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The ecclesial vision of William T. Cavanaugh and post-conciliar American ecclesiology

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THE ECCLESIAL VISION OF WILLIAM T. CAVANAUGH AND POST-
CONCILIAR AMERICAN ECCLESIOLOGY

Thesis

Submitted to

The College of Arts and Sciences of the

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

The Degree

Master of Arts in Theological Studies

by

Katherine G. Schmidt

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

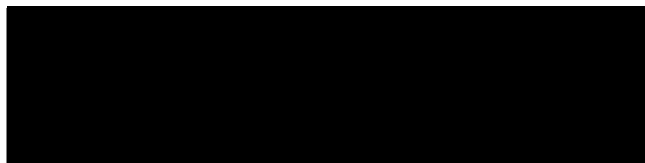
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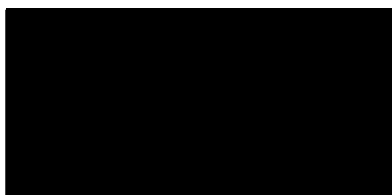


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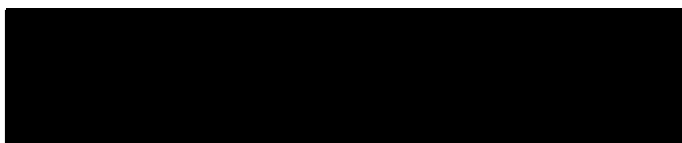
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ABSTRACT

THE ECCLESIAL VISION OF WILLIAM T. CAVANAUGH AND POST-CONCILIAR AMERICAN ECCLESIOLOGY

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The aim of this thesis is to place the work of William T. Cavanaugh in the broader context of American Catholic ecclesiology by comparing it to the work of Cardinal Avery Dulles. While already regarded as important for political theology and post-liberal theology, Cavanaugh's work has important implications for American ecclesiology since Vatican II more broadly considered. Cavanaugh's work is similar to Dulles' in its emphasis on the danger of mystification and its concern for the role of faith in the lives of American Catholics. Cavanaugh's work moves beyond Dulles' to offer a critique of the nation-state and capitalist economy that may help the American Catholic Church and the greater Church address the growing challenges of the modern world.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my thanks to my committee for their support of this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2005, I helped fight a zoning battle against Wal-Mart in my hometown. The retail giant tried (and failed) to place a new store within five miles of two other Wal-Mart stores, adjacent to state-protected wetlands with endangered species, and across the street from a farmers' market that has been open for fifty years. We won our battle at city council but this is rare for American cities and towns, most of which are being taken over by a few corporations at the expense of local businesses and identity...

Just before sunset on a fall evening in 2005, I found myself in Amsterdam's "Red Light" district with a Dutch friend of mine. "Most of these women," he explained, "are here against their will. They were promised money or marriages, and instead ended up as prostitutes." Until this moment, human trafficking had just been a series of impersonal NGO reports, not a reality that I could experience for myself...

A few weeks before graduating college in 2007, a friend of mine and recent convert to Catholicism sat in my apartment, stunned. He had been promised an intelligence position in the Army after his time in ROTC and instead had been placed in an infantry division. This meant a higher chance, almost an inevitability, of going to Iraq or Afghanistan to fight directly in a war of which the

Church had been and continues to be critical. I was sad for my friend, and worried about his well-being, but had nothing to offer him in consolation...

These three anecdotes speak to both my present concerns as a student of theology, as well as to the magnitude of modern ethical issues. These issues pose real questions for the Church--the community centered not on an uninterested God but on God Incarnate—about what its role in the world should be and how it seeks to bear witness to the person of Jesus Christ. As the Church describes itself and its mission in the world, it must do so in a way that can respond to the challenges of the twenty-first century such as human trafficking, terrorism and warfare, and globalization, among others. The theologians of this generation must seek innovative ecclesial frameworks from which to address these and other concerns, concerns whose gravity were only beginning to be realized (if at all) at the time of the Second Vatican Council. One such theologian is William Cavanaugh.

Political scientist Paul S. Rowe recently evaluated Cavanaugh's work in *The Review of Politics*.¹ Rowe draws on a number of Cavanaugh's articles, as well as *Torture and Eucharist* and *Theopolitical Imagination*, two of the primary sources for this thesis. That political scientists are evaluating Cavanaugh's work is itself telling of its complex nature. Also in the volume, however, is a response from Cavanaugh wherein he describes the distinctly theological aim of his writings, despite their social and political tenor. He writes, "My goal as a Christian theologian is to help the church be more faithful to God in Jesus Christ. In the

¹ Paul S. Rowe, "Render Unto Caesar...What? Reflections on the Work of William Cavanaugh," *The Review of Politics* 71, 4 (Fall 2009): 583-605.

present day, I think that faithfulness means taking a hard look at political and economic structures many Christians take for granted.”² These two sentences summarize the purpose of this thesis, which is two-fold.

First, this thesis attempts to broaden the context of Cavanaugh’s work to American Catholic ecclesiology more generally considered. To put Cavanaugh’s work in the context of ecclesiology is nothing new. According to one reviewer, *Torture and Eucharist* “may be seen in part as a contribution to post-liberal ecclesiology.”³ It is not the task at present to debate the degree to which Cavanaugh’s work is “post-liberal.” The purpose here, however, is to show that Cavanaugh’s work is a contribution to ecclesiology, without any qualifier that might make his important work dismissible. To this end, this thesis puts Cavanaugh in conversation with one of the most dominant figures in American Catholic ecclesiology, Cardinal Avery Dulles. This comparison will show important similarities that point to Cavanaugh’s distinctly Catholic ecclesial vision and his consistency with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.

The second purpose of this thesis is to describe what Cavanaugh means by a “hard look at political and economic structures.” His critique of the modern nation-state and his related comments on globalized economy present an aspect that is largely absent from the way in which the Catholic Church envisions its mission in liberal democracy today. Cavanaugh’s critique is in service to a constructive Eucharistic ecclesiology in which the Church moves closer to its

² William Cavanaugh, “If You Render Unto God What Is God’s, What Is Left For Caesar?” *The Review of Politics* 71, 4 (Fall 2009): 607.

³ Peter Scott, review of *Torture and Eucharist*, by William Cavanaugh, *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 1, 1 (March 1999): 105.

Christian witness, especially in terms of nonviolence and respect for human dignity.

Chapter I offers a brief description of Avery Dulles' ecclesiology. In his landmark *Models of the Church*, Dulles evaluates five models before offering his own. His evaluation of his first three models reflects his own concerns about a crisis of faith among American Catholics. This crisis of faith is not only seen in the dwindling mass attendance, priests shortages, or rising numbers of "lapsed Catholics." Dulles is concerned as well with the compartmentalization in American life that divorces faith from all other concerns. Throughout this project, the category of "mystification" is used to describe this divorce of faith and daily life. "Mystification" means the holding of a view of the Church that emphasizes particular elements at the expense of other crucial elements in a way that threatens the Church's wholeness. The term is usually used to describe an overemphasis on the invisible elements of the Church, but it is used here to describe any view of Church that makes it peripheral to its members. The danger of mystification is that the Church becomes disconnected from the daily lives of its members, including the political and economic activity in which they engage.

Both Cavanaugh and Dulles address the danger of mystification in their respective ecclesiologies. Dulles offers the model of Community of Disciples for his own constructive ecclesiology. The final section of this chapter will describe some of Dulles' comments on the relationship between the Church and the world or the state. This section serves as a foundation for the contrast between Dulles and Cavanaugh in their visions for the Church.

In light of Dulles' ecclesiology, Chapter II describes the ecclesial vision of William Cavanaugh in two sections: critique and construction. He criticizes the ecclesiology of New Christendom for mystifying the Church, a major point of similarity with Cardinal Dulles. Out of this critique comes Cavanaugh's use of Henri de Lubac to reinstate the Eucharist as the unifying action of the Body of Christ, whereby the Body can act in the world. Dulles shares Cavanaugh's emphasis on the Eucharist-as-center, but does not share his evaluation of the relationship between the Church and the state, the topic of the third chapter.

Chapter III explains Cavanaugh's critique of the nation-state in greater detail, especially his treatment of the "religious wars." It is here that Cavanaugh develops his theory of the "soteriology of the modern nation-state," a perspective that can help the American Catholic Church bear truer witness to Christ amid nationalism in the United States. This chapter ends with two brief discussions of the implications of Cavanaugh's view of the nation-state, including its relevance for Catholics and the United States military, and its application for economic activity. In short, Cavanaugh's work is both in keeping with the ecclesial concerns of Avery Dulles, which reflect the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council, and is innovative for the way in which he recommends that the American Catholic Church approach its relationship with the state and economy.

CHAPTER I

The Ecclesial Vision of Cardinal Avery Dulles, S. J.

Cardinal Avery Dulles appears in this project as William Cavanaugh's ecclesial interlocutor for several important reasons. Dulles stands as a figure of comparison because of his extensive work in examining the implications of the Second Vatican Council, as well as his esteem in the field of ecclesiology. From *First Things*, Thomas Guarino names Dulles as the "most distinguished American theologian," writing that his work "was searchingly focused on the texts of Vatican II, reading them within the long tradition of the Church, providing a way for the teachings of the great council to be properly received by the Catholic and Christian people."⁴ As one of the leading ecclesiologists in the United States, Dulles provides an important point of comparison for Cavanaugh's own discussions of the Catholic Church in American democracy. as he incorporates the concerns of the American Church in his interpretation of Vatican II.

Another reason for comparing Cavanaugh's work to that of Dulles concerns church politics. One of the aims of this project is to present the contributions of Cavanaugh's work and bring him in from the margins in which some may wish to put him. While no figure is free of particular ecclesio-political connotations, Cardinal Dulles remains one of the more diplomatic theologians of

⁴ Thomas G. Guarino, "Why Avery Dulles Matters," *First Things* 193 (May 2009): 40.

his time, garnering respect from the spectrum of opinions. Robert Imbelli's comments from Dulles' obituary in *Commonweal*: "In the disputatious context of the early 1970s, Dulles's *Models of the Church* allowed people holding different points of view to enter into more irenic and fruitful conversation with one another."⁵ This chapter will draw heavily on *Models of the Church* in an effort to describe Avery Dulles' view of church. This will provide the foundations necessary for discussing Cavanaugh's possible contributions to American Catholic ecclesiology. Discussing Cavanaugh's work in light of Dulles serves to broaden the context for Cavanaugh's ecclesial vision and mine his work ways to address the concerns of the Church in the United States. This chapter will first describe Avery Dulles' general ecclesial concerns, including his assessment of different models of the Church. Then it will describe his model of Community of Disciples. The final section describes Dulles' ideas concerning church-state relations as a foundation for a later discussion of the issue as central to Cavanaugh's work. Dulles' assessment of the first three models of the Church—institutional, mystical communion and sacrament—reflects the concern over the dangerous practice of mystification in the Church. His assessment of the last two models—herald and servant—reflects his thoughts on the relationship between the Church and the world. These two sets of models are discussed in two different sections because of the different concerns they reflect.

⁵ Robert Imbelli, "Model of the Church: Cardinal Avery Dulles, SJ (1918-2008)," *Commonweal* 136, 1 (January 16, 2009): 8.

Models and Assessment

In *Models of the Church*, Avery Dulles offers an account of Catholic ecclesiology that recognizes the reality of the post-conciliar Church. That reality was and continues to be characterized by myriad opinions concerning what the Church is and should be in the world. Instead of objecting to this pluralism of ecclesiologies, Dulles writes that “The method of typology pursued in [*Models of the Church*] should help to foster the kind of pluralism that heals and unifies, rather than a pluralism that divides and destroys.”⁶ Dulles explores five different models of the Church and evaluates their merits and drawbacks before offering his own constructive model for the Church. His comments on the five models relate to his other works, and these sources will be noted as they arise in order to describe his cohesive ecclesial vision. An implicit concern in Dulles’ discussion of these models is the danger of mystification of the Church and its resultant effect on the majority of the members of the Church. In particular, the first three models in his typology—institution, mystical communion, and sacrament—demonstrate his attention to this matter, and this section will concern these three models.

The first model that Dulles discusses is that of which he is most critical. The Church as institution refers to a vision of the Church that emphasizes “its visible structures, especially the rights and power of its officers.”⁷ Dulles is careful to distinguish this emphasis from a simple “acceptance” of visible structures, for it is evident throughout his career that he clearly supports the hierarchy of the

⁶ Avery Dulles, SJ, *Models of the Church* [Expanded Edition] (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 5. See also *A Church to Believe In: Discipleship and the Dynamics of Freedom* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1982), 6.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

Church. In *A Church to Believe In*, Dulles writes, "Certain structures of the Church are held to be divinely instituted, and to have a promise of grace attached to them through the will of Christ as founder."⁸ What Dulles means by "institutionalism," therefore, is the view of Church which emphasizes the institution above all other elements.

In a later chapter, we will discuss that Cavanaugh sees Pius XII's encyclical *Mystici corporis Christi* from 1943 as representative of the kind of institutionalism against which Dulles speaks. Dulles has a favorable view, however, of *Mystici corporis Christi*, and argues that it actually moves away from that institutionalism. He asserts that the Second Vatican Council follows Pius' move away from an overly juridical view of the Church. This document, however, becomes the center of Cavanaugh's critique of New Christendom ecclesiology. While they hold different views about the intent and effects of this document, they agree on the danger of viewing the Church as the "perfect society," a popular view of Church between the First and Second Vatican Councils. I will take up this comparison in the next chapter, but Dulles' view of the *societas perfecta* is important for understanding his own view of Church.

