain Israel, and Dtr gives no reason for the reader to believe that another royal system would do better.

Some Conclusions

What I believe my analyses have made possible are the following conclusions, which I will relate to Ellul's work:

(1) Yahweh never renounced kingship, but installed vicariates to act on Yahweh's behalf, for the good of the people. This is the generous subversion of the Israelites rejection of their identity as Yahweh's covenant people (Cf. Gerbrandt, *Kingship According to the Deuteronomistic History*, who sees the people's sin residing in asking for a king *like the other nations* (109). In his view Dtr is pro–monarchic, but against kingship in the manner of the gentiles). Ellul is justified in reading 1 Samuel in a way that maintains that Yahweh is still the supreme authority over Israel after the institution of monarchy. The monarchy in Israel was really a dynasty of vassals who led Israel into idolatry and betrayal of the true king, but Yahweh faithfully did what was best for Israel, which ultimately meant the end of the monarchy. Ellul is right—at least in relation to the DH—to interpret scripture as not dictating a certain political system. Ellul merely advocates that people "not rule out anarchism in advance, for in my view this seems to be the position which in this area is closest to biblical thinking" among all of the political options (Ellul, *Anarchy and Christianity*, 4). When Yahweh is the ultimate authority, any political system will have an anarchic leavening from the Spirit of God within it, whether this authority is acknowledged or not (Babylon is the perfect example of a human *arche* that does not acknowledge Yahweh, yet is still under Yahweh's control in the view of Dtr). There simply is no human *arche* able to maintain rule outside the providential permissiveness of Yahweh.

(2) Though kingship was sometimes a good, such as when David executed justice (2 Sam. 8:15), or when Josiah turned Judah from idolatry, for the most part the kings led the people into sin. The kings are responsible for the exile of Yahweh's people. This would seem like an obvious point, if there were not other possible and actual explanations for the exile (Brueggemann (*Old Testament Theology*, 587) notes

that exile could have been explained in many ways, but was not for Dtr. Also, the Chronicler does not blame the kings as much as Dtr does, placing responsibility on the people, whereas Dtr blames the kings). Also, David Janzen notes that Dtr distinguishes between the sin of kings and of people, because kings *cause* people to sin, lead them into it (Janzen, "Ambiguous Ending," 44). Dtr's cumulative view of kingship is that they are subordinate to Yahweh. Kings are faithful, unfaithful, or some mixture, but are never just "a king." And when they are unfaithful, Yahweh would rather the people be in exile than be led astray by kings into idolatry. This is a harsh pronouncement, but I do not see any other conclusion to the DH concerning kingship.

(3) The following question must be entertained: would a reinstatement of the Davidic dynasty bring Judah and Israel back to Yahweh? David's heir is alive at the end of the DH, but we must remember that he too had a history of evil in the eyes of Yahweh (2 Kgs. 24:9). It is the sin of kings that has brought catastrophe about, so why should the kingship of Israel or Judah be restored? I think the human run at kingship was not so good for Yahweh's people. If the return of a king could reinstate centralized worship, I imagine Dtr would find this an act of Yahweh's good grace. Otherwise, it seems to me that the DH has demonstrated the risk of the Exodus people losing their identity when led by kings. Yahweh's vicariates failed to serve Yahweh and the good of the people, and were rightly deposed. Yahweh is still king, for Yahweh brought about these destructive events. The question remains unanswered as to why this line of kings ought to be restored, and the goodness of monarchy stands in serious question from the perspective of the DH.

(4) At the end of the DH, with the future of Israel's monarchy seemingly over, the future is nevertheless open: hope for a good king persisted, and as we know it developed into messianism, and, eventually, Christology. Although the promise to David in 2 Samuel 7 surely did not have Jesus of Nazareth in mind, this passage would later be interpreted as the seeds of messianic hope (Brueggemann, 1&2 Kings, 608–10). Surely this is not the view of Dtr on kingship, but the open-ended nature of the DH allowed for such flexible reinterpretations. Whatever the case, if my analyses are sound, the people at least were given reason by Dtr to trust that Yahweh was still king, exile could be a perfect opportunity to learn once again what it might mean to live with only one king—Yahweh.

With such an open-endedness to the DH concerning political structures (aside from the certainty that Yahweh is Lord of all nations), all political systems are placed in a tentative position. Ellul is overstating the case in claiming that the dominant thinking in Israel from the 8th to 4th centuries was primarily antimonarchic (Ellul, *Anarchy and Christianity*, 51); what would be more accurate is to say that from an exilic or post-exilic perspective the monarchs were blamed for leading Israel into sin and its political consequences, and yet Judah still hoped for a true Davidic king. Resistance to monarchy paved the way to Christology. Yahweh graciously subverted Israel's sinful demand for a king, but—at least from a Christian perspective—sent the true king in human flesh to judge and transform the standards of monarchy. A "continuous reading" of scripture must then see Yahweh as playfully responsive to the chosen people, taking an often oppressive structure (monarchy), giving it a chance, and, when it failed, demonstrating in the Christ how Yahweh's sovereignty differs from all other authority by centering on Servanthood, rather than domination (See John Howard Yoder's reading of the book of Luke in *The Politics of Jesus*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), especially 36–39). But it must also be remembered that kingship is only one of the many metaphors used in the Hebrew Bible to portray Yahweh, so it should not surprise us if Yahweh turns out to be a different kind of king.

Once again, Ellul employs a "wide angle" hermeneutic, reading the Hebrew Bible continuously in his Anarchy and Christianity, without pausing to make specific claims about 1 Samuel or the institution of kingship—he merely comments that 1 Samuel 8 marks the rise of royal power and the rejection of Yahweh the liberator. What I have attempted to do is look at the patch of trees surrounding 1 Samuel 8 to make sure Ellul has the forest right, and I conclude that he has. The DH makes clear that Yahweh is Lord, not kings and their chariots, and any political system stands under the gracious judgment and Lordship of Yahweh.

"Come Out, My People!"
Rethinking the Bible's Ambivalence About Civilization

by Wes Howard-Brook

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Few books have been more formative of my understanding of God's relationship to human social structures than Jacques Ellul's *The Meaning of the City*. He shows like no one before him and few after how clearly Genesis roots the origin of the city in human violence and domination. It is part, of course, of Ellul's larger critique of technique: the human attempt to take control of what God has provided as gift.

Ellul continues in *Meaning* to trace the Bible's attitude toward the "holy city," Jerusalem. He powerfully explores how Jerusalem is portrayed as both "holy" and of no inherent importance. "Her only meaning is to testify of a new Jerusalem" (p. 110). The reality of Jesus Christ replaces Jerusalem as the locus of encounter with God.

In the forty years since *Meaning*, biblical and other scholarship has discovered many important elements of the ancient world and of the Bible's composition. The source criticism that developed in the eighteenth century has been challenged on all sides, and new ways of understanding the original contexts of the Bible are being actively explored. Further, developments in political, anthropological, and language theory have led to radical reconsideration of the relationship between texts and historical contexts.

