Faith in Politics

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Above the Great West Door of Westminster Abbey are arrayed ten great statues of the martyrs of the Church. Not Peter, Stephen, James or the familiar names of the saints sacrificed during the great Roman persecution before Constantine's conversion. No: these are martyrs of the twentieth century, when the age of faith was, in the minds of many in the West, already tottering towards its collapse.

One of those honoured above the Great West Door is Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian, pastor and peace activist. Bonhoeffer is, without doubt, the man I admire most in the history of the twentieth century. He was a man of faith. He was a man of reason. He was a man of letters who was as well read in history and literature as he was in the intensely academic Lutheran theology of the German university tradition. He was never a nationalist, always an internationalist. And above all, he was a man of action who wrote prophetically in 1937 that "when Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." For Bonhoeffer, whatever the personal cost, there was no moral alternative other than to fight the Nazi state with whatever weapons were at his disposal.

Three weeks before the end of World War II, Bonhoeffer was hanged by the SS because of his complicity in the plot to assassinate Adolf Hitler. This year marks the centenary of his birth. This essay seeks both to honour Bonhoeffer and to examine what his life, example and writings might have to say to us, 60 years after his death, on the proper relationship between Christianity and politics in the modern world.

In both George Bush's America and John Howard's Australia, we see today the political orchestration of various forms of organised Christianity in support of the conservative incumbency. In the US, the book *God's Politics*, by Reverend Jim Wallis, has dragged this phenomenon out of the shadows (where it is so effectively manipulated by the pollsters and spin-doctors) and into the searching light of proper public debate. US Catholic, Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians are now engaged in a national discussion on the role of the religious Right. The same debate must now occur here in Australia. As Wallis notes in his introduction:

> *God is not partisan: God is not a Republican or a Democrat. When either party tries to politicize God, or co-opt religious communities for their political agendas, they make a terrible mistake. The best contribution of religion is precisely not to be ideologically predictable nor loyally partisan. Both parties, and the nation, must let the prophetic voice of religion be heard. Faith must be free to challenge both right and left from a consistent moral ground.*

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Had Dietrich Bonhoeffer been at Oxford, he would have been one of the gods. He was at 21 a doctoral graduate and at 23 the youngest person ever appointed to a lectureship in systematic theology at the University of Berlin, in 1929. His contemporaries saw his career as made in heaven. Along Unter den Linden, just beyond the faculty walls, however, the living hell of the Nazi storm-troopers was being born.

At the core of Bonhoeffer's theological and therefore political life was a repudiation of the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms. As James Woelfel has noted:

> *According to this doctrine, the proper concern of the gospel is the inner person, the sphere where the Kingdom of God reigns; the Kingdom of the State, on the other hand, lies in the outer sphere, the realm of law, and is not subject to the gospel's message. German Christians used this argument to justify devotion to race and fatherland as 'orders of creation' to be obeyed until the final consummation.*

These debates may seem arcane in twenty-first-century secular Australia, but in the Germany of the 1930s they were central to the decision of the majority of German Lutheran ministers to submit to the *Reichskirche* (resplendent with swastikas on their ecclesiastical stoles) and to retreat into a politically non-threatening quietism as the political repression of Hitler's post-1933 chancellorship unfolded. Equally, it was Bonhoeffer's theological dissent from the perversion of this Two Kingdoms doctrine that led him, at the tender age of 29, to establish in 1935 the German Confessing Church, with its underground seminary.

Bonhoeffer's seminal work, his *Ethics*, was not collated and published until after his execution. Its final essay is entitled ‘What is Meant By Telling the Truth', and it represents a call to the German Church to assume a prophetic role in speaking out in defence of the defenceless in the face of a hostile state. For Bonhoeffer, "Obedience to God's will may be a religious experience but it is not an ethical one until it issues in actions that can be socially valued." He railed at a Church for whom Christianity was "a metaphysical abstraction to be spoken of only at the edges of life", and in which clergy blackmailed their people with hellish consequences for those whose sins the clergy were adept at sniffing out, all the while ignoring the real evil beyond their cathedrals and churches. "The Church stands," he argued, "not at the boundaries where human powers give out, but in the middle of the village."