Dulles contrasts this emphasis with the emphases of Vatican II in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium*. According to Dulles, the images emphasized by the Council were "those of mystery, sacrament, Body of Christ, and People of God."⁹ Dulles points to the pre-Vatican II Church, particularly the ecclesiology of Vatican I, and argues that Medieval and Counter

⁸ Dulles, *A Church to Believe In*, 21.

⁹ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 28.

Reformation notions of Church over-emphasized the hierarchical aspect of the Church. This over-emphasis led to an inevitable juridicism and triumphalism that Dulles believes the Second Vatican Council overcomes. It does this by affirming the role of the laity, as well as acknowledging the imperfection of the Church. The Council's attentiveness to overcoming juridicism is crucial, according to Dulles, for ecclesiology in the modern world. He describes the negative affects of institutionalism thus:

To large numbers of young people, and to others not so young, the laws and dogmas of the Church seem designed to control and crush rather than to nourish and satisfy the needs of the spirit. Until this fundamental difficulty is alleviated, all new techniques to shore up the institutional Church will accomplish little.¹⁰

An important liability of the Church as institution, therefore, is the effect it has on the laity. Dulles' concerns about this model are strongest when he considers how it renders the laity ultimately passive in the life of the Church.

Obedience is central to the institutional view, and this can and does result in clericalism, according to Dulles. This clericalism renders the laity passive participants more often than not, even in their role in "Catholic Action," wherein they are "a mere appendage of the apostolate of the hierarchy."¹¹ The role of the laity is reduced to obeying the "laws and dogmas" of the Church. A secondary concern in this passivity is the role of theologians, which is reduced to defending the teachings of the Church in lieu of producing innovative and fruitful theology.

¹⁰ Dulles, *A Church to Believe In*, 4.

¹¹ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 35.

According to Dulles, the ecclesiology of *Mystici corporis Christi* does not fully recognize the sin present in the Church. This ecclesiology emphasizes the divinely-instituted structures of the Church without attention to the human flaws inevitable in those structures. The view of Church that highlights the institutional aspect of the Church—a view represented by but not exclusive to *Mystici corporis Christi*—centers on the “theme of the splendor of the Church,” which “taken in isolation, might lead us to divinize it excessively, so that we would risk adoring the Church in place of Christ himself.”¹² This risk is found in both the institutional view, as well as in the next model in Dulles’ typology, the Church as mystical communion.

In the view of Church as mystical communion, the Holy Spirit plays a central role. The external dimensions of the Church are important, but they are secondary to “a deeper spiritual communion of grace or charity.”¹³ This communion is captured in the image of the Body of Christ. Dulles cites Augustine’s work on the Body of Christ, noting, “The Body is not essentially visible, since it includes angels and separated souls. Still less it is societal, since it includes all men who are animated by the spirit of God.”¹⁴ Augustine’s notion of the Body of Christ fits, therefore, within Dulles’ assertion that the Church as mystical communion accentuates the “vertical” aspect of the community over its “horizontal” aspects.

¹² Avery Dulles, *The Dimensions of the Church: A Postconciliar Reflection* (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1967), 7.

¹³ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 42.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

Although Dulles praises the efforts of both *Mystici corporis Christi* and *Lumen gentium* to find balance in terms of the horizontal/vertical distinction, he recognizes the implicit dangers of the mystical communion image. In particular, the image of the Body of Christ may lead to an “unhealthy divinization of the Church” that “would obscure the personal responsibility and freedom of the members.”¹⁵ This echoes Dulles’ concern in the previous chapter concerning the institutional image. In his *Postconciliar Reflection*, Dulles highlights the importance of Vatican II’s recognition in the sinfulness of the Church. According to *Lumen gentium*, “The Church, however, clasping sinners to her bosom, at once holy and always in need for purification, follows constantly the path of penance and renewal.”¹⁶ This recognition does not render the Church incapable of acting in the world; rather, it allows it to be more appropriately grounded in human reality, thus enabling it to attend to the concerns of the world in which it finds itself. Dulles writes, “The Church, then, is not a pure idea existing in some supracelestial realm.”¹⁷ His praise of Vatican II is that its ecclesiology moves away from such an abstract view of the Church and is instead “concrete and historical.”¹⁸

The Church as sacrament, according to Dulles, attempts to harmonize the institutional and mystical communion models. He points to the theology of Henri de Lubac, who emphasized the role of the Eucharist in the Church. The effect of emphasizing the sacraments is to move away from an overly-individualistic view

¹⁵ Ibid., 47.

¹⁶ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, ¶18.

¹⁷ Dulles, *The Dimensions of the Church*, 8.

¹⁸ Ibid.

of faith due to the communal nature of sacraments. Dulles writes, "Nobody baptizes, absolves, or anoints himself, and it is anomalous for the Eucharist to be celebrated in solitude."¹⁹ To see the Church as sacrament, then, is to realize the centrality of the social nature of humankind, and to appreciate the efficacy of the Eucharist within the community.²⁰ God's grace, "seeking its appropriate form of expression—as grace inevitably does—will impel men to prayer, confession, worship, and other acts whereby the Church externally realizes its essence."²¹

Cardinal Dulles' evaluation of this model is noticeably less critical than the previous two models. Instead of offering his own criticisms, he reviews other scholars' assertions about the sacramental model. He does, however, note that an extreme form of this notion of Church can be unhealthy, especially in terms of its action in the world. He writes, "It remains true that the sacramentalism, carried to excess, can induce an attitude of narcissistic aestheticism that is not easily reconcilable with a full Christian commitment to social and ethical values."²² This concern, however, is precisely de Lubac's own in *Corpus Mysticum*, wherein he challenges the individualization of Eucharistic piety since the Middle Ages. Dulles' criticism is not unwarranted here but perhaps de Lubac's notion of Church as sacrament differs in important ways from the other proponents of Church as sacrament.²³

¹⁹ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 59.

²⁰ The latter section of this chapter will take up Dulles' treatment of the Eucharist and its role in his own ecclesiology.

²¹ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 63.

²² *Ibid.*, 67.

²³ Chapter II discusses Cavanaugh's use of de Lubac's Eucharistic ecclesiology, especially on this point.

In addition, Dulles' concern for the laity is clear in his evaluation of Church as sacrament, as he worries about its practicality: "The notion of sacramentality it presupposes is technical and sophisticated, and defies easy popularization."²⁴ His point is that understanding the Church as sacrament relies upon technical sacramental theology which is not readily accessible for most Catholics. Overall, however, Dulles treats the sacramental model favorably. One of his major concern is again to avoid a mystification of the Church wherein its members are inclined to stress either visible elements of the Church or the invisible elements in a way that neglects the other.

Cardinal Dulles is most dissatisfied with the view of Church that emphasizes its institutional aspects above all else. In this view, the laity are almost inconsequential to the existence of the Church. The second model, that of Church as mystical communion emphasizes the spiritual aspects of the Church over the external structures, a welcomed move away from the juridicism of the institutional model. The danger of this model, however, is a divinization of the Church that over-emphasizes the mystical aspect of the Church and makes the actions of its members irrelevant. The third model, Church as sacrament, appears to move in a direction of harmonizing these two models. Should sacramentalism itself move into excess, however, the members of the Church are once again susceptible to an interiorization of faith and a mystification of the actions of the Church that threaten their ability to act in the world. While Dulles' discussion of ecclesial models helps illuminate some of his own ecclesiology, he

²⁴ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 67.

writes that it does “not constitute a rounded systematic ecclesiology.”²⁵ It is Dulles’ systematic ecclesiology to which we now turn.

Community of Disciples

As previously noted, Dulles begins *Models of the Church* with an optimistic view of the pluralism of ecclesiologies in the post-conciliar Church. Between the first edition of *Models of the Church* in 1974 and the second in 1987, however, Dulles expanded *Models of the Church* to include a thirteenth chapter wherein he describes his preferred model, the community of disciples. Before the addition of this chapter, the first edition attempts to validate different starting points for ecclesiology. By adding his constructive ecclesiology, Dulles instead argues for normative aspects from each model that compromise his preferred view of the community of disciples, which amounts to the Church as a contrast society. This model retains the centrality of the sacraments, hierarchy, and tradition with recognition of the Biblical model of discipleship. Implicit in the community of disciples model is Dulles’ attention to both the importance of tradition and the ability of the Church to be a true witness in the world.

According to Dulles, one of the strongest aspects of the community of disciples model is its Biblical foundation. The New Testament offers a clear narrative of discipleship for the Church as well as an invitation to enter into discipleship throughout history. Dulles notes the varying degrees of discipleship within the New Testament, based on the degree of intimacy with Jesus himself. All of the disciples, the Twelve and the multitude of followers outside of this most

²⁵ Ibid., 195.

intimate group, however, “constituted a contrast society.”²⁶ The foundation of this “contrast society” was the mission to bear witness in the world, a mission that required (requires) a palpably different way of living than the rest of society: “It was therefore important for them to adopt a manner of life that would make no sense apart from their intense personal faith in God’s providence and his fidelity to his promises.”²⁷

While the notion of discipleship changes after the death and resurrection of Jesus, the idea of “contrast society” remains for the Christian community while under Roman rule. Dulles notes that this notion of “contrast” becomes difficult in a Christianized society. The notion of discipleship, however, remains important and members are still called to follow Christ. Dulles goes on to assert that “it is particularly important for the Church to visualize itself, as it originally did, as a contrast society.”²⁸

According to Dulles, in order for the Church to form its members in discipleship and become a true contrast society, the liturgy (worship) must be paramount. It follows that the sacraments take on high importance as well within the model of community of disciples, owing to the mystical communion model. This echoes the Council’s *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. The bishops write,

For it is the liturgy through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, ‘the work of our redemption is accomplished,’ and it is through the liturgy, especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives

²⁶ Ibid., 200.

²⁷ Ibid., 201.

²⁸ Ibid., 215-16.

and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church.²⁹

Although the Eucharist does not come immediately to the fore in Dulles' preferred model, his statements in *Models of the Church* and elsewhere point to a particularly Eucharistic understanding of the Church and its role in the formation of the "contrast society" of disciples.

Dulles uses superlatives in his brief mention of the Eucharist in *Models of the Church*. He writes, "The Eucharist is the climactic sacrament, signifying the deepest and most intimate union with Christ, who makes himself the life-sustaining food and drink of his spiritual family."³⁰ Dulles explains that the disciples in the New Testament were called to break even with their families for the sake of the spiritual bond of the Christian community. This bond is effected by the Eucharist, making it the climax of the sacramental life of discipleship.

The model of community of disciples comes from Pope John Paul II, according to Dulles. It follows then, that Dulles' description of the model is informed by John Paul II's Eucharistic theology. In his 2004 Laurence J. McGinley Lecture, Dulles outlined the late Pope's vision for a Eucharist-centered Church. According to Dulles, the Eucharist can be expounded in the four attributes from the Nicene Creed; *one, holy, catholic, and apostolic*.

Because Christ is substantially present in the Eucharist, it is the *holiest* among the sacraments. Those who participate in the Eucharist, then, are made

²⁹ Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶1.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 207.

holy in their participation through the salvific work of Christ in the Eucharist.³¹

According to Dulles, though, "Eucharistic holiness is never merely individual; it is ecclesial."³² The Eucharist binds individual members of the Church to one another—representing, effecting, and demanding unity simultaneously. This "demand" is simply that communicants "must have a will to be in unity and peace with the whole Church."³³

In terms of *catholicity*, the Eucharist takes place within the context of both the local church as well as the Church universal. That is, the Eucharist does not take place in isolation within the local church. Instead, the celebration of the Sacrament is the very bond between the local churches, building them up into the Church universal. Dulles seeks to maintain this relationship of local and universal in his model of community of disciples by acknowledging not only the importance of the Eucharist, but also by contextualizing the hierarchy and showing it as essential to the unity of the Church. He believes that framing leadership in terms of discipleship moves towards a harmonization of the positive aspects of the models he discusses previously. He writes, "The interpretation of office in terms of discipleship, which I am here proposing, contributes a pastoral dimension to the institutional model and helps bridge the gap between the institutional and community models as usually presented."³⁴ Similarly, the *apostolic* attribute of the Eucharist bespeaks the apostolic succession of Church leadership. This is in keeping with the earliest Christians who celebrated the

³¹ Avery Dulles, "A Eucharistic Church: The Vision of John Paul II," *Church and Society: The Laurence J. McGinley Lectures, 1988-2007* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 445.

³² *Ibid.*, 446.

³³ *Ibid.*, 448.

³⁴ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 208.

Eucharist only when it was presided by “a priest ordained by a bishop who stood in the apostolic succession.”³⁵

Dulles’ discussion of the Eucharist in terms of these four attributes speaks to the importance of the sacrament in his ecclesiology. The Eucharist clearly has a central role in his view of Church. The notion of Church as community of disciples relies upon a concrete formation of members, a formation that has liturgy—whose center is the Eucharist—at its center.