One trajectory arising from these recent discoveries has been the expansion of Ellul's concern with "the city" to that of "empire." Throughout biblical history, God's people were surrounded by and embedded within the great empires of Babylon, Persia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. In our own time, we are increasingly able and willing to name "empire" as our own context, whether one thinks of that in terms of American Empire or global corporate empire. How do ancient texts such as Genesis and the narrative of Israel's monarchy sound different when considered from within the framework of acceptance of or resistance to empire?

This is, of course, a huge topic, one which I have addressed at length in my book, *"Come Out, My People!:" God's Call Out of Empire In the Bible and Beyond* (Orbis, 2010). In this brief essay, I can only offer some suggestive lines of inquiry. First, how do Genesis' narratives of origin challenge the agriculture-based imperial assumptions of the Babylonian creation epic, Enuma Elish? Second, how might we hear the stories of origin of Israel's relationship with the "holy city," Jerusalem, not as "scripture" but as political propaganda aimed to co-opt the Name of YHWH for an imperial act of city and nation building?

Cursing agriculture

Ellul begins *Meaning* with the story of Cain, the first city builder. However, Genesis' antiurban narrative begins earlier, with the first verses of Genesis 1. Traditional source criticism—which Ellul eschwed in any event—saw Genesis as presenting two creation stories: Genesis 1, part of the so-called "Priestly" strand of the Pentateuch, and Genesis 2, part of the "Yahwist" strand. The Priestly narrative is understood to be post-exilic, focused on establishing order via genealogical lists and other apparatus deemed the provenance of an urban priestly elite. The supposed purpose is to substitute ritual order for monarchical order. The Yahwist narrative, on the other hand, is usually understood to be older, often

associated with the supposed "Solomonic enlightenment" in which "wisdom" flourished amid the prosperity and security of imperial Jerusalem.

As noted, recent discoveries have increasingly discredited this two source theory. Instead, interpreters are frequently reading Genesis 1-11 (if not the entire book) against the background of the Babylonian exile of Jerusalem's elite in the early 6th century BCE. The experience of exile was akin to the experience of German scientists brought to the US after World War II. The place was "foreign," but overflowing with wealth, culture and technology. The source of such splendor, according to the Babylonian Enuma Elish, was an urban divine order established in primordial time. That is, the city of Babylon was not a human building project, but a gift of the gods. The hierarchical social structure was similarly a "given," established as part of the order of creation. Humans—that is, other than the royal elite—were designated by the gods to serve Babylon by working the irrigated agricultural fields that surrounded the city, as well as conducting the necessary tasks of urban maintenance. To serve the human king was to serve the divine king, the god Marduk.

Ellul, of course, correctly read Genesis' Tower of Babel story as a caricature of this pretension to divine legitimation. In "Technique and the Opening Chapters of Genesis," he read the Garden and Expulsion stories as expressive of the beginning of "technique," focusing his discussion on the question of "work" before and after "the Fall." Ellul accepted the common translation of the divine command in Gen 2:15 as "to cultivate it and keep it." However, recent Genesis scholarship notes that the Hebrew 'bd translated "cultivate" or "till" more often means "serve." Thus, the question of "cultivation" in the sense of working the earth does not actually arise in the Garden, but only with the Expulsion In the "curse" proclamation in Genesis 3, the voice of YHWH undermines the root of the imperial claim that generating surplus agriculture is part of the divine command to humanity. Rather than receiving the divine gift of food from trees, people are "sentenced" to agriculture, as we hear in this passage:

> And to the human ['adam] God said, *"Because you have listened to the voice of your woman, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the topsoil ['adamah] because of you; in painful work ['itstsavon] you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the topsoil, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return." (Gen. 3:16–19)*

Several specific words underscore the point. The previously sacred relationship between the 'adam and the 'adamah is now "cursed," a technical biblical term expressing the inability to bring forth life. Instead, the human will experience pain in wresting "bread" from the ground. Of course, "bread" is not a product of creation, but of human technological manipulation. "Plants of the field" specifically refers throughout the Bible to domesticated crops. "Thorns and thistles" refers to inedible species that arise when soil has been disturbed and eroded by plowing (Carol Newsom, "Common Ground," in *Earth Story in Genesis*, ed. Normal C. Habel et al. (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2001), 73–86). The divine speech-act ends with the expulsion of the humans from the garden to live "in the east," which for Israelites, signified the Tigris-Euphrates river valleys upon which Babylonian and Assyrian empires were built.

Agriculture is the basis for what we call "civilization." Surplus agriculture allows for division of labor, social stratification, and military-based security that undergirds "empire" throughout history. Key here is that Genesis presents this state of affairs as a divine curse. It valorizes instead human life experienced in direct contact with the Creator God who provides all that humans need as gift. More concretely, it presents the original state of divine blessing as food gathering. The other half of the usual pair, "hunter-gatherer," comes only after the Flood narrative as a divine concession to the persistence of human violence against creation and one another (Gen 9.1-6).

Throughout Genesis (and Exodus), the question of food is a central test of trust in YHWH. Immediately after Abram's unconditional response to YHWH's call to leave empire behind, he experiences "hunger" (Hebrew, ra`av, usually translated as "famine"). This designates not a "natural" condition, but a function of urban empire controlling access to agricultural surplus. Abram is willing to sacrifice his wife to the king of Egypt in order to gain access to Egyptian food (Gen 12.11-20). But the clearest expression of this relationship between "bread" and "empire" is in the Joseph story at the close of the Genesis narrative. The background here is likely no longer exile and Babylon's Enuma Elish, but the experience several centuries later of Ptolemaic Egyptian control of

Jerusalem and environs. Joseph, like Jerusalem's elite, has not only collaborated with Egypt's imperial establishment, but has claimed that it is the will of God for Jacob's family to come to Egypt for food and to "settle" there (Gen 45.7-10). But once the family of Israel has left the Promised Land for Egypt, we hear the true nature of Joseph's imperial authority (Gen 47.13-26). With further "hunger," the people come to Joseph seeking "grain." They receive it, but not before they have surrendered money, animals, land and freedom to the imperial representative.

Thus, from beginning to end, Genesis not only condemns "the city," but reveals the unholy mechanism by which the city is possible. The human yearning to take control of the food supply, "from the beginning," leads to enormous pain and suffering.

Solomon's "wisdom"

Ellul's critique of Jerusalem, as noted, accepts its vocation as "holy city," even if its ultimate purpose is to be transcended in and through Jesus Christ. Ellul largely takes the monarchical narrative as given, including that God has "chosen" Jerusalem in ratification of David's taking of the city from the Jebusites, and that Temple and ark make the city "holy" (Meaning, pp. 95-96).

Closer study of the David-Solomon narrative, however, can lead one to radical questioning of these premises. Biblical historical Baruch Halpern has shown in great detail that the narrative is likely an attempt to legitimize the reign of David and his son (See Baruch Halpern, *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004). As such, we must be highly suspicious of what otherwise sound like standard claims that echo across imperial history: that the "high" God lives in his temple in the capital city, and the human king is his representative. What might these suspicions lead us to discover behind the "official" viewpoint?

