

9. What do Christians say about their relationship to the state?

Crucifix, p. 187

The Haitian artist Jacques Chéry (b. 1928) created the Misereor Hunger Cloth to coordinate with the Roman Catholic Church's Sunday lectionary readings for the Sundays of Lent, year B. The lowest level depicts scenes of unbelief, the center scenes of Christ conquering evil, and the upper level hope and promise.

Quotes and Images

p. 188: The quote from Max Weber (1864–1920) indicates the historic situation in which a government assumes that its own god will ensure victory. That each country has its own deities is called henotheism.

p. 190: The famous Serenity Prayer was composed in 1942 by Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971). The Second World War was a sorry illustration of his worldview that governments too often act in immoral ways.

p.192: Carmelite nuns are a particularly rigorous order of contemplative Roman Catholics. The order was founded in the twelfth century.

p. 194: Mario Cuomo (b. 1932), governor of New York from 1983 to 1994, created a stir when, lecturing in 1984 at the University of Notre Dame, he advocated that Roman Catholics live out their values without expecting the government to adopt their positions as law.

p. 196: Centuries of nearly universal acceptance of the Great Chain of Being help explain world and church history. This chart is particularly useful because it includes the philosophical categories of Being

and Nonbeing. It is instructive to engage students in conversation about the degree to which they too ascribe to this worldview.

pp. 197, 198: The opposite quotations from two Protestant clergymen, one from the North, the other from the South, illustrate the disagreement among nineteenth-century Christians concerning slavery. Southern clergy preached a benign slavery, supporting their position with biblical quotes.

p. 199: Many women were active abolitionists, writing, speaking, and organizing in opposition to slavery. When after the Civil War black men, but no women, were granted the vote, some of these women became radicalized for the franchise. Quakers were pacifists, but not all Methodists were.

p. 201: Other interpretations of the four small crosses have been proposed, besides the one popular during the Crusades.

p. 202: Raymond Hunthausen (b. 1921) was the Roman Catholic archbishop of Seattle from 1975 to 1991. His 1982 public condemnation of America's stockpiling of nuclear weapons and his refusal to pay taxes that supported the military led to the Internal Revenue Service garnishing his wages.

p. 203: Members of the third-wave Radical Reformation were harassed, imprisoned, and executed by both Protestant and Roman Catholic countries that viewed their resistance to government authority and refusal to serve in the military as seditious. This history helps account for the relative isolation of for example the Amish. The image depicts the 1554 executions of David van der Leyden and Levina Ghyselins.

p. 204: The two quotations express opposite opinions, both by American Protestant evangelicals, about how the government ought to relate to conditions of poverty. D. James Kennedy (1930–2007) was a Presbyterian minister; Jim Wallis (b. 1948) is a renowned Christian author and political activist, the founder and editor of the Christian magazine *Sojourners*.

Suggestions, pp. 205–6

6. Paul's view expressed in Romans 13 that the government is an arm of God has been much debated in Christianity. Paul wrote before the Roman Empire began its persecutions of Christians. The author of Revelation was reacting to the increased persecution of Christians by the Roman Empire.

7. "Voyage Four: 1661" (1978) was written by the well-known American author of historical sagas, James A. Michener (1907–1997). Set in colonial Boston, the story narrates the trial, imprisonment, whipping, and hanging of the Quaker Thomas Kenworth by the Puritan authorities. The suggestion is that the Quakers' religious intensity is feared by the Puritans, who are glad to cleanse their church of such excesses. Discussion of the story can focus on the social and religious attitudes of both the Quaker and the Judge. Can any of the students sympathize with the Puritans?

8. In the sixteenth century some 300,000 Japanese were Christianized, but in the seventeenth century the government sought to wholly eradicate the religion from Japan. The 1969 novel *Silence* by Japanese Christian Shusaku Endo (1923–1996) narrates the grim circumstances of the Jesuit missionaries, who rather than themselves being tortured, had to watch Japanese peasants tortured in their stead. The missionaries were willing to be martyred, but observing others being martyred was something else entirely. The "silence" refers to God's silence in face of this horror.

9. For this chapter, it is appropriate to assign two films, since they tell opposite stories. The 2007 film *Amazing Grace* narrates the inspirational story of William Wilberforce (1759–1833), who after becoming an evangelical Christian, decided not to become a minister but rather to dedicate his life as a member of Parliament to ending the British slave trade. He received encouragement from John Newton, the author of the hymn "Amazing Grace," a slaver turned Anglican priest. Thus in this example a Christian used the state to bring about Christian goals. The 2002 film *Amen* tells the story of S.S. officer Kurt Gerstein, a member of the Confessing Church, who tried to alert Protestant and Roman Catholic officials about what

was happening in the Nazi extermination camps. He was executed by the Third Reich in 1945. Thus in this example Christian authorities refuse to challenge immoral acts of the state. Discussion of these films can focus on how complex is the picture of the relationship of church and state.