The benefits of the community of disciples model, according to Dulles, lie in its relevance for the Church in the modern world. Cardinal Dulles was continually concerned with the de-Christianization of society, and with the challenge of pluralism he encountered in the United States. As a result, he attends to issues of ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue in many of his works. He reiterates, however, that the value of the discipleship model for the Church lies in its allowing the Church to bear radical witness to Christ. He writes, “The discipleship model has the advantage of calling attention to the radical break with worldly values that is required for fidelity to Jesus.”³⁶ Whereas Dulles maintains the openness to dialogue of the Second Vatican Council, his model for the Church is one that can and must form its members in a way of life that challenges the values of the prevailing culture.

Dulles’ critique of the aforementioned models often center on their inadequacy for the majority of the Church, the laity. In *A Church to Believe In*, Dulles touches on the commonplace concerns of priest shortages, paltry mass

³⁵ Dulles, “Eucharistic,” 451.

³⁶ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 216.

attendance, and dissension among the laity concerning birth control.³⁷ His concerns, however, go beyond these issues. Dulles touches on the problem that connects him to the impetus for the work of William Cavanaugh, the primary subject of this thesis. Dulles succinctly states the problem thus:

Even Catholics who are faithful to their religious obligations rarely experience Church as a community of mutual support and stimulation. Although they may accept the teachings of the Church, they find it hard to relate the Church to their daily life, which is lived out in a very secular environment. When religion is so divorced from daily life, it begins to appear peripheral and even unreal.³⁸

In his wisdom, then, Cardinal Dulles speaks to the “divorce” of the life of faith from daily life. As the next two chapters will demonstrate, Cavanaugh interprets the “stuff” of daily life to mean issues that are usually sequestered to the realm of politics or economics. It is not clear, however, that Dulles shares his definition. The final section of this chapter will explore Dulles’ position concerning the relationship of the Church to politics and the nation-state. This will provide a basis of comparison for Cavanaugh’s work on the subject.

The Church and The World

Ecclesiology is functionally and etymologically the study of the Church. As one studies the Church, however, especially in terms of different models and visions of that Church, one is inevitably drawn into conversations about “not-

³⁷ See Dulles, *A Church to Believe In*, 2.

³⁸ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 210.

Church.” Discussing the shape of the Church must contend with the context in which that shape finds itself, namely a culture imbued with political happenings and economic activity. Although much of his work retains a level of abstraction, Dulles often mentions “the world” in his discussion of ecclesiology, due in no small part to his attention to ecumenism.

In the following section, I will attempt to outline Cardinal Dulles’ thoughts on the relationship between the Church and “not-Church,” with particular attention to his treatment of politics and economics. This will be done in large part chronologically so as to be sensitive to the development of his thought on the matter over time. Cardinal Dulles’ thought on this matter is similar to his thought on other matters in that he tends to hold ideas in tension, favoring a more dialectical approach over the oversimplification he sees in many thinkers. Dulles undoubtedly sees the relevance of the Church in social and political issues—even to the point of calling the Church a contrast society—but maintains the Church/state distinction that Cavanaugh wants to challenge.

In his *Postconciliar Reflection*, Dulles devotes a chapter to this topic, entitled “The Church and the World.” This chapter is, not surprisingly, his reflection on *Gaudium et spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World from Vatican II. Dulles follows the more optimistic view of the world offered by Vatican II: “[The Council] resolutely addresses not only the sons of the Church and all who call upon the name of Christ, but the whole of humanity as well, and it longs to set forth the way it understands the presence

and function of the Church in the world of today.”³⁹ In this view, the relationship between the Church and the world is not antagonistic as in centuries past. “The ideal relationship between the Church and the world is,” Dulles writes, “one of harmony within distinction.”⁴⁰ That is, the two need each other but are certainly distinct.

Dulles comes out strongly against secularization theology in *The Resilient Church* and his critique speaks to his thoughts on the relationship between Church and politics. This movement, according to Dulles, reduced the Church to another social organization among many, ignoring the uniqueness and sacredness of the Christ-event. Whereas many since Vatican II have looked to the Church for definitive positions on politics and social issues, Dulles notes that the Church lacks competence in these areas to fully address them and therefore must acknowledge the value of secular disciplines. He leaves little doubt of his opinion of the Church and “politics” here: “The Church has generally avoided taking positions on political or social questions except where there was a clear issue of a moral or religious character. I would personally hope that this healthy tradition will be maintained.”⁴¹ At other times, however, he is not as clear about the relationship between the Christian community and the greater society.

In his discussion concerning the relationship between nature and the supernatural in *The Catholicity of the Church*, Dulles includes a section on Church-state interaction. Here, he argues that the Church and state are indeed separate realms with distinct competencies. Dulles is sure to point out, however,

³⁹ Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes*, ¶12.

⁴⁰ Dulles, *The Dimensions of the Church*, 84.

⁴¹ Dulles, *The Resilient Church*, 21.

that “grace and sin are at work in the socio-political order and that this order falls within the Church’s sphere of concern.”⁴² The Cardinal does not expand upon the practical implications of the “sphere of concern,” but is clearly attentive to the blurry lines of faith and politics.

Writing only a year later, Dulles echoes this tension in *Models of the Church*. One of the key aspects of Dulles’ preferred model is that the Christian community is a “contrast society.” Dulles seems to acknowledge that to live out values in contrast with the larger society will implicate the community in political and social issues. He writes,

“Although the Church cannot be reduced to the level of a political coalition, its commitment to Christ and its eschatological hope have a proper and necessary impact upon political and economic life and consequently on the transformation of human society.”⁴³

In 1989, Dulles took up the topic of the Church’s relationship to American culture for his McGinley lecture. He names for major stages in American culture, with the last stage—the present—being the stage of “consumerism.” Dulles goes on to describe the different responses to American culture, each of which falls on the spectrum between counter-culturalism and accommodationism. Ultimately, Dulles comes out most strongly against accommodationist trends, arguing for the unique witness of the Church. “The more thoroughly Catholics become inculturated in the American scene, the more alienated they become from their

⁴² Dulles, *The Catholicity of the Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 66.

⁴³ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 213.

religious roots and the hierarchical authorities."⁴⁴ According to Dulles, there is a crisis of identity among American Catholics, a concern he voices in the aforementioned assertion about the divorce of religion from daily life.

Thus far, we have only looked at the first three models from *Models of the Church*. The final two models are relevant here, for Dulles' evaluation of them speaks to his tendency to nuance the Church-world issue and maintain a creative tension. He says of the fourth model, church as herald, that because it can oversimplify faith due to its reading of the Bible, "it tends...to be satisfied with words and professions rather than to insist on deeds, especially in the social and public arena. As a remedy, one must stress the necessity of incarnating one's faith in life and action."⁴⁵ Dulles' discussion of church as servant explains the post-conciliar attempts at this incarnation. He describes the work of Teilhard de Chardin and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, both of whom reflect the ecclesiology of The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. According to Dulles, *Gaudium et spes* "outlines a completely new understanding of the relationship between the Church and the world of our day."⁴⁶ Chardin and Bonhoeffer envisioned the Church as servant and represent secular-dialogic theology for Dulles.⁴⁷ "They tried to get the Church to take seriously the secular achievements of modern man, and they sought to ground their positive attitude toward the world theologically and Christologically."⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Dulles, "Catholicism and American Culture," *Church and Society: The Laurence J. McGinley Lectures, 1988-2007* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 38.

⁴⁵ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 186-187.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 83.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 87.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Dulles' treatment of church as servant speaks once again to his nuanced approach to the Church/state question. His critique of the church as servant model is that it "could easily give the impression that man's final salvation is to be found within history, and could lure the Church into an uncritical acceptance of secular values."⁴⁹ Instead, the community should have the Kingdom of God at the center of its belief and actions. He does recognize, however, that the Kingdom of God has implications for political and social issues, including the role of the Church for critiquing the institutions in which its members act. He writes, "This service can include prophetic criticism of social institutions, and thus help to transform human society into the image of the promised Kingdom."⁵⁰ The extent of this prophetic criticism is unclear, however, and it is from here that Cavanaugh moves beyond Dulles to explore the role of the Eucharist in a critique of political and economic institutions.

This surely does not exhaust Cardinal Dulles' work on the Church-world/state issue. It is clear, however, that Dulles attempts to maintain a moderate position and recognize the tension of the discussion. The Church cannot ignore the political and social implications of its witness, yet it cannot accommodate to the changing values of the world around it in order to be popular. He assents to the modern distinctions of Church and politics, and while he recognizes that the Church should and must make comment on matters in the latter, Dulles emphasizes that the Church does something different from the

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 91.

state. He affirms the value of secular disciplines and recognizes that the state rightly attends to different concerns than the Church.

Conclusion

The work of Avery Dulles represents a particularly American interpretation of the ecclesiology of Vatican II. In addition, although Dulles never worked as a pastor, his work has a notable pastoral dimension, especially in its concern for the role of the Church in the lives of lay American Catholics. Dulles recognizes that the life of faith is often in competition with the other facets of a person's life because of the overtly secular nature of the society in which Americans reside. When the Second Vatican Council affirms religious liberty and the values of liberal democracy, it inevitably raises questions of ecumenism and interfaith relations—topics with which Dulles is concerned throughout his career—but we are focused here on the way in which Dulles envisions the Church specifically with Catholics in mind. When he evaluates the first three models, he is concerned with their tendency to mystify the Church. This mystification renders the Church inattentive to the political and social issues that need its attention and action. Faithful to the Council's recognition that the Church cannot sequester itself away from the world, Dulles cautions that none of the models can be assumed fully but that there must be an attempt to harmonize what is good from each of them in order to develop the fullest vision of Church possible.

Dulles' constructive ecclesiology lies in his description of the "community of disciples," an image he borrows from John Paul II. This image retains the

sacramental and biblical integrity of the mystical communion and sacrament models, as well as the importance of tradition and structure (hierarchy) from institutional model. The notion of discipleship, according to Dulles, allows for a better relationship between laity and leadership, as well as motivates and challenges the Church as a whole to bear faithful witness in the world. While Dulles clearly recognizes the role of the Church in the world, he holds a very nuanced position, attempting to argue for a middle way between the extremes of sectarianism and accommodationism, and clearly affirming the distinction of realms between Church and state.

In the next two chapters, I will explore the ecclesiology of William Cavanaugh in light of Dulles' work. Insofar as Dulles represents the primary American interpretation of Vatican II's ecclesiology, he is the primary basis of comparison for determining Cavanaugh's value in the discussion of the Church in both liberal democracy and capitalist economics.

CHAPTER II

The Ecclesial Vision of William Cavanaugh

In *Torture and Eucharist*, William Cavanaugh gives a detailed account of the violent regime of General Pinochet of Chile in the 1960s and 1970s. The first part of his work sets out to describe the social effects of torture, and the role it plays for the modern nation-state. He argues that in the modern configuration of church and state, the Church has allowed the state control of the body, assuming control of "spiritual" matters. This led to the tragedy of Chilean torture jails, wherein the government of Chile manifested its power on the bodies of its citizens, individualizing them and tearing asunder important social bodies.⁵¹ Cavanaugh seeks to describe why the Catholic Church was unable to stop the oppression of the Chilean people, especially in a country so Catholic in heritage and history. Chile is admittedly an extreme example of the relationship between

⁵¹ Cavanaugh devotes almost half of *Torture and Eucharist* to developing this point, but his argument about the "work" of torture, especially as "anti-liturgy" is not the focus of this particular chapter. A central feature of Cavanaugh's argument about torture, and about the nation-state in general, concerns a particular view of the modern notion of "religion," wherein the modern imagination construes the nation-state as the necessary arbiter among inherently violent religious convictions. This is shown most clearly by the "religious wars" of the 16th and 17th century. This argument is the focus of Cavanaugh's latest work, *The Myth of Religious Violence*. Cavanaugh argues that the modern nation-state functions as a savior in this capacity. Under this disordered soteriology, the state effects its power on the bodies of its citizens in various way, with torture being one of the most perverse: "Torture may be considered a kind of perverse *liturgy*, for in torture the body of the victim is the ritual site where the state's power is manifested in its most awesome form" (Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 24). I will return to the importance of Cavanaugh's argument concerning the nation-state in Chapter III.

individuals and their government, but Cavanaugh is able to abstract particular observations from the tragedy of Chile to modern nation-states in general.

The work of *Theopolitical Imagination* is a more general account of the church-state relationship, with special emphasis on the American context at places. Cavanaugh first describes "The Myth of State as Savior," a chapter he develops from an earlier article.⁵² It details Cavanaugh's unique critique of the modern nation-state from an historical perspective, critique that he did not include as completely in *Torture and Eucharist*. The next two chapters deal with the topic of civil space and the rise of consumerism. In this succinct text, Cavanaugh lays out the general principles of his view of the Church in liberal democracy.

The purpose of this chapter is to mine both of these works for Cavanaugh's ecclesial vision. A majority of his work is admittedly critical, yet this critique is crucial to understanding his own view of the Church. The chapter is divided, therefore, into two sections: Critique and Construction. I will describe Cavanaugh's critique of what he perceives as problematic ecclesiology, as well as his own ideas for a Eucharist-centered ecclesiology. I will note his use of or consonance with important theologians in the realm of Catholic ecclesiology, Avery Dulles in particular, in order to contextualize his work and demonstrate its relevance.