David, as encountered on the surface of the biblical narrative, is not what anyone would call "holy." He is a extortioner, adulterer, murderer and gang leader, who is willing to battle Israelites on behalf to the dreaded Philistines (1 Sam 27). As king, he brutally puts down popular rebellion, including one led by his own beloved son, Absalom. On his death bed, he instructs his successor, Solomon, to execute those whom the old king thinks had been unfaithful to him.

Solomon's willingness to carry out these orders is attributed to his "wisdom" (1 Kg 2.6, 9).

Indeed, the subsequent narrative attributes divinely-given "wisdom" to Solomon via a dream, a wisdom which will exceed that of "all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt" (1 Kg 4.30). But shouldn't we be suspicious of an all-too-familiar "wisdom" that includes strategic assassination?

Whatever Solomon's wisdom was, immediately upon his death, "all the assembly of Israel" go to his son-successor, Rehoboam, to complain that "Your father made our yoke heavy…" (1 Kg 12.3). Behind the royal propaganda machine's portrayal of Judah and Israel "happy…sitting in security…under their vines and fig trees" (1 Kg 4.20, 25) is another story which manages to reach the surface of the narrative. Yes, the monarchy can provide military security (maintained by Solomon's forty thousand horses and chariots), but at the usual great cost: imperially enforced taxation that provides enormous wealth and luxury for the elite but slave labor for the ordinary folk. Is this what YHWH-provided "wisdom" is supposed to look like?

The textual evidence for Solomon's God-given wisdom is the report of a royal dream. Of course, there is no way, then or now, to challenge directly the authenticity of such a claim. But the narrative provides a clear, if subtle, clue, as to both the truth and nature of this supposed "wisdom" in an oft-overlooked story. Immediately upon waking from the dream, we are told of the only public act of Solomon's entire reign: the resolution of a maternity dispute between two street prostitutes (1 Kg 3.16-28). Was this the reason for wanting a king "like other nations" (1 Sam 8.5)? The entire episode practically shouts to be interpreted allegorically rather than literally, not least because the wider David-Solomon narrative has already presented two blatantly allegorical stories about royal behavior (2 Sam 12, 14).

Studying the details of this story reveals plainly what Solomon's "wisdom" was: holding together by imperial control the two otherwise separate peoples, Israel and Judah. The moment Solomon was dead, Israel rebelled from Jerusalem-centered control to form its own, decentralized identity. Although Israel eventually succumbed to the same kind of urban-based empire from which it had escaped, there are strong hints that the original vision was for something radically different. As I explain in more

detail in *Come Out, My People*, the core Exodus narrative may well have been composed to legitimate and support both the rebellion and the alternative vision of a wilderness-based covenant relationship directly between YHWH and the people.

Thus, "from the beginning," Jerusalem was an imperial project, hardly different from that of Babylon or Egypt. Throughout the remainder of biblical history, prophets and apocalyptic visionaries proclaimed judgment on Jerusalem for its participation in empire, both "at home" and "abroad." The collection of apocalyptic texts gathered as 1 Enoch express such a radical critique of this imperial participation that the Jerusalem-centered scribes and priests who established the scope of "scripture" excluded the texts from the eventual canon. Of course, it was Jesus' own harsh critique and rejection of Jerusalem that led Jerusalem's defenders to provide him an imperial execution.

Space does not permit exploration of how consistently the core texts of what we know as the New Testament continue this rejection of Jerusalem's claim to embody the divine will even as it collaborates with the Roman Empire. Ellul anticipated this in his groundbreaking interpretation of Jesus' relationship with Jerusalem, both in the gospels and in the book of Revelation. However, as we know, a few centuries later, the unthinkable became reality: the claim of the Roman Empire to be "Christian." Constantine's audacious act of imperial authority is in many ways a perfect analog for Solomon's own claim for a YHWH-authorized empire.

But Christians should have no basis for accepting such propaganda, given how radically it conflicts with the Good News of God's kingdom of love-based peace. Imperial propaganda, as Ellul so cogently noted throughout his career, has an amazing capacity to convince people of what they otherwise know to be false. The revelation in Jesus Christ of God's true purpose for human life continues to be the most powerful means of defeating empire and its propaganda. We should all continue to be grateful to Ellul for opening doors that allow the Light to shine in the darkness.

Just Policing:
An Ellulian Critique

by Andy Alexis-Baker

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Since the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, many pacifist-minded Christians have began to explore differences between policing and warfare with the noble hope of limiting or even abolishing war as we know it. For example, Catholic theologian Gerald Schlabach has developed a theory he calls "just policing." Schlabach argues that the differences between policing and war are significant enough to merit a wholesale realignment of just war and pacifist thinking. Rather than justify war according to abstract criteria, just policing would draw upon international law to pursue suspected criminals, which should limit civilian casualties and demonizing of individuals and groups (Gerald Schlabach, ed. *Just Policing, Not War* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2007), p. 4). If just war theorists would honestly explore these distinctions, they would recognize policing is more appropriate to Christian duty than war. If pacifists would "support,

participate, or at least not object to operations with recourse to limited but potentially lethal force," then a *rapprochement* might occur between just war theorists and pacifists through policing (Schlabach, p.3).

In *God's Politics*, Jim Wallis claims that since 9/11 many Christians have re-read Jacques Ellul, "who explained his decision to support the resistance movement against Nazism by appealing to the 'necessity of violence' but wasn't willing to call such recourse 'Christian'" (Jim Wallis, *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), 166). Similarly, Christian pacifists might respond to terrorism, Wallis claimed, by advocating that the international community create a global police force to deal with violations of international law and human rights (Wallis, 164–67). Such a force, Wallis wrote, is "much more constrained, controlled, and circumscribed by the rule of law than is the violence of war, which knows few real boundaries" (p. 166).

Wallis' suggestion that Ellul's works may help to formulate a response to terrorism, and that such a response ought to be "policing" raises the question of what an Ellulian analysis of policing might look like. Ellul was after all an anarchist and viewed the police as a technique. In fact, his most famous text, *The Technological Society*, by my count uses police as an example of technique over thirty times. In what follows, I will use Ellul—rather than summarize his views—to critique just policing. Those who advocate for just policing have not adequately tested whether police are less violent because of the rule of law, and they make ahistorical arguments that do not countenance the possibility that policing may in fact sustain or even worsen violence, not lessen it.

The importance of history

At the outset of his book *The Technological Society*, Ellul decries the scholarly tendency to reduce technique to machines, stating that this "is an example of the habit of intellectuals of regarding forms of the present as identical with that of the past" (Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, trans. John Wilkinson (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), 3). But the caveman's tool differs qualitatively from modern technology. This same bad habit applies to current reflections on police. Police have not always existed; they are a modern invention.