In short, Cavanaugh wants to develop an ecclesial vision that describes the Church as a counter-politics to the prevailing problematic politics of the

⁵² See William Cavanaugh, "'A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House': The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State," *Modern Theology* 11, 4 (October 1995): 398-420.

modern-nation state. The Church must be willing to see itself as relevant to both social and political questions, and must be willing to bear outspoken witness in political and social situations that contradict the Gospel. At the center of this vision is the Eucharist and its eschatological re-ordering of space and time. He thus follows the Eucharistic ecclesiologies of other theologians, yet moves beyond the prevailing notions of Church that continue to accept the distinction of Church/politics by insisting upon the Church's ability—perhaps necessity—to criticize the governments it has for years tacitly accepted.

Critique

NEW CHRISTENDOM ECCLESIOLOGY. In light of the atrocities he outlines in the first part of *Torture and Eucharist*, Cavanaugh sets out to discuss the underlying causes of the Catholic Church's inability to act or react properly in Pinochet's Chile. In order to understand Cavanaugh's version of Eucharistic ecclesiology, it is necessary to understand his critique of New Christendom ecclesiology, the way of imagining the role of the Church that Cavanaugh believes prevented the Church from speaking to evil during the human rights crisis of the 60s and 70s in Chile. Cavanaugh continues his critique of New Christendom ecclesiology in *Theopolitical Imagination*, wherein he discusses the dangers of this ecclesial vision for modern democracies. The aim of this section is to outline Cavanaugh's critique of this particular ecclesiology and compare his critique to the concerns of Avery Dulles above. The comparison serves to demonstrate the way in which Cavanaugh continues the tradition of the Second

Vatican Council by exploring the problems the Catholic Church faces in the modern world, including its ability to speak clearly and relevantly in pluralistic society.

"New Christendom" ecclesiology is the model of the Church that separates the temporal and spiritual and claims the Church's jurisdiction over the latter. Cavanaugh calls this a "distinction of planes" and cites Jacques Maritain as its primary advocate. Maritain asserts the "autonomy of the temporal and the superiority of the spiritual."⁵³ The Church is, and always has been, concerned only with "spiritual" matters, and should thus remove itself from direct political involvement. The Church should instead address itself to "social" questions in lieu of political issues and do so only in an effort to further the Kingdom of God.⁵⁴

New Christendom ecclesiology is best seen as a reaction by the Church to the rise of modernity. As the Church lost its political power, it had to reevaluate the way it saw itself in relation to the bodies that had assumed it. It could not, however, be subsumed into the structure of modern nation-states and thus needed to assert its transcendence. In Maritain's framework, "Modernity has swept away the old Christendom, turning its back on the church but at the same time freeing the mystical body from its cultural encumbrances and entanglements with the state."⁵⁵ The Church makes claims on the spiritual realm, that which is superior to the temporal anyway. Ideally, then, the Church retains its power by

⁵³ William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 160.

⁵⁴ Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum* makes a similar distinction in paragraph 2 between political issues and "social" issues like the rights and dignity of workers.

⁵⁵ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 165.

transcending the modern political realm—which seeks to subjugate it—altogether.

In addition to Jacques Maritain, Cavanaugh points to the role of the popes in this particular model for the Church. Maritain's ideas about the role of the Church stood as theological support for Pius XI's actions against Catholic political movements in France. In the period between the World Wars, Pius XI worked to establish a model for the Church that would retain its viability. He tried to "avoid conflict enough to win for the church a sphere of autonomy where it might evangelize without interference."⁵⁶ Such autonomy, of course, is at the heart of Maritain's vision of the Church transcending over temporal matters (i.e. "politics").

If the Church is to attend to social but not political questions, it must have a means of doing so. Cavanaugh explains the role of Catholic Action, specifically in Chile but around the world as well. The question of defining Catholic Action in the early to mid-twentieth century is a difficult one. The movement is quite nebulous given its various manifestations in different countries⁵⁷, different communities and even different parishes. Recall from the previous chapter that, put simply, it is the lay apostolate of the Church's mission, the activity of lay people in furthering the mission of the Catholic Church. Catholic Action received its name Leo XIII, and was explicated by his encyclical, *Graves de communi* in

⁵⁶ Ibid., 136.

⁵⁷ See for instance Gianfranco Poggi, *Catholic Action in Italy: The Sociology of a Sponsored Organization* (CA: Stanford University Press, 1967).

1901.⁵⁸ The movement had its history, however, in European groups such as the Italian Catholic Youth, and German and Italian Congresses, which were supported by Pius IX.⁵⁹ The laity were called upon even more explicitly by Leo XIII to take action in light of the growing dangers of the modern world. The theme of looming danger is present in both papal statements leading up to Pius XII, as well as the corpus of literature expounding the ideas and foundations for Catholic Action in various countries and communities.

Although similarities in the logistical details of each manifestation of the concept of "Catholic Action" are difficult to name, one of the definitive texts on the subject offers a helpful definition. In his *A Manual of Catholic Action*, Luigi Civardi writes that Catholic Action is "The organization of the Catholic laity, consecrated to the apostolate in aid of, and in direct dependence on the hierarchy, in view of the triumph of the Kingdom of Christ, in the family, and in society at large."⁶⁰ The movement has its roots in various papal documents, all of which provide Catholic Action as a means of dealing with the challenges of the modern world. In particular, these documents relate the movement to the image of the Mystical Body of Christ and insist upon the dedication and work of the laity in combating the dangers of the 20th century.

In *Graves in communi*, often cited as the textual inception of Catholic Action as a unified lay movement, Leo XIII writes, "The harvest of misery is before our eyes, and the dreadful prospects of the most disastrous national

⁵⁸ The Benedictine Monks of Solesmes, *The Lay Apostolate: Papal Teachings*, trans. A Secular Priest (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1961), 11.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 10.

⁶⁰ Luigi Civardi, *A Manual of Catholic Action*, trans. C.C. Martindale, S.J. (NY: Sheed and Ward, 1943), 8-9.

upheavals are threatening us.”⁶¹ The threat, according to Leo, came from the growth of socialism the world over. His successor, Pius X, however, speaks of a more general decline of society. In *Il fermo proposito*, Pius writes, “Against the peaceful conquests of the Church arose unceasing attacks, the more deplorable and fatal as human society tends more to govern itself by principles opposed to the Christian ideal, and to separate itself wholly from God.”⁶² It is clear to see, therefore, the rather defensive posture of the Pontificate in the early twentieth century toward modernity, viewed as dangerously secular and increasing in atheism.

This defensiveness manifested itself in the movement of New Christendom ecclesiology. Cavanaugh writes, “The movement reached its climax in 1943 with Pius XII’s encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi*, which gave official sanction to the popularity of this image.”⁶³ Much of this document on the Mystical Body of Christ is only properly understood in the shadow of the growing horrors of World War II. Though there is much debate over the degree of Pius XII’s commitment to speak out against the atrocities of Nazism,⁶⁴ there are statements in *Mystici corporis Christi* that seem to speak directly or at least in part of the situation in Europe at the time. Pius writes, “To Our profound grief We see at times the deformed, the insane, and those suffering from hereditary disease deprived of their lives, as though they were a useless burden to Society.”⁶⁵ He

⁶¹ Leo XIII, *Graves in communi* (1901), ¶283.

⁶² Pius X, *Il fermo proposito* (1905), ¶332.

⁶³ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 209.

⁶⁴ See Frank J. Coppa, “Between Morality and Diplomacy: The Vatican’s ‘Silence’ During the Holocaust,” *Journal of Church and State* 50, 3 (Summer 2008): 541-568.

⁶⁵ Pius XII, *Mystici corporis Christi* (1943), ¶94.

also refers to the time in which he is writing as “the gravest of hours”⁶⁶ and “sad and anxious times,”⁶⁷ a recognition of the devastating effects of the ongoing war.

It is not clear, however, that the War is the only thing on the Pope's mind when he uses such language. Earlier in the document, for instance, he lists threats to the Church and society as a whole that echo the statements of his predecessors. He writes that “false ideas are being disseminated which turn minds aside from the straight path of truth,” including “rationalism...popular naturalism...and false mysticism.”⁶⁸ The doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, therefore, must be explained so as to correct such errors. More than errors from within the Church, however, Pius XII points to the dangers of the world outside of the Church in language not dissimilar from Leo XIII and Pius X. In the very beginning of the document, he writes,

the Church of God not only is despised and hated maliciously by those who shut their eyes to the light of Christian wisdom and miserably return to the teachings, customs and practices of ancient paganism, but is ignored and neglected, and even at times looked upon as irksome by many Christians who are allured by the specious error or caught in the meshes of the world's corruption.⁶⁹

Pius goes on to explain the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ and the role of the laity therein.

⁶⁶ Ibid., ¶97.

⁶⁷ Ibid., ¶84.

⁶⁸ Ibid., ¶8-9.

⁶⁹ *Mystici corporis Christi*, ¶3.

The Mystical Body of Christ stands as the perfect society, contrasted starkly with the society of the world that is falling into deeper and deeper disarray. *Mystici corporis Christi* lauds Catholic Action in particular for its role in facing the challenges and errors of the modern world. Pius XII says of the movement, "There is no one who does not realize their energetic zeal is of the highest importance and of the greatest weight especially in the present circumstances."⁷⁰ It is clear from this encyclical and the encyclicals of the Popes before Pius XII that the laity are part of a conscious defense on the part of the Church against the threats and errors of the 20th century. Catholic Action was both formed by and representative of this defensive posture, illustrated by the ideological foundations of the movement found in literature concerning Catholic Action in the early to mid-twentieth century.

In the United States, a small pamphlet was printed in 1940 in order to more fully inform the laity of the nature and obligations of Catholic Action. James O'Toole writes with vigor and passion to the laity of the American Catholic Church about their duties in the movement. He leaves no doubt as to his attitudes towards many of the changes of the modern world. O'Toole writes, "To repair the ravages of secularism is the principle and most imperative aim of Catholic Action."⁷¹ Taking his rhetoric to an even shriller tone, O'Toole uses the language of warfare to express the degree of danger present in the modern world: "Militant atheism is on the march,"⁷² and "A solid phalanx of lay apostles is

⁷⁰ Ibid., ¶98.

⁷¹ James O'Toole, S.T.D., J.C.D., *What is Catholic Action?* (NY: The Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle, 1940), 12.

⁷² O'Toole, 15.

needed to bring back to world to Christ.”⁷³ In the theology of Catholic Action, the laity are called upon by the Church to fight against the modern world with the weapons of the Church, which stands as the perfect society over and against the clearly imperfect society of the world.

Such vocabulary, however, is not exclusive to O’Toole, for the members of Catholic Action are elsewhere referred to as “militants.”⁷⁴ Besides a sense of defensiveness, the rhetoric surrounding Catholic Action takes on a degree of urgency, not unlike the tone of Pius XII’s encyclical. Much emphasis is placed on the need for immediate action among the laity: “For us Christians, this present historic moment, which will decide the future of humanity, is the moment in which the Providential plan enters into a decisive stage.”⁷⁵ The order for the laity, therefore, is not only tall but carries a sense of urgency. In addition to mirroring the defensive and urgent rhetoric of the Pontificate, Catholic Action literature is also clear on the connection between the movement and the ecclesiology of the Mystical Body of Christ.

According to Cavanaugh, New Christendom ecclesiology— notions of the Church that privilege the model of Mystical Body of Christ—is the Church’s response to the changing relationship between faith and politics in the era of the modern nation-state. Cavanaugh’s critique of this response is that by emphasizing that the Church was responsible for “spiritual” matters and unconcerned with “political” matters, the New Christendom ecclesiology sought

⁷³ Ibid., 52.

⁷⁴ See Civardi, *A Manual of Catholic Action* (1943).

⁷⁵ Joseph Cardijn, *Laymen Into Action*, trans. Anne Heggie (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1964), 87.

the "removal from an autonomous political sphere" represented and produced by the encyclicals of Pius XI and the theology of Catholic Action"⁷⁶ Here Cavanaugh echoes Dennis Doyle as Doyle describes the extremes of images for the Catholic Church. He writes, "*Mystification* labels a form of reductive distortion that downplays or ignores the human elements and processes in the Church. What is practical, human, and sometimes arbitrary has unfortunately sometimes been justified by a vague appeal to 'mystery'."⁷⁷ While it is not clear that Doyle agrees with Cavanaugh's view of *Mystici corporis Christi*, Doyle does acknowledge the danger of mystification, and supports Cavanaugh's assertions about its problems for ecclesiology.

Cavanaugh's contention is that mystification renders the Church incapable of resisting such evil as the violence in Pinochet's Chile. This inability to resist, however, is not isolated to the totalitarian regimes of the developing world. Instead, "the church's inability to resist would have the same roots as the church's weakness when jackboots pounded the streets of Europe."⁷⁸ Furthermore, it is possible to see the consequences of the Church's acquiescence to the spiritual/temporal (political) distinction in American democracy. "The church created a confined sphere for itself called the 'social' in which alone it could act as church, thereby creating a vacancy in the 'political' to be occupied by increasingly powerful state interests."⁷⁹ These interests hold

⁷⁶ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 151.

⁷⁷ Dennis Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology: Vision and Versions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000), 15.

⁷⁸ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 137.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

sway in the American context, and the Church remains confined to its “social questions,” despite the efforts of American public theologians.

PUBLIC THEOLOGY. In *Theopolitical Imagination*, Cavanaugh critiques such thinkers as John Courtney Murray and Harry Boyte, figures he sees as representative of public theology in the American context. Murray, one of the most prominent American theologians of the twentieth century, argued that theology could be brought into the public realm by appealing to natural law, “the language of cool, dry reason.”⁸⁰ This appeal, according to Cavanaugh, relies on the presumption that society is a neutral space in which theological arguments can be made and public consensus reached on the basis of reason. Cavanaugh challenges this neutrality and notes that theologians have elsewhere been inattentive to the degree of influence state interests have on “public” conversations.

Another avenue for bringing theology into the public realm is to emphasize “the democratic potential of civil society itself.”⁸¹ Cavanaugh offers Harry Boyte, founder of “Public Achievement,” as representative of this model of public theology. Boyte’s goal is to empower grassroots movements in democratic society. The effect of this empowerment is that the democratic process is recovered through community groups. Boyte’s Public Achievement teaches schoolchildren how to solve problems in the public sphere, “dealing with a diversity of people who will have a diversity of ends.”⁸² Cavanaugh highlights the

⁸⁰ William Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Christian Practices of Space and Time* (New York: T&T Clark, 2002), 56.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 68.

lack of shared ends in Public Achievement as it recognizes that public interest is determined by building consensus among diverse opinions. This is a difference from Murray, who argues for particular values held in common by all Americans. Nevertheless, according to Cavanaugh, both lines of thinking share the assumption that civil society or public space is a neutral realm in which theology can enter. It is this assumption that he wants to challenge.

Cavanaugh contends that public theologians are insufficiently attentive to the dangerous compromises theology must make to enter the "public" realm. He writes, "Theology must submit to what 'the public' can consider reasonable, where 'the public' is understood in terms of the nation-state."⁸³ For Cavanaugh, this is problematic given the nation-state's monopoly on legitimate violence. Public theology must make itself digestible in society, a standard that is set by the nation-state.

The Church's pursuit of peace is at the heart of Cavanaugh's project. The general unwillingness to criticize the nation-state, especially concerning war, lies at the center of his argument against New Christendom ecclesiology and its subsequent notions of church in relation to the state. He writes, "The church's collaboration with government naturally includes, in dangerous times, support for military preparedness."⁸⁴ New Christendom ecclesiology addresses the nation-state by assuming a mystical vision of the Church. Public theology attempts to make forays into politics through civil society. Both rely on the efforts of individual Catholics, especially the laity, to manifest its social teaching. For Cavanaugh,

⁸³ Ibid., 81.

⁸⁴ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 162.

both positions render the Church unable to take properly critical positions towards the nation-state, especially in desperate times of state-sponsored violence, be it torture or unjust war. The Church remains outside (even if “above”) the conversations in which the Eucharist mandates it take part: “There is no sense that the church itself is meant to be a body in any way analogous to other social bodies.”⁸⁵

Cardinal Dulles’ comments about the model of Mystical Body reflect concerns that are related to Cavanaugh’s critique of New Christendom ecclesiology as a whole. While Dulles did not share Cavanaugh’s assumptions about the nation-state, especially his contention about violence, Dulles does share Cavanaugh’s concern about the ability (or lack thereof) of the Church to be relevant in American society. Recall from the previous chapter Dulles’ statement about the problems of the Catholic Church in the United States: “The Church finds itself increasingly difficult to transmit its doctrine and values to its younger members. It does not seem to be forming a sufficient body of new leaders to assure an effective apostolate for the coming generations.”⁸⁶ Although his specific concerns are notably different from Cavanaugh’s, they share the same motivation: they judge that the Catholic Church in the United States struggles because of the prevailing divorce of the life of faith from the life of everything else, including politics and economics. The Church makes specific claims about a person’s life, yet it struggles to articulate both the reasons for these claims or the claims themselves to young people especially.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 141.

⁸⁶ Dulles, *A Church to Believe In*, 2.

Dulles remains stridently faithful to Church teaching on church-state relations, and thus represents a prevailing tendency of American Catholics to remain uncritical of the American government and its claims on citizens. He maintains the definition of “politics” with which Cavanaugh takes issue. Dulles writes, “The Church [in the United States] has generally avoided taking positions on political or social questions except where there was a clear issue of a moral or religious character. I would personally hope that this healthy tradition will be maintained.”⁸⁷ He does, however, share with Cavanaugh concerns about an overly-transcendent view of the Church. Again from the discussion above, Dulles says, “The designation of the Church as Body of Christ is in danger of leading to an unhealthy divinization of the Church.”⁸⁸ This view reflects the concern of the Second Vatican Council itself. In *Lumen Gentium*, the Bishops devote an entire chapter to the People of God, emphasizing the importance of this image for the Church in the modern world.

Cavanaugh’s critique of New Christendom ecclesiology attempts to expose the underlying assumptions about church-state relations that threaten to—perhaps already do—render the Church incapable of bearing full Christian witness in the face of modern problems such as torture and unjust war: “It was because of theory, of theology, mistaken ecclesiology, because the church did not see itself as called to break with the government.”⁸⁹ His concerns about an overly mystical view of the Church that assigns “temporal” concerns to nation-states appear to be shared by both the Bishops of the Second Vatican Council,

⁸⁷ Dulles, *The Resilient Church*, 21.

⁸⁸ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 47.

⁸⁹ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 123.

and by Cardinal Dulles as he reflects upon their statements in an American context.

Cavanaugh's project, however, is to follow this concern to its ecclesiological conclusions and offer that the Church as a body, real and living, must at times speak and act critically of the governments in which it finds itself. It is this push for break with government that moves Cavanaugh's work beyond the work of a theologian like Dulles and into discussions of issues that challenge the Church in the 21st century. At the center of Cavanaugh's critique of New Christendom ecclesiology is that it is unwilling to challenge properly the governments in which the Church finds itself a part. In particular, when the Church does not see itself as a true social body, the monopoly of violence held by the state goes unchallenged. Cavanaugh's own ecclesial vision follows from the critique above by focusing on the unifying power of the Eucharist, not simply as an object of personal devotion but as a spatial and temporal reordering that can move the Church into a position more conducive to witnessing to the power of God in the world.

Construction

Much of William Cavanaugh's work is critique. As we saw above, he spends a great deal of effort in *Torture and Eucharist* critiquing the ecclesiology he perceives as responsible for the Church's inaction in Chile under Pinochet's oppressive regime. Elsewhere, Cavanaugh develops a detailed critique of the narrative about religious warfare, a critique we will explore later. However, in both

of the primary sources for this critique, *Torture and Eucharist* and *Theopolitical Imagination*, Cavanaugh also offers a constructive vision of the Church centered on the role of the Eucharist for the community. The purpose of this section will be to outline Cavanaugh's Eucharistic ecclesiology, specifically his use of Henri de Lubac. I will then briefly compare Cavanaugh's view of the Eucharist to Cardinal Dulles', and by extension, the Second Vatican Council.

Cavanaugh's critique of New Christendom ecclesiology carries important implications and assumptions that inform his own ecclesial vision. In particular, Cavanaugh is critical of an ecclesiology that is unwilling to criticize government, especially in light of the use of violence for the propagation and survival of the nation-state. He seeks to develop the Church as a body unconfined to the spiritual/mystical sphere of life, and willing to witness to the mystery of the Eucharist. He will draw heavily, then, on the temporal and spatial aspects of the Sacrament in order to demonstrate how the Eucharist functions as a counter-politics to the nation-state, in both its abuses (torture) and its accepted forms (democracy).

Cavanaugh's aforementioned critique of the Church as Mystical Body follows the work of Henri de Lubac. Cavanaugh draws heavily on de Lubac's work not only to critique this central image for New Christendom ecclesiology, but to show precedent for his own ecclesial vision. While it retains a notably critical tone, I will outline Cavanaugh's discussion of de Lubac and the Mystical Body as part of his own constructive ecclesiology.

As we saw above, Cavanaugh argues that the insistence upon the transcendence of the Church—i.e. emphasis on the “mystical” nature of the Church over the temporal or physical—can be dangerous in the modern configuration of church and state. He asks the probing question that leads into a discussion of de Lubac’s seminal work, *Corpus Mysticum*: “How is it that the doctrine of the mystical body of Christ could have come to mask, rather than witness against, the violence of nations?”⁹⁰ According to de Lubac, the understanding of the Body of Christ in antiquity had a different meaning than he finds in modern Eucharistic understanding. De Lubac explains the threefold distinction of the Body of Christ, summarized by Cavanaugh thus: “(1) The historical body, meaning the physical body of Jesus of Nazareth, (2) the sacramental body, or Christ as present in the Eucharistic elements, and (3) the ecclesial body, that is, the church.”⁹¹ The early understanding was to see the second and third notions together as effecting a union with the first. Cavanaugh writes, “The gap is a temporal one.”⁹² De Lubac’s assertion is that in the Middle Ages, this configuration was changed so that the historical and sacramental body became closely linked, with the ecclesial body standing on its own. The effect, according to de Lubac, is that “The essential link that bonded the Eucharistic rite to the unity of the Church has disappeared.”⁹³

⁹⁰ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 212.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*, trans. Gemma Simmons with Richard Price and Christopher Stephens, ed. Laurence Paul Hemming and Susan Frank Parsons (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 245.

Unity is crucial for de Lubac's understanding of Church. Dennis Doyle notes that in de Lubac's ecclesiology, "The sacraments have a social dimension because as a means of salvation they are instruments of unity. The Eucharist above all is a sacrament of unity."⁹⁴ Emphasizing the unifying effect of the Eucharist in terms of Church is of course important for Cavanaugh in his attempt to present the Church as a social body unto itself capable of resisting violence. When the sacramental body becomes identified with the historical body, "The central perspective shifts from being communion to being sacrifice."⁹⁵ This focus on Eucharist as sacrifice can inspire heavily individualistic Eucharistic piety. On the contrary, de Lubac asserts, "True Eucharistic piety...is no devout individualism...With one sweeping, all-embracing gesture, in one fervent intention it gathers together the whole world."⁹⁶

Thus Cavanaugh uses de Lubac to argue that the Church is the true Body of Christ, not as a mystical, transcendent union between individual believers but as a body unified by the sacrament of the Eucharist capable of witnessing to Christ in the face of evil, even (especially?) concerning earthly affairs. This witness requires a different kind of imagination, a notably Eucharistic imagination. In order to make a distinction between modern imagination and Eucharistic imagination, Cavanaugh discusses their different notions of time. The former is a linear notion: "The secular imagination of history...is a uniform sequence of cause and effect, measured not by the divine plan, but by clock and

⁹⁴ Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 68.

⁹⁵ de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum*, 204.

⁹⁶ Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: A Study of Dogma in the Relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind* (New York: Longmans, 1950), 49.

calendar.”⁹⁷ In addition, this notion of time has no concrete end; the state exists in order to preserve itself. By contrast, the Body of Christ functions within a concept of time with a particular end point, or *telos*, making it notably eschatological. In the Eucharist, the church enacts the theology of “already but not yet.”⁹⁸ By bringing all times into the moment of the Eucharist, the modern dichotomies are challenged; when heaven and earth meet in the Eucharist, Christians are left wondering how to accept the distinction of spiritual and temporal planes.

Recall his comment about the temporal gap in the preferred configuration of the threefold Body of Christ: what distinguishes the sacramental and ecclesial body from the historical body is time.⁹⁹ The Eucharist is properly viewed as eschatological, the moment at which the Church is brought together over time and space. According to Cavanaugh, “The emphasis on the Eucharist as a memorial of Jesus’ actions on earth has emphasized his first coming to the neglect of his second.”¹⁰⁰ Without this proper eschatological awareness, the importance of bringing about the Kingdom of God and the hope of the eschaton is lost to individualistic piety.

The eschatological reality of the Eucharist is critically important for the Church if it is to realize itself as a social or political body. Paul McPartlan, another of Cavanaugh’s sources, explains how the Eucharist allows the Church to face the myriad of issues in the world: “Because of our regular celebration of the

⁹⁷ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 223.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 212.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 226.

Eucharist, the future is no stranger to us. Through the Eucharist, *it* becomes the foundation upon which we build our daily lives.”¹⁰¹ The notion of the Eucharist becoming the foundation of hope on which we live our lives is integral for Cavanaugh. This foundation is the product of Eucharistic formation: “We are formed into a body which transfigures the world’s violence through self-sacrifice and reconciliation.”¹⁰² The Eucharist is to inform our decisions, both locally and universally.

Space is also an important category in Cavanaugh’s Eucharistic ecclesiology. In *Theopolitical Imagination*, he asserts that the Eucharist offers a re-imagination of the modern idea of space. This is related to his idea of time, for if the whole Church is gathered in the Eucharist at any given time, the sacrament must also transcend spatial barriers between members of the Body: “The community may journey without leaving its particular location, because the entire world and more comes to it in the Eucharist.”¹⁰³ The spatial work of the Eucharist has important implications for the role of the Church in the world, bringing the whole Church into one space in the Eucharist. If the Eucharistic assembly transcends space, it crosses borders, physical and political, that might preclude the members from addressing the needs of their brothers and sisters in different parts of the world. The Sacrament allows, even mandates, that those who

¹⁰¹ Paul McPartlan, *Sacrament of Salvation: An Introduction to Eucharistic Ecclesiology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995) italics in text, 6.

¹⁰² Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 151.