Greco-Roman cities did not employ officials to prevent or detect common criminal activity; citizens themselves performed these tasks. (For more on law enforcement in ancient Athens and Rome see David Cohen, *Law, Violence, and Community in Classical Athens* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and Wilfried Nippel, *Public Order in Ancient Rome* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995)). Athenian law centered on private prosecution, which meant that the victim or her family prosecuted the perpetrator in Athenian courts. For public crime like stealing city property, any citizen could prosecute and would do the necessary detective work and witness solicitation (Virginia Hunter, *Policing Athens: Social Control in the Attic Lawsuits, 420-320 B.C.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 125). Athenians usually settled disputes through negotiation, mediation and arbitration with minimal formal structures or authorities and stressed keeping peace over blame. To Athenians, democracy meant "consensus rather than coercion, participation rather than delegation. At the judicial level, the principle of voluntary prosecution . . . was fundamental" (Hunter, p. 88) Far from pandemonium, the Athenian system worked well. A state police would have been unthinkable.

Roman society worked in a similar way. If a person witnessed a crime, they cried out for those nearby to help aid in capturing the perpetrator and in aiding the victim. The Roman military never involved itself in such acts unless a riot or rebellion was about to ensue that would disrupt the flow of goods to Rome. Classicist Wilfried Nippel even claims, "We do not even know to what degree (if at all) the Roman authorities undertook prosecution of murder" (Nippel, *Public Order in Ancient Rome*, 2).

This informal "hue and cry" system prevailed through the Middle Ages as see in Chaucer's Nun's Priest's Tale. As Chaucer described it, the hue and cry involved shouting to draw attention to a crime. Those nearby gathered to witness, to help, to investigate and even to right the wrong. They might form a *posse comitatis*, led by the shire reeve (later called "sheriff") who was an estate manager, to hunt for a fleeing felon. The entire process was a community activity, not the responsibility of a professional police. This description is confirmed in legal codes throughout Europe. For instance, the municipal code of Cuenca, Spain, published around 1190 C.E., describes city employees such as judges, an inspector of market weights, a bailiff to guard incarcerated individuals, a town crier and guards for agriculture (The English translation is published as

The Code of Cuenca: Municipal Law on the Twelfth-Century Castilian Frontier, trans. James Powers (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000)). But the code does not mention any officials to detect or prevent crime. At most medieval cities had night watchmen, who were not police but firemen who might also warn of other danger.

The American colonies used the hue and cry and night watch system, memorialized in Paul Revere's night-time warning, "The British are coming!" The English-speaking world developed professionalized preventative policing during the nineteenth-century. In America, these police forces evolved along two paths.

Southern police forces evolved from state-mandated slave patrols, which monitored every aspect of slave life to prevent revolts. These armed patrols morphed into southern police forces before and after the Civil War. Despite occasional white protests, the police carried firearms because, they claimed, the shadowy fear of slave revolts and the mythical physical prowess of a revolting slave necessitated well-armed police (See Bryan Wagner, *Disturbing the Peace: Black Culture and the Police Power after Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009)). Most southern police departments, however, formed postbellum, simply taking over slave patrol disciplinary methods and applying them to the newly freed back populations through arrests on disorderly conduct, public intoxication, loitering, arrest "on suspicion," "on warrant," larceny and prostitution. Born in 1868, W.E.B. DuBois later said (*Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), 124, 25):

> *The police system of the South was originally designed to keep track of all Negroes, not simply of criminals; and when the Negroes were freed and the whole South was convinced of the impossibility of free Negro labor, the first and almost universal device was to use the courts as a means of reenslaving the blacks. It was not then a question of crime, but rather one of color, that settled a man's conviction on almost any charge. Thus Negroes came to look upon courts as instruments of injustice and oppression, and upon those convicted in them as martyrs and victims.*

In the North, police departments emerged in the nineteenth century to suppress the "dangerous class." In city after city police departments combated working class vices such as drinking and vagrancy, not violent crime. For instance, from 1873 to 1915 police superintendents in Buffalo, New York crime consistently requested increased funding to hire more police, citing as a reason not a rise in violent crime, but labor strikes (Sidney Harring, "The Buffalo Police—1872-1915: Industrialization, Social Unrest, and the Development of the Police Institution" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1976), 43). Arrest records confirm this focus. The 1894 records from Buffalo—then a city of 300,000—show that police arrested 6,824 people for drunkenness, 4,014 for disorderly conduct, 4,764 for vagrancy, 1,116 for being tramps (p. 201). Yet they arrested only 98 people for felonious violence (murder, robbery and rape) (p. 192). The superintendents—invariably tied to big businesses—used "public order" arrests alongside more violent methods to break strikes and control unions.

Besides maintaining class order, northern police also helped consolidate political power. The police controlled elections by promoting turnout, monitoring voting stations, and harassing electoral opposition to the current administration since new regimes usually replaced existing police with loyalists. This happened following elections in Los Angeles (1889), Kansas City (1895), Chicago (1897) and Baltimore (1897) (See Robert Fogelson, *Big-City Police* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 30).

Understanding this history of policing is important. Do the police represent a natural desire for security that is central to all societies, dismissals of which reveal a profound naiveté? Or is modern policing a technique that represents a profound shift in western history as Ellul sees it? My contention is that instead of promoting the common good or protecting the weak, police have historically promoted particular interests, siding with their employers and with dominant racial and economic groups. Police technique is applicable to many areas, as Ellul claimed. The police did not result from inevitable historical forces but from calculated moves to maintain social stratification that continue into the present.

The rule of law is an illusion

Besides mistakenly making the police into an ancient and natural institution, the notion that the rule of law restrains police violence unlike the military remains untested. For Ellul, the rule of law is a pure illusion: "We must unmask the ideological falsehoods of

many powers, and especially we must show that the famous theory of the rule of law which lulls the democracies is a lie from beginning to end" (Jacques Ellul, *Anarchy and Christianity*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdman's, 1991), 16). Taking this statement seriously, rule of law as it functions in just policing should be challenged at two levels. First, when the U.S. military charges a soldier with a felony, such as abusing prisoners or killing civilians, 90% are convicted and most are incarcerated. (According to the 2009 "Annual Report of the Code Committee on Military Justice" 1098 soldiers across all military branches were charged with the equivalent of a serious felony under military law. Of those 972 were convicted. See http://www.armfor.uscourts.gov/annual/FY09Annual Report.pdf accessed July 21, 2010). By comparison, in 2009 only 33% of American police officers charged were convicted—even if they killed unarmed, innocent people—and only 64% of those convicted were incarcerated. (The statistics on police misconduct are created by an NGO called The National Police Misconduct Statistics and Reporting Project and are "low-end estimates" based on news reports across the United States. See http://www.injusticeeverywhere.com/?page_id=1588 accessed July 21, 2010). These statistics contradict the assumption that law operates more on the police than the military.