¹⁰³ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 117-118.

receive it move beyond their particular station and consider the whole world, indeed "the world in a wafer."¹⁰⁴

Here Cavanaugh is indebted to the work of communion ecclesiology, which relies on the intimate relationship between local and universal church. Dennis Doyle explains that this is one of the four elements of communion ecclesiology that remain across its various interpretations. He writes, "Communion ecclesiology promotes a dynamic and healthy interplay between unity and diversity in the Church, between the Church universal and the local churches."¹⁰⁵ Cavanaugh stands firmly in the Tradition here by upholding this tension and challenging modern dichotomies.

The public/private distinction is a particularly problematic dichotomy for Cavanaugh, as we saw in his treatment of public theology above. The relegation of the church to the "private" sphere of influence "has only sapped our ability to resist."¹⁰⁶ He goes on to argue that the key to regaining such an ability lies not in attempting to make forays into the "public" sphere but to draw on the church's Eucharistic ecclesiology in order to reconfigure the public sphere itself. The Church draws on its Jewish heritage for its self-understanding and looks to the practices of the assembly at Israel. Cavanaugh then offers that this history can lead the church to a fuller understanding of "public": "What makes these practices 'public' is that no aspect of life is excluded from them."¹⁰⁷ This is in stark contrast with the modern conception of religion that claims that religion cannot

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 114.

¹⁰⁵ Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 13.

¹⁰⁶ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 85.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 87.

encompass all of life lest we succumb to perpetual war between competing individuals. Such a conception relies upon a particular anthropology that happens to stand in direct conflict with that of the church.

Modern political theory maintains the individuality of each person and creates a distinction of public and private in order that people relate to one another through a center (the state) which "seeks to maintain the independence of individuals from each other."¹⁰⁸ In the Body of Christ, on the other hand, members relate to one another and to God not only in the center but through each other as well. Thus, Cavanaugh argues, "in Christ, the dichotomy of centre and periphery is overcome."¹⁰⁹ In addition to reimagining the relationship between members of the Body, the church offers a counter-imagination to that of the state, one that is characteristically eschatological.

A fully Eucharistic understanding of Church transforms the relationship between individual members. Contrary to the Enlightenment anthropology, the Eucharist enacts earthly reconciliation while looking forward in eschatological hope. Cavanaugh finds this in the letters of Paul, noting, "Where peace is lacking, the Eucharist appears as an eschatological sign of judgment requiring that people reconcile before a true Eucharist can take place."¹¹⁰ It is this requirement that enables the Church to make itself visible despite modern efforts to render it invisible and interiorized.

That members of the Body should be reconciled before partaking of the Eucharistic meal is central to the theology of excommunication. Cavanaugh

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 49.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 52.

discusses it within the context of Pinochet's Chile but his logic can be applied to the greater project of Eucharistic counter-politics. According to Cavanaugh, the excommunication of torturers under the Pinochet regime was an appropriate practice because "torture attacks the unity of the body of Christ."¹¹¹ In this context, excommunication is not a punishment but an acknowledgment of the Eucharistic counter-politics wherein the church refuses to be rendered invisible. By excommunication, the Body of Christ highlights the need for reconciliation as well as the necessity of community, thus undercutting the secular imagination that argues for the primacy of individuality.

The counter-politics of the Eucharist also functions to redefine the "other." Its eschatological character brings into one moment the whole church. It also breaks down all other divisions between people. This serves as a "fundamental disfigurement of the imagination of citizenship in the territorial state. One's fellow-citizens are not all present Britons or Germans, but fellow members (and potential members) of the Body of Christ, past, present, and future."¹¹² The Eucharist challenges the many divisions between people and reconciles us one to the other at the table.

Cavanaugh's Eucharistic theology follows from theologians who came before him who argue for the unifying, eschatological, and communal reality of the Sacrament. In *Models of the Church*, for instance, we see Dulles foreshadowing Cavanaugh's Eucharistic ecclesiology. He writes, "In its ecclesiological aspect the Eucharist celebrates and solidifies the union of the

¹¹¹ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 256.

¹¹² Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 51.

faithful with one another about the holy table.”¹¹³ The difference, of course, is that Cavanaugh argues that this union effects a counter-political character among the Body of Christ. He insists that the Eucharistic meal not only binds individual members, but mandates that they attend to the concerns of people locally and universally, regardless of the stigma of the “political” label. He challenges the very notion that the Church should stay out of “politics” by showing that the Eucharist itself is a political act in which we become involved in each other’s lives.

Conclusion

William Cavanaugh exerts a great deal of effort in deconstructing pre-conciliar ecclesiology. His aim is not to inspire antipathy towards hierarchy or assert the superiority of Vatican II’s ecclesiology per se. He seeks instead to challenge the assumption that the way we imagine church-state relations and therefore ecclesiology is inevitable or somehow organic. In the next chapter, I will explain how his argument about religious violence augments this challenge from an historical perspective. I hope to have made clear, however, that behind Cavanaugh’s critique of New Christendom ecclesiology is an inherent skepticism, if not outright objection, towards the modern imagination of Church and state that often renders the Church incapable of being what it is because of its claims on the whole person, body and soul.

Cavanaugh’s own answer to the question of Church is centered on the Eucharist. He uses Henri de Lubac to argue for a close identification between the

¹¹³ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 62.

Sacrament and the Church. This allows him to describe the Church as a real body, capable of moving and acting in response to the Paschal Mystery. The Eucharist unifies the members of the Body of Christ, transcending both time and space to bring all believers together from around the world and over time. Both spatially and temporally, the Eucharist frustrates the modern imagination and awakens people to the concerns of their brothers and sisters, irrespective of their physical location. Such a view of the Eucharist challenges the notion that the Church has nothing to say in "politics," for the Eucharist creates a political body itself, attending to the needs of the whole person, not just her soul.

CHAPTER III

"The Hard Look": The Contribution of Cavanaugh's Ecclesial Vision

The goal of the preceding chapter was to demonstrate the way in which William Cavanaugh's ecclesiology, mostly as laid out in *Torture and Eucharist*, moves away from an overly-transcendent view of the Church. That is, he argues with the premise that the image of the Body of Christ, especially when imagined as "Mystical," carries the danger of putting the Church in a less-than-relevant place in the lives of its members. He shares with Avery Dulles, then, the desire for the Church to be true to its mission and has implicit in his project the concern that Dulles makes explicit—the problem of distinguishing the life of faith from the rest of one's beliefs and actions in the world.

Cavanaugh's project, I believe, reflects the spirit of the Second Vatican Council's ecclesiology. His ecclesial vision has at its center the Eucharist, not as a disconnected event, but as the communal experience of the in-breaking of God in time and space. He also seeks to contend with the problems of the modern world, a major focus for both the Second Vatican Council and the work of Avery Dulles. But there are important differences in Cavanaugh's work from Dulles, differences that do not detract from its value but speak to what Cavanaugh's work may be able to contribute to the Catholic Church in the United States.

The aim of this chapter is to explore what is novel in Cavanaugh's project, and what it adds to the ongoing discussion of ecclesiology in America since Vatican II. In particular, Cavanaugh's critique of the modern nation-state--insofar as it has overtaken the claim on the body that is proper to the life of faith--may help the Church navigate some of the more challenging contemporary issues it now faces. I will first describe Cavanaugh's critique of the modern nation-state. I will then describe some implications of this critique in both the political and economic issues that face the Church today.

State as Savior

The account Cavanaugh gives concerning the rise of modern categories relies on his description of the popular mythology of the Enlightenment. The deconstruction of dichotomies he sees as antithetical to the Christian story is grounded in a re-imagining of the things we call "religion" and "politics." Cavanaugh questions the terminology of "religious wars" of sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe in order to challenge the notion of religion as necessarily sequestered from other parts of life. It is this separation which allows for the soteriology of the modern nation-state, the imagined savior that Cavanaugh argues has become a perverse imitation of the true Body of Christ.

Modernity's evaluation of religion is crucial for Cavanaugh's description of the modern nation-state. By claiming that the nation-state developed out of a need to keep the peace between religions, post-Enlightenment *mythos* thus justifies the dichotomization of the religious and political, the private and public,

as well as body and soul. The nation-state is imagined as a savior from the inevitable violence that arises when religion is not confined to the interior person. Cavanaugh argues, "The soteriology of the modern state is incomprehensible, however, apart from the fact that the Church is perhaps the primary thing from which the modern state is meant to save us."¹¹⁴ As the religiously neutral peacemaker, the state takes over as separate from the church, owning the "public" and leaving religion to the "private."

In order to understand the state as savior, we must be clear on what it is we are saved from. Drawing on the work of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau, Cavanaugh points to the anthropology of modern political theory as the basis for the soteriology of the modern nation-state.¹¹⁵ According to such theorists, there exists a state of nature characterized by competition between individuals. This view, then, relies on "an assumption of the essential individuality of the human race."¹¹⁶ Human beings are all inherently equal and free *from* one another, a freedom that Cavanaugh points out is in direct tension with Christianity's conception of freedom as communion with God and with one another. Such a view of the human person leads the modern mythos to claim that people are innately in competition with one another. This is only exacerbated by the story told of the "Wars of Religion" wherein the violent tendencies of humanity are confirmed.

¹¹⁴ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 20.

¹¹⁵ See also Cavanaugh, "Discerning: Politics and Reconciliation," in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Ethics*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas and Samuel Wells (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2004), 196-208.

¹¹⁶ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 17.

Religion is a matter of individual commitments, an inherently private affair that society and government cannot touch. This notion Cavanaugh attributes to John Locke.¹¹⁷ The concept of the divisive nature of religion comes out starkly in Rousseau, although Cavanaugh lists the myriad thinkers who espouse this assumption. The list bolsters his argument about the myth of religious violence:

As the story goes, the primary cause of the wars of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe was fruitless squabbling over religious doctrine: Spinoza' "tissue of ridiculous mysteries," Hobbes' "disputable doctrines of these your wise men," Locke's "nice and intricate matters that exceed the capacity of ordinary understandings," d'Holbach's "castle in the air," Voltaire's "unintelligible sophisms."¹¹⁸

In place of the violent inevitability of outward religiosity, then, Rousseau proposes adherence to civil religion. This civil religion, Cavanaugh recounts, is to augment the internal religion of an individual and "bind the citizen to the state."¹¹⁹

Religious commitments to God were solely matters of the individual, mitigated by the common religious commitments on the civil level so as to not succumb again into their essentially violent propensities, as evidenced in its sharpest relief in the "Religious Wars" of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries.

Thus the anthropological basis for the soteriology of the modern nation-state: unless the state functions as the "neutral" arbiter of individuals who are in inherent competition with one another, we will all be subject to a state of perpetual conflict and unmitigated violence. In order for the state to function this way, however, it must use violence itself. Cavanaugh can consistently make the

¹¹⁷ See Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (New York: Oxford, 2009), 78-80.

¹¹⁸ Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, 129.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.

claim, then, that modern political imagination has allowed for a perceived disconnect between soul and body in order to ensure protection by the state. The state must actively engage in binding practices to maintain itself as savior. Of this Cavanaugh writes, "We submit to these practices, even give our bodies up for war, in the hope that the peace and unity promised by the state will be delivered."¹²⁰

In order to critique modern nation-state itself, Cavanaugh must demonstrate the ways in which the myth of the Religious Wars is not true. This is the major project of his latest book, *The Myth of Religious Violence*. Cavanaugh names four major components of the myth¹²¹, and sets out to test each component against the historical record. His basic argument is that the notion that the wars of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe were primarily religiously motivated is false and has contributed to the modern narrative that allows the nation-state to maintain a negative view of religion.

The first component of the myth, according to Cavanaugh, is that "Combatants opposed each other based on religious difference."¹²² He cites numerous instances of Protestant-Catholic cooperation, focusing specifically on the French wars of religion from 1562-1598.¹²³ In addition, Cavanaugh recalls that in some circumstances, members of the same religious community fought one another, undermining the myth's contention that theological differences lie at the heart of the violence. For example, "In 1556-1557, Pope Paul IV went to war

¹²⁰ Ibid., 52.

¹²¹ For the remainder of this section, I will use "the myth" to mean the myth of religious violence that is the object of Cavanaugh's challenge.

¹²² Ibid., 141.

¹²³ Ibid., 144.

against...the devoutly Catholic Philip II of Spain.”¹²⁴ Cavanaugh also notes that if theological differences were the cause of such bloody warfare, we would expect to see armed conflict between Lutherans and Calvinists but the historical record does not bear this out.

The second component that Cavanaugh aims to debunk is that “the primary cause of the wars was religion, as opposed to merely political, economic, or social causes.”¹²⁵ He proceeds to describe the work of historians on the “Religious Wars,” showing how some have questioned the centrality of religion in the conflicts. Early twentieth century historians took into account the complex reasons for the conflict and “tended to push aside religion in its search for the underlying material causes of the wars.”¹²⁶ An article in 1973 by Natalie Zemon Davis, however, “is considered a watershed for bringing religious factors back into the study of the French wars,” and a 1993 article by Mack Holt broadens the scope of the centrality of religion in the conflicts.¹²⁷ Cavanaugh’s intention in bringing up two rather obscure, and late, articles is to make an historiographical point: the narrative about the “religious wars” is not unanimous among historians, though the influence of the modern project à la Hobbes and Rousseau may loom large. Given the historical record recounted in the discussion of the first component, Cavanaugh asserts, a more complex view of the conflicts’ causes is needed. “We must conclude,” Cavanaugh argues, “that the myth is at best a

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 142.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 154.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

distorted and one-dimensional narrative; at worst, it eliminates so many of the relevant political, economic, and social factors as to be rendered false."¹²⁸

The third component of the myth of the religious wars for Cavanaugh is that religion can be deciphered as constituting a different motivation from social, political and economic motivations. It is on this point that Cavanaugh echoes something he discusses more fully in an earlier piece. In "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House," Cavanaugh argues that "'Wars of Religion' is an anachronism, for what was at issue in these wars was the very creation of religion as a set of privately held beliefs without direct political relevance."¹²⁹ His argument is that "religion" as we conceive of it today is a product of the very wars commonly described as being fought in the name of competing religions. Before the Enlightenment, *religio* referred to a virtue, not a particular set of dogmas.¹³⁰ For Cavanaugh, the wars following the Reformation are better understood as "birthpangs of the State."¹³¹ He thus inverts the common story that nation-states developed out of necessity in light of warring religious groups, the mythology that permeates modern sensibilities about church-state relations and forms the basis for Cavanaugh's description of the state as savior.