More fundamentally, however, policing advocates have missed that police operate as a sovereign power that stands above the law through their discretionary powers whereby they determine when, where and upon whom they will implement law. This discretionary power conflicts with western democratic theory, which gives pride of place to the rule of law. John Locke, for example, argued that "settled and standing rules" should circumscribe discretionary authority; due process should prioritize individual rights over coercive police powers; and the rule of law should protect citizens from arbitrary arrest and ensure their fair treatment while in custody. For "wherever law ends," Locke proclaimed, "tyranny begins" (John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government, and a Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. Ian Shapiro (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 189, 90; Bk 2, §202). Locke prohibited discretion as tyrannical except in emergencies where "the safety of the people . . . could not bear a steady fixed route" (169; Bk 2, §56). At that point the executive could "act according to discretion for the public good, without the prescription of the law, and sometimes even against

it." (Locke, 172; Bk 2, §60. For a discussion of Locke's notion of prerogative see Pasquino Pasquale, "Locke on King's Prerogative," *Political Theory* 26, no. 2 (1998): 198–208). Locke thus pushed discretion—a decision outside the law—to edge of government, denying its necessity in quotidian governance.

Echoing Locke, Jeffrey Reiman argues that "police discretion begins where the rule of law ends: police discretion is precisely the subjection of law to a human decision beyond the law" (Jeffrey Reiman, "Is Police Discretion Justified in a Free Society?," in *Handled with Discretion: Ethical Issues in Police Decision Making*, ed. John Kleinig (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996), 74). Because police operate in "low visibility" conditions, the only people likely to know that the police officer decided not to invoke the law are the police officer and the suspect. Thus discretionary decisions are unreviewable and risk becoming arbitrary and prejudiced, particularly in cases of racial profiling, police brutality and class bias. In using discretion, police act as sovereigns in a state of emergency and can disregard law. Thus the assumption that police operate under the rule of law ignores routine discretion that transforms the police from an institution that enforces law, into a sovereign institution that can act without lawful authority and even against the law. In the fictional HBO series, *The Wire*, which is a hard-hitting critique of not only current American policing, but other institutions as well, one of the seasoned police officers named McNulty tells his fellow officer: "Let me let you in on a little secret. The patrolling officer on his beat is the one true dictatorship in America. We can lock a guy up on the humble, lock him up for real, or say fuck it and drink ourselves to death under the expressway and our side partners will cover us. No one, I mean no one, tells us how to waste our shift!" (*The Wire*, Season 4, episode 10). The police are thus an autonomous technique.

In states of emergencies, sovereigns suspend law and use their monopoly on violence most often in police actions both externally and internally. Internally, the Holocaust was a police action within a state of emergency that Hitler had declared soon after taking office. In the Holocaust, the police did not violate German law; the entire operation was legal, which the legally police carried out. Other scholars have also noted that the Holocaust was legal and a police action. See Michael Berenbaum, "The Impact of the Holocaust on Contemporary Ethics," in *Ethics in the*

Shadow of the Holocaust: Christian and Jewish Perspectives, ed. Judith Herschcopf Banki et al. (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2008), 256. Quoting a Nazi official Hannah Arendt writes, "only the police 'possessed the experiences and the technical facilities to execute an evacuation of Jews *en masse* and to guarantee the supervision of the evacuees.' The 'Jewish State' was to have a police governor under the jurisdiction of Himmler." (Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Viking Press, 1965), 76). These states of emergencies are not confined to totalitarian states. The United States, for instance, has experienced nearly uninterrupted states of emergencies since the 1800's, using them to suppress labor disputes, deport "communists," and to execute people in the Civil War. Police actions are characteristic of sovereign power in times of national emergency, and this power has often been of the most brutal kind. These powers have been routine and are not exceptional at all, as Ellul argues (*Violence: Reflections from a Christian Perspective* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1970), 86):

> *But so long as it faces crisis or encounters obstacles, the state does what it considers necessary, and following the Nuremberg procedure it enacts special laws to justify action which in itself is pure violence. These are the 'emergency laws,' applicable while the 'emergency' lasts. Every one of the so-called civilized countries knows this game.*

Community, policing and order

With discretionary powers, police primarily maintain order rather than enforce law. But, Ellul would remind us (*The Technological Society*, 103):

> *This order has nothing spontaneous in it. It is rather a patient accretion of a thousand details. And each of us derives a feeling of security from every one of the improvements which make this order more efficient and the future safer. Order receives our complete approval; even when we are hostile to the police, we are by a strange contradiction, partisans of order.*

The trick for police is to make people "partisans of order," and since the police represent order itself, we must see the police as indispensable. This is how community policing theory works.

Community policing theorists have long recognized the distinction between law and order and therefore promote broader discretionary police power, not less.

According to Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, "'Community policing' combines greater police/community cooperation with increased police discretion" (See Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers in the Editors preface to Tracey Meares and Dan Kahan, *Urgent Times: Policing and Rights in Inner-City Communities* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), xv). For them, procedural rules and laws inordinately restrict the police to observing an individual's legal rights over the community's well-being. Thus ostensibly minor issues such as panhandling, loitering and vagrancy remain unchecked but grow into larger problems as they signal lack of communal welfare to criminally-prone outsiders who subsequently invade the neighborhood. Community policing argues that police should have discretionary power to "clean up" these initial "disorders" even if their actions are not "easily reconciled with any conception of due process or fair treatment" and would probably "not withstand a legal challenge" (James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, "Broken Windows," *Atlantic Monthly* 249, no. 3 (1982): 35, 31).

The underlying premise of community policing bifurcates and simplifies community into "orderly" people (the community) and "disorderly" people (outsiders). It strips some people of rights and constructs a simplified community whose sole problems tend to be deviant outsiders and those inside who neglect quality of life issues like "broken windows." The very word "community" connotes positive images, and masks the contested and complex nature of real communities. Furthermore, community policing deploys the word *against* some people and advocates that police be permitted to use any means necessary to rid a "community" of these "disorders." By putting cops back on the beat and giving them a seemingly friendly face in the creation and maintaining of white bourgeois order, police do exactly as Ellul describes them in *The Technological Society*. They appear to protect "good citizens," relieving the citizenry of any fear and by patrolling openly lose their secretive aura, and therefore are not felt to be oppressive. Thus most citizens do not seek to oppose or escape police technique because the police have removed any desire to escape. That is the ideal of technique: to make itself invisible and internalized in its object (*The Technological Society*, 413).

But to do this it has to exclude some people from the notion of community. Anybody who might cause "orderly" people to feel uncomfortable must be stripped of liberal rights and chased out. They do not

have to be violent, but in the words of prominent community policing theorists merely "disorderly people. Not violent people, nor, necessarily, criminals, but disreputable or obstreperous or unpredictable people: panhandlers, drunks, addicts, rowdy teenagers, prostitutes, loiterers, the mentally disturbed" (James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, "Broken Windows," *Atlantic Monthly* 249, no. 3 (1982): 30). These are "broken windows" who if left unchecked will cause a spiral of crime and urban decay, indeed, they are the first signs of decay and must be eradicated with "zero tolerance" policies. This scapegoating mechanism has caused police to become much more violent toward these mere objects of police power (See Andy Alexis-Baker, "Community, Policing and Violence," *Conrad Grebel Review* 26, no. 2 (Spring, 2008): 104–5).