Finally, Cavanaugh addresses the assertion implicit in the myth that "the rise of the modern state was not a cause of the wars, but rather provided a solution to the wars."¹³² Cavanaugh continues to trace the development of "religion" from the pre- to post-Enlightenment periods. He maintains that the

¹²⁸ Ibid., 155.

¹²⁹ Cavanaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough," 400.

¹³⁰ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 33.

¹³¹ Cavanaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough," 398.

¹³² Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, 142.

distinction between religion and politics was not entirely absent before the sixteenth century, but rather it “was in the process of developing as new forms of power—what would become known as the ‘state’—were developing.”¹³³ As political power moved from the Church to the burgeoning civil authorities (growing nation-states), religion was being reconfigured in response to these new instantiations of power as well as with the rise in the anthropology previously discussed and the role of religion therein.

The view of the human person found in thinkers such as Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau provides the basis for the modern view of the state. An anthropology wherein each person is in natural conflict with each other person allows for a view of the nation-state as peacemaker between individuals, as a savior from this state of nature. The major source of this mythology is the narrative of the “Religious Wars” of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century—the best example of the violent nature of religious beliefs that are not sequestered to the internal world of the individual. In order to become peacemaker, however, the state must take over all legitimate forms of violence. Through the lens of state-as-savior, then, it is possible to see modern torture as a type of perverse liturgy wherein the state’s project of self-preservation is enacted.

¹³³ Ibid., 161.

Torture as Perverse Liturgy¹³⁴

From the outset, Cavanaugh makes clear that his discussion of torture in Chile is best understood in terms of imagination. Throughout the modern world it is possible to see many ways in which the political imagination of the state comes into direct conflict with the imagination of the church conceived as the Body of Christ. Cavanaugh argues, therefore, that torture can be understood as an ecclesiological problem because it threatens the existence of the Body of Christ. It does so by enacting a kind of perverse liturgy, the effect of which is an individuation of the members of the body in the name of state self-preservation. It is possible to see torture as distorted liturgy "because it involves bodies and bodily movements in an enacted drama which makes the real power of the state and constitutes an act of worship of that mysterious power."¹³⁵ For Cavanaugh, the torture enacted under the Pinochet regime in Chile is but one modern example, albeit extreme, of the conception of state-as-savior since the seventeenth century.

On the surface, torture appears to be purely the physical abuse of human bodies. Cavanaugh argues, however, that modern torture has a greater purpose, namely to effect a particular type of socio-political imagination within society. He writes, "Modern torture as practiced in Chile is, therefore, not simply a contest over the visible, physical body; it is better understood as a contest over the social

¹³⁴ Throughout this section, I will use "liturgy" as Cavanaugh understands it, and within the framework previously discussed in his Eucharistic ecclesiology. He favors a definition by Alexander Schemmann in *For the Life of the World* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988): "an action by which a group of people become something corporately which they had not been as a mere collection of individuals." As discussed in Chapter II, it is the Eucharist that effects this "becoming" for Cavanaugh. I am admittedly ignoring the many and important conversations concerning the liturgy, as this is simply outside of the scope of the present project.

¹³⁵ Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 30.

imagination, in which bodies are the battleground.”¹³⁶ If the state is a distorted analog of salvation, torture is a perverse liturgy wherein human relationship itself is called into question.

Duly acknowledging the immense pain suffered by victims of torture, Cavanaugh goes on to explain the numerous social effects of the practice. Most notably, torture functions as a way to break apart social bodies that threaten the power of the state. Under the political imagination of post-Enlightenment political theory, the primary relationship is between state and individual, and “politics is defined as the realm of coercion.”¹³⁷ Though an extreme example of the monopoly of violence by the state, torture in Pinochet’s Chile can be seen, according to Cavanaugh, as a systematic individuation in the state’s project of self-preservation. He goes on to explain the particular means by which such individuation is accomplished, and the way in which torture functions as a distorted liturgy therein.

In order to grasp the imaginative work accomplished by torture, Cavanaugh insists upon considering both the physical act of torture as well as the after effects upon which the state relies to perpetuate its particular view of society. After a victim returns to his or her community, the real “work” of torture as social fragmentation begins.¹³⁸ Drawing on the work of Elaine Scarry, Cavanaugh describes the devastating consequences of extreme physical pain on individual bodies within social bodies. Through their inability to communicate the scope of their experiences, torture victims unwillingly offer their voice up to the

¹³⁶ Ibid., 57.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 9.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 35.

purposes of the regime. When a torture victim cannot speak or otherwise describe her pain to others, she remains isolated from others. In this individuation, even a torture victim must look, in a tragically ironic way, to the state for protection from other individuals. In other words, the nature of such pain allows the regime to perpetuate a social imagination wherein it can continue to function as savior: "Thus in torture does the regime's world swell to enormous proportions and occupy reality itself, while the world of the victim dissolves into nothing."¹³⁹ In addition, the effect of physical abuse is exacerbated by the fact that it is another human being causing the pain: "It is a perversion and destruction of the very idea of human relationship."¹⁴⁰ The effect of torture is a type of individuation aimed at breaking social bonds between people. From an ecclesiological standpoint, such rupture is detrimental to the concept of the Body of Christ for the way in which it destroys relationships so crucial for its fruition.

Cavanaugh documents the difficulty of the Chilean Catholic Church in stopping the torture of its people, often at the hands of its own people. The ecclesiological problem of torture is that the church is left with little to say because it has assented to the proposition that it is responsible only for the "spiritual" realm as separate from the temporal.¹⁴¹ He writes, "Catholic ecclesiology accepted an arrangement whereby the state would have charge of the body and the church would care for the soul."¹⁴² Not only is there tension when the church attempts to speak out against such atrocities, but torture also

¹³⁹ Ibid., 36.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 43.

¹⁴¹ See also Cavanaugh, "Church," in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, ed. Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2004), 393-406.

¹⁴² Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 57.

threatens the Body of Christ by isolating individuals and breaking apart community.

The example of Chile offers a disturbing picture of the soteriology of the nation-state. Torture is a way to create a situation of distrust and violence from which the state could then offer its salvation. Cavanaugh explains, "The state increased fear and the subsequent demand for order, and then presented itself as the only possible solution to the disorder."¹⁴³ In a most horrifying way, the Pinochet regime sought its self-preservation as peacekeeper and unifier (read savior) by enacting a distorted liturgy through torture, sacrificing the physical and social bodies of Chileans as a means of state worship.

Cavanaugh's argument about the enactment of state soteriology on the bodies of its citizens seems to follow well in the case of Chile and torture under Pinochet. Given that the United States government has not and does not torture its citizens, however, what can Cavanaugh's work contribute to ecclesiology in an American context? Although *Torture and Eucharist* centers on the case study of Chile, Cavanaugh's other works speak more generally about nation-state soteriology. Cavanaugh argues that within Western democracies, especially the United States, "What is left to the Church is increasingly the purely interior government of the souls of its members; their bodies are handed over to the secular authorities."¹⁴⁴ One arena in which this is particularly and acutely true is Catholic in the military. The issue of Catholics in the United States military (truly,

¹⁴³ Ibid., 55.

¹⁴⁴ Cavanaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough," 399.

the issue of war in general) is the first issue which the ecclesial vision of William Cavanaugh has something to offer modern conversation within the Church.

“Bodies Handed Over”: Problematizing the United States Military

The Christian just war tradition requires a prudential decision on the part of the participant in each conflict. What the legal history of selective conscientious objection illustrates is the ongoing struggle for conscientious Catholic soldiers in the modern world.¹⁴⁵ The government has left Catholic soldiers with no legal options when faced with their own imminent participation in an unjust war. While the history tells the story mostly of those men who objected to military service after being drafted, the decisions of the court have effectively denied the possibility of objection from Catholics presently in the military.

Despite the pacifist leanings of many Christians, including Catholics, in the United States, Catholics continue to serve in the United States military in large numbers. While Catholic pacifists may view military service as an affront to the Gospel, Catholic servicemen and women often view their careers as an extension of their faith, or at least as a vocation compatible with the teaching of their Church—and rightly so, according to official Church teaching. The Church affirms the vocation of the military as one in line with, if not necessary to, the

¹⁴⁵ Relevant cases include but are not limited to *Sicurella v. United States* (1955), *United States v. Spiro* (1967), *United States v. Gillette* (1971), and *Negre v. Larsen* (1971). The conclusion of jurisprudence in the United States Supreme Court concerning selective conscientious objection is that it is unconstitutional because it violates the ability of the country to secure defense forces. For Catholics, this means that the just war theory, which requires discernment of each war's justness, is rendered impracticable from a legal standpoint for Catholics who have joined the military of their own volition or who would be drafted.

common good of a society. This point is developed in Church documents, and its strongest defense can be found within the Catechism.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church affirms the vocation of military service on the grounds of the common good. According to the Church, the state represents the best manifestation of the nature of the human person, and is therefore "necessary to him."¹⁴⁶ It follows from this that each state has the right to defend itself as a means by which to protect to the common good. The Catechism states, "It is the role of the state to defend and promote the common good of civil society, its citizens, and intermediate bodies."¹⁴⁷ Thus the Church praises those who would take on this task of defending the common good, saying, "Those who are sworn to serve their country in the armed forces are servants of the security and freedom of nations. If they carry out their duty honorably, they truly contribute to the common good of the nation and the maintenance of peace."¹⁴⁸

Military service is thus justified in theory by the Church. The problem, however, is that the Church maintains a tradition of just war that the United State government does not allow members of the military (or drafted persons) to enact legally. Thus far, it does not seem that the Church has been willing to problematize whether or not Catholics should be joining a military force which can and does fight unjust wars without their ability to object. Cavanaugh's framework allows for a view of the nation-state in which the practices of the Church call attention to problems like this. If the Eucharist necessitates that we

¹⁴⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1997), n. 1882.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 1910.

¹⁴⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2310.

do not live fractured lives by which we separate our spiritual from our bodily affairs, the members of the Body of Christ must be aware of the demands that the state is putting on their bodies.

At first glance, Cavanaugh's assertion that we are "handing over our bodies" to the state seems overstated. As long as the United States government retains the freedom to draft citizens into the military, it is possible to see even non-military citizens as allowing the nation-state a rather large claim on the body, even if just in potentiality. When viewed in the context of the jurisprudence of selective conscientious objection and the subsequent lack of legal options for Catholics therein, Cavanaugh's assertion seems tragically true. The imagination which separates body from soul appears dangerously at work in the turmoil of conscientious Catholics bound to fight unjust wars in the name of "legitimate" violence. The Church has made abundantly clear in its sexual teaching that soul and body are intimately connected, to say the least.

What Cavanaugh's ecclesiology offers the Church in the 21st century is a view of the nation-state and the place of the Church therein that allows it to witness to the world by refusing to "hand our bodies over to the state" and to bring to light the ways this may be happening. Not only are demands made on the body within the imagination of the nation-state, Cavanaugh goes on to argue the Church expresses similar positions about its relationship to the economy.

"Being Consumed": The Economic Implications

The trajectory of William Cavanaugh's re-narration of the current socio-political imagination takes a turn towards the decidedly economic by the end of *Theopolitical Imagination*. In the book's last chapter and continuing into the full text of *Being Consumed*, Cavanaugh argues that globalization does not mean "the end of the state project, but rather its generalization across space."¹⁴⁹ However, Cavanaugh does not differentiate sufficiently between the nation-state and the capitalized economy here. Although both do make claims on the body, one does not participate in the economy in the same way one participates in the nation-state. The relationship between the nation-state and the Church may be analogous to the relationship between the economy and the Church, but the analogy is limited and Cavanaugh has not, as yet, attended adequately to these limitations.

The ecclesiology he offers in his work, however, particularly as it concerns the Eucharist and the body, has something important to offer the American Catholic Church in terms of economics. That is, the Eucharist can be seen in terms of both politics and economics, and Cavanaugh's Eucharistic ecclesiology necessitates a re-imagining of economic activity for the Church. I will offer a brief description of the direction Cavanaugh takes in terms of economics, and then offer what I see as a simpler, and more defensible, truth concerning economics that comes from his ecclesial vision than the "generalization of the state project."

¹⁴⁹ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 104.