The criminal abstraction of the technological society

This scapegoating mechanism also reveals another problem in policing. From his experience working with gangs, Ellul argued that preventing youth from sliding into a life of violence "could not consist in adapting young people to society" (*In Season, Out of Season* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), 120). For Ellul, these youth were part of those "who do not conform to the level of efficiency society demands [and] are pushed aside" (129). Thus instead of helping them become professional bureaucrats, Ellul took "a stand against the technological society" and helped them become rightly "maladjusted" themselves. He saw that society's labeling of them as criminals and delinquents was simply part and parcel of the technological society.

More deeply, I think, the technological society must redefine such people not as criminals and delinquents rather than enemies because criminality creates a permanent class of misfits to justify the state and its police. In just war thought—which, as a Christian pacifist, I am also against—enemies rightly construed have a political agenda that obligates the other side to treat them with a certain degree of equality and fairness. At war's end, people go home. And war ends eventually through some kind of negotiation. But once that enemy is redefined as criminal, terrorist or delinquent, they are depoliticized. Instead of legitimate political claims, such people act out of insanity and hatred. One only needs to remember how those who planned the attacks on 9/11 were described and how no thought to negotiation was countenanced to see that this relabeling serves to create a permanent conflict and justify the state, including its police technique. The technique becomes much further entrenched and the violence more intractable with this shift in identity.

International war in police garb

A global police force will only quicken the march of the technological society and is really only a technical solution to technological problems. Ellul himself saw modern policing as a technique designed "to put . . . useless consumers to work" (*The Technological Society*, 111). Techniques intertwine into a system so that a technique applies across disciplines. So policing naturally carries over into economics. When the emerging capitalist system called for more laborers, the police were created to put nonproducers to work, outlawing loitering, gathering firewood and other necessities from the commons, all of which made it harder for nonproducers to stay outside the emerging economic order. Thus technique expands. The police are no exception. It seems naïve to suggest that the police would not expand into economic techniques, for example, on the international order. What would a broken window look like on the international scene? Who are the "panhandlers, drunks, addicts, rowdy teenagers, prostitutes, loiterers, the mentally disturbed" that are the human embodiments of broken when one's community is the whole world? If international broken windows must be addressed so that they do not invite a spiral of unrest and violence, who is to notice and fix these windows? In community policing theory it is an outside police force that aggressively drives out undesirable elements, often violating their rights in the name of community. It seems unfathomable that an international police force would not be used to expand global capital markets.

Looking outside the system

As one example of a non-technical way of thinking about security we might look to the Paez tribe in Colombia, 100,000 people strong, who have completely disarmed their indigenous guard. This guard is not a professional force, but is made up of all volunteers and includes over 7,000 men, women and youth. They carry a three foot long baton decorated with various colors as a symbol of their authority, not as a weapon. When there is encroachment on their territory they communicate via radios and many of them gather together to confront the intrusion and try to persuade them to leave (a hue and cry). This does

not mean that such a decentralized, democratic, and nonviolent practice is always effective in warding off outside aggression: currently the tribe is facing increased pressure from both the government and FARC rebels with encroachment from both sides. However at times they have been able to persuade the rebels to back off and to release hostages. They provide security at great personal risk to themselves and their communities. This is not really "policing," in the normal sense of this word, but a communal practice of care and concern for communal well-being through resolving conflicts nonviolently.

Conclusion

Just policing advocates distinguish between war and policing in such a way that policing must necessarily be less violent than war. They have historically

maintained social stratification and expanded into new areas to justify their existence and operate not under the rule of law, but under the assumption that they should create order, a subjective concept that looks different to a radical anarchist than to a police officer. I have tried to demonstrate the flaws in this argument. In the end, Ellul's statement on these distinctions holds true (*The Political Illusion*, trans. Konrad Kellen (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 74-75):

> *We hardly need to point out how simple-minded the distinction made by one of our philosophers is between "police" (internal), which would be legitimate as a means of constraint, and an 'army,' which would be on the order of force. In the realm of politics these two elements are identical.*

Going Offline

by Brenna Cussen Anglada

Brenna Cussen Anglada lives at the New Hope Catholic Worker Farm in Dubuque Iowa where she and others try to live out Peter Maurin's vision of a "worker-scholar" by combining farming and education

"There are almost seven billion people in the world. Since it is not ecologically sustainable for each one of those people to use a computer, *why you*?"

This question, posed by Ethan Hughes to a small group of us visiting the Possibility Alliance, an intentional community in Northeast Missouri living without the use of fossil fuel, has made a lasting impression on me. Ethan's challenge, pointed at the privilege that I take for granted, and backed by the weight of sobering statistics about the destructive effects computers have on God's creation, has triggered my decision to give up the personal use of computers by the end of 2011.

I say I will give up the personal use of computers, because I realize it is currently beyond my ability and imagination right now to stop using the computers that are involved in my daily activities like using public transportation, banks, or telephones, or purchase

anything. One exception I *may* make to the personal computer ban is if I travel to Occupied Palestine or another area where extreme oppression is taking place. Then I may use a computer as a means to communicate such injustices. However, I have not yet made this decision

My decision did not come in a vacuum. Already, I live in a Catholic Worker farm community that is trying in multiple ways to simplify, and care for, our own basic needs. Eight adults and five children use one washer (no dryer), share three cars, heat our homes with wood, compost our human waste, and raise the bulk of our food. While we still use refrigeration, cook with propane, and depend on electricity (with some solar) for lights and appliances, we hope to implement alternatives for these conveniences in the near future. Part of the reason I live this way is because, in recognizing the immense privilege I inherited as an educated white American, I no longer want to assume that somebody poorer (or browner) than me will perform the daily tasks that keep me alive in order that I can pursue more "intellectual" or "spiritual" interests. And though I don't own a computer, the fact that I still

borrow friends' laptops or use the library desktop – the very creation of which wreaks havoc on the environment and the lives of the poor – is yet another way I capitalize on another's misery.

Admittedly, for some, computers are amazingly helpful tools. On a personal scale, computers have served as a convenient way for me to stay in touch with my family and friends across large geographical distances. I have used them to edit and publish my ideas on issues of justice and faith, about which I am passionate. More generally, computers assist communities of people from across the world to exchange ideas, and have served as a means through which activists can promote awareness about important causes. The recent nonviolent, democratic revolution in Egypt owes much to the computer for its efficient means of communication (though the actual extent of its valued role has been debated.) Computers can be used in modern medicine to prevent death and promote healing. Often, computers can help us save lives.

According to Jacques Ellul, such advantages of "technique" (as he refers to what is more familiarly called "technology") are usually concrete and obvious to the common person. My readers can probably come up with an even longer list on the benefits of computers than I have already presented. However, as Ellul posits in his book *The Technological Bluff*, the disadvantages of technique (which are of a different type than and usually cannot be compared to the advantages) are very real, though generally more abstract than the advantages, and often only come to light after long arguments. Ellul offers as an example the invention of artificial light, the benefits of which are plain to see. A major, though less obvious, disadvantage, as he points out, is the fact that such artificial light has enabled human beings to work and live as much at night as during the day, "breaking one of life's most basic rhythms," and leading to the expectation of industrialized society that people work as machines work (Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Bluff*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdman, 1990), 43). Ellul asserts that, contrary to common assumption, and unlike many other inanimate objects (i.e. a knife being used either to slice bread or to kill a neighbor) technique is *not* neutral. He says, rather, that no matter how technique is used, it carries with it a number of both positive and negative consequences (p. 35).

If this is true, then it would behoove our society to begin a serious argument over the effects of the computer, weighing the positive against the negative.

Below I have listed a sampling, by no means exhaustive list, of the negative environmental impacts alone (please take into account that since the computer industry is such a rapidly changing field, it is difficult to get the most up-to-date statistics). I hope for this short essay to contribute to a larger, much more comprehensive, discussion.

- The manufacturing of a typical desktop and monitor takes 500 pounds of fossil fuels, 47 pounds of chemicals, and 1.5 tons of water in a world where one third of the human population does not have access to clean drinking water (Worldwatch Institute, "Behind the Scenes: Computers," *State of the World* (New York: Worldwatch Institute, 2004), 44 http://www.rohan.sdsu.edu/faculty/ dunnweb/ StateofWorld2004.dat.pdf).
- Each year, between five and seven million *tons* of e-waste (trashed toxic components of computers that are impossible to recycle) is created (Annie Leonard, *The Story of Stuff* (Free Press of Simon and Schuster, 2010), 58). The majority of this is sent to China, India, South Asia, and Pakistan, as it is cheaper to send trash abroad than it is to deal with it domestically.
- An investigation by the Basel Action Network and Greenpeace China in December 2001 found that most computers in Guiyu, an e-waste processing center in China, are from North America and, to a lesser degree, Japan, South Korea, and Europe. The study found that computers in these "recycling" facilities are dismantled using hammers, chisels, screwdrivers, and even bare hands. Workers crack CRT monitors to remove the copper yoke, while the rest of the CRT is dumped on open land or pushed into rivers. Local residents say the water now tastes foul from lead and other contaminants (Worldwatch Institute, 45).
- A single 320-megabyte microchip requires at least 72 grams of chemicals, 700 grams of elemental gasses, 32,000 grams of water, and 1200 grams of fossil fuels. Another 440 grams of fossil fuels are used to operate the chip during its typical life span – four years of operation for three hours a day (Worldwatch Institute, 44).
- More than two thousand materials are used in the production of just one microchip (smaller than a pinky fingernail), a single component of one machine: given this, it is next to

impossible for human rights watchdog groups to track the origin of all the materials that go into making an entire computer. It can be safely assumed, though, that all of the same problematic mining practices of environmental contamination, health problems, and human rights violations (for the gold, tantalum, copper, aluminum, lead, zinc, nickel, tin, silver, iron, mercury, cobalt, arsenic, cadmium, and chromium that are used in computer manufacturing) are involved (Leonard, 58).

Knowing all of this, if I neither want to mine the parts for, nor build, a computer myself, nor want any member of my family to do so, then why would I ask somebody else to do it for me?

There exist other persuasive arguments – social, psychological, physical, and spiritual – against the use of the computer. I'm sure you are familiar with many of them, so I will only touch on a few: the average American child spends 30 hours a week in front of a screen, no doubt contributing to the worrying rise in obesity, diabetes, and other related diseases. This also exposes children to more violence and pornography than with which they would otherwise come into contact. Since 90% of human communication is nonverbal, the pervasiveness of email, Facebook, iPhones, and other forms of electronic interaction have led to the loss of much authentic communication in relationships. And as both spiritual and physical beings, created by God to be in the material world, such mediated access to our environment disrupts a more direct access to the divine.

As a Christian and an anarchist trying to live an authentic life, the most compelling reason for me to give up computer use is that *computers make me reliant on an unjust system I claim to resist.* Both the manufacturing and the running of computers require strip mining and the extraction of fossil fuels. Most of the funding for computer science research comes from the military. Worse, it is due to the military's occupation of foreign lands that we have easy access to resources like oil and other materials we need to run our high-tech lifestyles. If I believe in a world where military and corporate domination do not exist, then I need to start practicing for that world. And, as far as I can see, such a world cannot have computers. The farmer-writer Wendell Berry, in his well-known essay "Why I Am Not Going to Buy a Computer," says, "I would hate to think that my work as a writer could not be done without a direct dependence on strip-mined coal. How could I write conscientiously against the

rape of nature if I were, in the act of writing, implicated in the rape?" (Wendell Berry, "Why I Am Not Going to Buy a Computer," published in *New England Review* and *Bread Loaf Quarterly* in 1987 and reprinted in *Harper's.* http://www.jesusradicals.com/wp-content/uploads/computer.pdf).

Again, the computer is not the only culprit here. My refrigerator, the gas I put in the car I drive, the stove on which I cook meals for my family – all of these were likely manufactured or obtained in unethical ways. Thankfully, there exist alternatives to the gas or electric stove, to electric refrigeration, and to petroleum-powered transportation. I encourage us all to seek out such alternatives and begin to experiment with them, as our community is currently doing. But the computer has no such alternative. As Ellul says, "There is no choice. The computer brings a whole system with it…offices, means of distribution, personnel, and production all have to be adapted to it" (*The Technological Bluff*, 9).

In such an enormous system, you may ask whether my action as one person opting to discontinue computer use will even matter. Ellul would not think so. Rather, he laments, "Whom should we hold responsible? The scientists who were there at the beginning? But they do only theoretical studies… [T]he experts who examine the plans? But they only give advice…" Ellul places the majority of the blame—curiously, considering he's an anarchist—on politicians, whom he says "decide in favor of useless and wasteful projects" and who must "lose their mandate and be refused the possibility of reelection." (p. 301). Ellul says we, the people, "must take seriously our citizenship" and hold the politicians accountable. But if we seek to create a world free of computers and the State, why would we bother with a state-based solution? I find Wendell Berry, in this regard, more compelling. Berry is critical of those who only point fingers at the elite: "The consumption that supports the production is rarely acknowledged to be at fault… To the extent that we consume, in our present circumstances, we are guilty. To the extent that we guilty consumers are [environmentalists], we are absurd. But what can we do? Must we go on writing letters to politicians and donating to conservation organizations until the majority of our fellow citizens agree with us? Or can we do something directly to solve our share of the problem?"