For Cavanaugh, the nation-state project is “characterized by the subsumption of the local under the universal.”¹⁵⁰ He then argues that globalization is a hyperextension of this project due to the growing number of transnational companies that bring the same goods and services to countries around the world. “Free trade” is best understood as a “detachment from the local and a commitment to the hypermobility of capital.”¹⁵¹ By this he means that companies follow cheap labor, almost completely irrespective of the particular country in which it is found. Cavanaugh names this as “global mapping.”¹⁵² Global mapping entails a vision of the world in which every person is in the same space and time. This leads to competition between localities.¹⁵³ Although this mapping often has the appearance of magnifying the particular by the sheer variety of goods and services, Cavanaugh argues that it has produced an adverse situation wherein the particular is indeed subsumed into the universal.

In many ways, a globalized economy might appear like a realization of catholicity in its universalizing effect through many particulars. Ironically, however, the presence of so many particulars has led to an intense homogenization: “Any difference is on the surface and is ultimately dispensable. This applies not only to products but to traditions, cultures, religions, and self-identities of all kinds.”¹⁵⁴ While it may seem, therefore, that globalization offers

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ William T. Cavanaugh, *Being Consumed: Economics and Christian Desire* (Grand Rapids, MI : William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2008), 63.

¹⁵² Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 101.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 120.

¹⁵⁴ Cavanaugh, *Being Consumed*, 67.

catholicity, Cavanaugh argues that only Eucharist provides the satisfactory answer to the problem of the particular and universal.

If globalized economy relies on a specific global mapping, Cavanaugh argues that the Eucharist as a "spatial story is an act of resistance to the dominant overcoding of the map."¹⁵⁵ The Eucharist offers an entry point in the eschatological narrative through *particular* things and people, resisting the triumph of the universal prevalent in globalized capitalism. In the person of Jesus Christ, Cavanaugh argues via Balthasar the dichotomy of particular and universal is overcome. Thus in the Eucharist "Christians see the universal revealed in even the lowest of the material."¹⁵⁶

Cavanaugh offers the Eucharist as a form of resistance to the illusion of catholicity found in globalization. In addition to offering the aforementioned account of the way in which Christ in the Eucharist disrupts the dichotomy of particular and universal, he notes that the "radical collapsing of spatial barriers" that occurs in the Eucharist brings to light the many divisions that are between people, especially in terms of economic relationships.¹⁵⁷ In this way, the Eucharistic assembly informs the consumption choices of its members and sets as its standard human flourishing and not merely monetary gain.

Globalization does in many ways mimic the catholicity offered in the Eucharist. What is unclear, however, is the extent to which this illusion is really a hyperextension of the nation-state, as Cavanaugh wants to argue. The nation-state subsumes the particular under the universal in order to create an

¹⁵⁵ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 117.

¹⁵⁶ Cavanaugh, *Being Consumed*, 79.

¹⁵⁷ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 120.

imagination of the soteriological nature of itself. Describing the position of the modern political theorists, Cavanaugh writes, "In the absence of shared ends, individuals relate to each other by means of contract."¹⁵⁸ In order to understand his view of state-as-savior, however, one must acknowledge that there is in fact a shared end, namely the peace and unity between individuals. This is important for his views on economics because globalization presents itself as a completely different creature than the nation-state by virtue of globalization's true lack of ends.

The nation-state promises to be a peacemaker in exchange for a distinction of private and public space, with social bodies such as the church sequestered into the former. In the nation-state project, then, human beings do have the shared end of peace, which Cavanaugh ironically notes requires that the state take over all forms of violence. In a globalized economy, however, a true lack of shared ends has created a different situation. The free market carries with it no soteriology; there is nothing that consumerism is purported to save us from. The globalized economy does in many ways mimic the church in its perceived catholicity. In light of a lack of soteriology, however, it is perhaps a conflation to name global economics as a hyperextension of the nation-state project.

In terms of the Eucharist, then, it becomes more difficult to speak in similar ways for its relationships to the two supposed "simulacra." The Eucharist as counter-politics is a full understanding of the church as a social body unwilling to accept an individualistic anthropology. It is true as well that the re-imagination of

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 45.

space and time of the Eucharist has important consequences for consumption choices. Much of Cavanaugh's Eucharistic prescriptions for the globalized world, however, are very susceptible to claims of sectarianism. He does address this charge, saying, "The suspicion may arise that Eucharist as antidote to globalism is simply a retreat into a place-bound theocracy or sect."¹⁵⁹ He believes that his idea of the Eucharist as a "spatial story" addresses this claim. The Eucharist brings the universal into the local, transcending space and overcoming the physical barriers of the members of the Body of Christ. Although it is clear that the Eucharist undercuts the anthropology of modern political thought and free market economics, it is not clear that the Eucharist functions as the counter-narrative to economics in the same way as it does to modern politics.

So what can we say about economics in light of Cavanaugh's work? Perhaps a better question: why need we say anything at all? Although it does not appear that the nation-state and global economy function in the same way as "savior," it is possible to say that both make serious demands on the bodies of its members. These demands must be evaluated in light of the Eucharist—that is, in light of the radical in-breaking of God in Jesus Christ. That the economy involves our bodies is nothing profound. That we ought to be attentive to the ways in which these demands are consonant or dissonant with the truth of the Eucharist may be novel for American Catholics.

The Eucharist can and should have a problematizing effect of the lives of the members of the Body of Christ. Cavanaugh brings this into sharp focus and augments it by focusing on the role of the physical body in these relationships.

¹⁵⁹ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 116.

He uses torture to demonstrate an extreme case of the modern nation-state's jurisdiction over the body. I argued above that the state of selective conscientious objection in legal terms in the United States is evidence of Cavanaugh's point that the nation-state asks citizens to "hand their bodies over." Because the nation-state as savior is directly opposed to the claim of Jesus as savior, this "handing over" is inherently problematic. Our economic actions need not be, however. The realm of economics presents a more complex, and thus more challenging situation for Eucharistic problematizing. Because of its complexity, however, it may be that economics presents a more hopeful instantiation of the role of the Eucharist in the lives of those who participate in it.

In the case of the nation-state, citizens are more capable of removing themselves from its mythos, although albeit not entirely: I can refuse to vote, I can refuse to fight in any of its wars, I can refuse to subscribe to its civil religion and nationalism—I can make all of these refusals and still function not just physically but culturally. To be active culturally, however, almost always involves a citizen (and her body) in economics. And because it is not clear that capitalist economy has a *necessary* soteriology like that of the nation-state, a citizen's implication in it is not inherently at odds with faith in Christ. In Cavanaugh's narrative about the nation-state, the whole project is predicated on its saving society from the violence of individuals and their personal (religious) commitments. While many often argue for the triumph of the free market and its ability to save the world from its social ills (poverty, hunger, etc.), it does not claim to save us from each other in the same way Cavanaugh explains the

soteriology of the nation-state. The danger facing the Church today (especially in the West) is to assume that implicating oneself as a Christian in the economic realm is a neutral endeavor.

To function in the economy—to buy and eat food, to wear clothes, to advertise and be advertised to, etc.—is to subject one's body to the myriad of claims operative in the free market. The economy is the very place in which a person decides how to treat other people with what she does with her body. Therefore, the point is not to remove oneself from a particular imagined structure (as it seems necessary in the nation-state) but to recognize the economy as teeming with real human relationships and to be attentive to the demands therein. As a locus of human relationships, then, it is subject to the demands of the Eucharist. Economic decisions, therefore, become “moments of truth,” wherein members of the Body of Christ either bring the reality of God's self-gift to bear or not.

That the reality of the Incarnation should affect our economic decisions is, of course, not unfamiliar to American Catholics. In their 1986 letter *Economic Justice for All*, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops write, “The challenge of this pastoral letter is not merely to think differently, but also to act differently. A renewal of economic life depends on the conscious choices and commitments of individual believers who practice their faith in the world.”¹⁶⁰ What appears to be missing “on the ground,” however, is the real belief that Catholic consumers can and must make choices about their bodies (economic decisions)

¹⁶⁰ USCCB, *Economic Justice for All*, 25.

that were they viewed in light of the Eucharist, would make them radically different from the rest of American culture.

The benefit of Cavanaugh's ecclesiology is that he places the Eucharist back at the center of what is *different* in the lives of Christians. It is not just about fair trade coffee being sold in parishes, though this is one way in which the Eucharist informs consumer choices by making people aware of the effect of their actions on others. Cavanaugh's insistence upon being attentive to the way in which our popular imagination may work against the demands the Eucharist makes on our bodies can help in both political and economic challenges for the Church. His work helps move the Church into a framework to discuss economic questions as problematized by the Eucharist: in light of the bodily sacrifice of God in Christ, what are we to do or say in response to human trafficking and the sex trade industry? In light of the self-communication of the Creator to His creation in Jesus, how are we to live out our call as stewards of creation in the globalized economy? In light of the abundant life given by Christ through His sacrifice, what are we to do or say about our lives in the Internet? Cavanaugh's work stands within the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, but provides a framework in which to address issues which the Council fathers could not have anticipated by problematizing systems that we often see as neutral, especially our economic relationships.

Conclusion

The discussion of church and state relations often focuses on particular boundaries that need to be maintained or breeched. For many American Christians, for example, the church must work harder to make forays into the public sphere from which they feel excluded. Their marginalization, however, is only exacerbated by their acknowledgment of the distinction between public and private as it has been construed by modernity, according to William Cavanaugh. In order to challenge such a distinction, Cavanaugh must re-narrate the popular mythology of the nation-state since its inception.

Cavanaugh argues throughout his work that the modern imagination has relied on a particular anthropology, a view of the human person as primarily individual in conflict with other individuals. Such a view of humanity has led to the popular story of the "religious wars" of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Cavanaugh rejects the idea that the wars were fought over religion, arguing that the wars were themselves a factor in the creation of religion as we know it. From this retelling of the Enlightenment story, he is then able to argue that the project of the nation-state is one of soteriology; the state becomes the peacemaker between warring individuals. In order to be peacemaker, the state makes demands on its citizens, including demands on their bodies in order to legitimate its existence. That the state makes claims on the bodies of its citizens is evidenced by the legal history of selective conscientious objection wherein the Christian tradition of just war cannot legally operate.

If the state has set itself as savior of the inevitable conflict between competing individuals, the Eucharist offers a counter-politics by enacting a view of the human person that is essentially communal. Eucharistic imagination challenges that of the state by its inherently eschatological nature, bringing the church of present, past, and future into a particular moment of a particular community, challenging the modern conceptions of space and time. For Cavanaugh, the Eucharist does similar work in light of modern economics. While globalization has created what seems like catholicity in its triumph of the universal, its inability to hold particular and universal together has proved it a mere simulacrum of the catholicity of the Eucharist. Cavanaugh's account of the illusions of globalization are appropriate and insightful, yet he does not adequately acknowledge the difference between the project of the nation-state and the reality of the global economy. Specifically, the nation-state maintains an imagined soteriology against which the Eucharist can effectively create itself as foil whereas the economy offers no soteriological imagination. It seems more appropriate, therefore, to apply Cavanaugh's insistence upon the demands on the body to economics while recognizing the important difference between the nation-state and the free market. Attention to the demands of the free market on the bodies of the people within it, and an honest evaluation of its consonance or lack thereof with the truth of the Eucharist may allow the Church to address the challenges of globalization in the twenty-first century.

CONCLUSION

In the first chapter of *Models of the Church*, Avery Dulles writes, "Disputes...are going on everywhere these days. Christians cannot agree about the measure of progress or decline [in the Church in America] because they have radically different visions of the Church."¹⁶¹ The second edition of *Models* came out less than a year after I was born and its longevity is due in large part to this simple observation. The frustration of ecclesiology is also its beauty: competing visions of what the Church should be and how it should act in the world. Cardinal Dulles saw the creative potential for these "disputes," despite the frustration that may accompany some of the vagueness of Vatican II's vision for the Church. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the bishops left great room for conversation, a conversation that includes Cardinal Dulles and William Cavanaugh alike.

Faced with issues that the bishops could perhaps not have imagined, it is the task of modern theology to find new ways to talk about the Church in the world that both maintain the integrity of the Catholic tradition while moving the Church on to bear truer witness in the world. The late Cardinal Dulles was a clear and articulate advocate for the Tradition, a Tradition that includes the Second Vatican Council and its questions about the modern world. His assessment of prevailing models of the church implies his concerns about a dangerous

¹⁶¹ Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 7.

mystification of church. He saw the role of religion in the lives of American Catholics becoming less and less central to decisions about self, family, and society. Although he maintained a very moderate position concerning the role of the Church in the world, it is clear that Dulles understood the implicit relationship between the life of faith and the political system, as well as the danger of dividing one's life into "temporal" and "spiritual" mutually-exclusive categories.

William Cavanaugh belongs in the same conversations of ecclesiology for the American Catholic Church because his work is not *just* political theology, but has as its center the question, "What is the Church?" In addition, the ways in which his work diverges from those who came before him serve not to undermine his orthodoxy but to augment its importance. For Cavanaugh, one can only understand the nature of the Church today by understanding the historical narratives that create the imagination surrounding it. According to popular mythology, the Church must remain in its own realm, responsible for "spiritual" matters alone. Otherwise, the inherently violent nature of competing individuals will create chaos in our society. For Cavanaugh, the Eucharist challenges the underlying anthropology of these myths by bringing individuals together over time and space. The Church is centered on this eschatological reality and Cavanaugh asserts that this has particular political and economic implications that may not and often do not coincide with the prevailing narratives of our time. His critique of the theopolitical and economic imagination in liberal democracy, especially the United States, forces American Catholics to take a "hard look" at that which they take for granted.

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