I assume that most people who are reading this article, are most likely one of a privileged few in the world who owns a computer. In fact, to put computer usage

into perspective, Americans own 40% of all of the computers in the world. If we want to begin to unfetter ourselves from the disastrous consequences of a technological society, the abandonment of personal computer use, which seems to be possible for the majority of the world, is one very simple step in that

direction. For ultimately, if we cannot find more creative ways to transform society, ways that do not depend on oppressive means, then we will only bolster, lend credence to, and finance the very injustice we seek to eliminate.

In Review

Christian Anarchism:
A Political Commentary on the Gospel
by Alexandre J. M. E. Christoyannopoulos
Imprint Academic, 2010

Reviewed by Tripp York
Tripp York has taught religion at Western Kentucky University and has authored several books including his latest, The Devil Wears Nada: Satan Exposed.

The subtitle of Christoyannopoulos' book, *A Political Commentary on the Gospel*, may give some readers the impression that there exists an apolitical "Gospel" in need of political commentary. It is as if there exists some reality beyond the gospel called the "political" that can offer objective observations on what political import, if any, the gospel contains. This would hardly be innovative as theologians, especially in the past few centuries, have often made just such an assumption. The life and teachings of Jesus appear to have nothing to say about "real life" until someone fills the gaps by aligning it with a secular political theory of their own predilection.

This is not, however, the intention of Christoyannopoulos' book. Instead, his purpose is to offer a "detailed and comprehensive synthesis of the main themes of Christian anarchist thought. . . ." (p. 1). In order to do this, Christoyannopoulos attempts the incredibly arduous task of weaving together the various thoughts, meanderings, and arguments offered to us by numerous Christian anarchists. By doing so, he not only hopes to provide both a broad and succinct account of Christian anarchism (by delineating the cardinal tenets of their shared agreements and disagreements), but to contribute to the growing arena of political theology (p. 4). (Note 1)

Christoyannopoulos divides his book into six chapters and a concluding word on the prophetic role of Christian anarchism. His introduction outlines and discusses numerous Christian anarchists and how their work can be located amidst current political theologies. The introduction provides a hint as to how his entire manuscript will read: this is not so much a book making a specific argument as much as it is an encyclopedic account of the arguments made by Christian anarchists. To his credit, Christoyannopoulos is exhaustingly exhaustive. The introduction contains almost 200 footnotes, while some of the chapters include more than 400 footnotes. I do not point this out as a criticism. My point is quite the opposite. In order for him to achieve his objective, Christoyannopoulos, it seems, incorporates everything ever discussed by Christian anarchists in regards to the kind of things Christian anarchists like to discuss.

For instance, chapter one is a sustained reflection on the Sermon on the Mount. The author examines how various Christian anarchists have exegeted, for example, the text "do not resist evil" in order to display commonalities of approach from thinkers such as Tolstoy, Ellul, Eller, Myers, Ballou, Wink, Andrews, Hennacy, Day, Bartley, Penner, Berdyaev, and Yoder (among many others). This is, for the most part, how the entire book runs. Christoyannopoulos breaks his chapters into sections and sub-sections that comprise a range of topics including, but not limited to, Romans 13, taxes, nonviolence, the state, revolution, exorcism, economics, the swearing of oaths, conscription, the beatitudes, institutional religion, and civil disobedience. He then provides a thorough juxtaposition of what many Christian anarchists have said about each of these topics, therein providing an indispensable commentary on key biblical passages. For some, such a read could be tedious, while for others, this could replace their bible.

Perhaps, in some ways, such a format is both the book's greatest strength and its greatest weakness. It is a dissertation, and it reads like one. The author goes to great lengths to be as comprehensive as possible—something not always possible when you are trying to sell a book to a publisher. Such comprehensiveness can often make for a slower read, yet, given the nature of his task, it is necessary. Christoyannopoulos' goal is that of synthesizing the main themes of Christian anarchist thought, and, to this end, he succeeds. This is the book to examine when the situation dictates knowing what Ellul, Tolstoy, Cavanaugh, etc., have to say about Christian life in, under, and outside of governmental authorities.

Christian Anarchism is certainly an important part of the Christian anarchist canon. Actually, it may be the canon *of* the canon. There is simply no other book I am aware of that brings together so many Christian anarchist voices on so many key theological issues. In this manner, it functions as an essential guide to everything a Christian anarchist may ever want to read. In a book with more than 2,000 footnotes, it provides you with all the resources your little anti-capitalist heart can afford (assuming you are not one of those strange anomalies known as an anarcho-capitalist). Speaking of affordability, this book will, ironically, make the most ardent defender of capitalism shout with joy. It is expensive. It is eighty dollars expensive. Perhaps it should have included a preface similar to the one found in Wendell Berry's *Sex, Economy, Community and Freedom* (NY: Pantheon Books, 1993): "If you have bought it, dear reader, I thank you. If you have borrowed it, I honor your frugality. If you have stolen it, may it add to your confusion" (p. 18). Regardless, the author promises that within the next year, a shorter, revised, and a "foot-note freer" version will be released (vii). I am assuming (or at least hoping—as I am sure the author is as well) it will also be less expensive. If you are inclined, however, to have a version that functions as a guide to everything that combines a cross with a circled 'A', then this may be your best bet.

My only word of warning is the same word I offer to any person compelled to adopt the label of Christian anarchism: Avoid labels that tend to be both novel and reactionary (note, I say "tend to be" as opposed to "are"). The best Christian anarchists I have ever read never considered themselves to be Christian anarchists. Fortunately, Christoyannopoulos shows us that many so-called Christian anarchists have far higher aspirations than some of the reactionary postures we all tend to embrace. This book offers an excellent manual for how to not only live like a Christian anarchist, but, and more importantly, how to live like a disciple of Jesus. Hopefully, at its best, Christian Anarchism will serve to remind us that Christianity is about living the kind of life that may best be called anarchistic, while remaining well aware that Christianity was lived faithfully, by many others, for seventeen-hundred years prior to the creation of words like anarchistic.

Note 1: The very existence of something called "political theology" may assume the kind of posture I was critical of in the first paragraph. It, inherently, suggests the existence of a different kind of theology that is somehow apolitical—which very well may be the reality given North American Christianity's overwhelming tendency toward Gnosticism. Nevertheless, the idea of a political theology seems to posit, and reinforce, the notion that there can be some sort of reflection on God that lacks any bearing on how creation interacts with itself. Granted, I imagine the real reason such terminology exists is, in part, due to the heretical bifurcations created and perpetuated by modern theologians, as well as the need for such theologians to garner interest in their increasingly irrelevant field of study.

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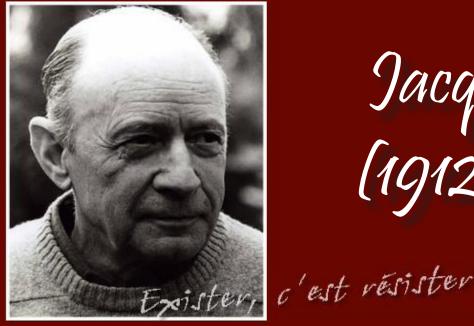
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