In his *Letters from Prison*, he wrote, reflecting in part on the deportation of the Jews, that "We have for once learned to see the great events of world history from below, from the perspective of the outcast, the suspects, the maltreated, the powerless, the reviled - in short, from the perspective of those who suffer." Bonhoeffer's political theology is therefore one of a dissenting church that speaks truth to the state, and does so by giving voice to the voiceless. Its domain is the village, not the interior life of the chapel. Its core principle is to stand in defence of the defenceless or, in Bonhoeffer's terms, of those who are "below".

Bonhoeffer lived what he preached. The day after Hitler became chancellor in January 1933, Bonhoeffer made on Berlin Radio a direct attack on the so-called "Führer Principle", before the broadcast was cut off. In April 1933, two weeks after Hitler's enactment of the Aryan Civil Service legislation banning people of Jewish ancestry from public employment, Bonhoeffer published *The Church and the Jewish Question*, in which he urged the church to "jam the spoke of the state ... to protect the state from itself".

He then established his Confessing Church which, before being finally suppressed by the SS in 1941, produced much of the leadership of the German Resistance. Internationally, Bonhoeffer spent from 1933 to 1939 seeking to unite the International Christian Movement into a global pacifist movement that would oppose the aggression of his own state. After the failure of these efforts, in 1940 he joined the German *Abwehr* (military intelligence) as a double agent, and until his arrest in late 1943 he collaborated with the armed forces' conspiracy against Hitler - and, at the same time, organised the secret evacuation of a number of German Jews to Switzerland.

Bonhoeffer's was a muscular Christianity. He became the Thomas More of European Protestantism because he understood the cost of discipleship, and lived it. Both Bonhoeffer and More were truly men for all seasons.

here does Bonhoeffer's teaching fit within the history of Christian thought on church-state relations? This history begins with the great exchange, recorded in the New Testament, in which Jesus of Nazareth instructed people "to render under Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's". The Nazarene, of course, had the good sense not to define precisely what each could lay claim to: which things uniquely belong to Caesar, and which to God. Therein lies the dilemma that has confounded Christians of all persuasions who have engaged with the political process in the intervening 20 centuries.

During the first three centuries of its history, Christianity did not just preach a Gospel for the oppressed; Christians themselves were being oppressed. Christianity began as the profession of an oppressed minority, having emerged from within Judaism, Judaism in turn having had its own troubled experience within the Roman Empire. The New Testament therefore sees the world from the perspective of that persecution, as do the later parts of the Old Testament, particularly the literature of the Babylonian captivity.

All this began to change with the Constantinian settlement at the beginning of the fourth century. Once Christianity became part of the orthodoxy of the later Roman Empire, the greatest challenge of theology and politics was how to translate this "theology of the oppressed" into a doctrine for an age in which the church was secure and legally protected through the offices of the state itself. For its first three centuries, Christianity had represented an active counterculture, but what was to be Christianity's message in a new age in which the church had become culturally dominant? This became the continuing challenge of Christianity in the Christian West for the subsequent 1500 years.

Over the last 200 years, however, we have seen an entirely different debate arise, as Christianity has sought to come to terms with a rising and increasingly rampant secularism. The impact of independent scientific enquiry, the increasing impact of secular humanism itself, combined with the pervasive influence of modernism and postmodernism, have had the cumulative effect of undermining the influence of the mainstream Catholic and Protestant churches across the West.

Where this will lead, as Christianity enters its third millennium, remains to be seen. But there are signs of Christianity seeing itself, and being seen by others, as a counterculture operating within what some have called a post-Christian world. In some respects, therefore, Christianity, at least within the West, may be returning to the minority position it occupied in the earliest centuries of its existence. But whether or not we conclude that Christianity holds a minority or a majority position within Western societies, that still leaves unanswered the question of how any informed individual Christian (or Christians combined in the form of an organised church) should relate to the state.

I argue that a core, continuing principle shaping this engagement should be that Christianity, consistent with Bonhoeffer's critique in the '30s, must always take the side of the marginalised, the vulnerable and the oppressed. As noted above, this tradition is very much alive in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament. It is also very much alive in the recorded accounts of Jesus of Nazareth: his engagement with women, gentiles, tax collectors, prostitutes and the poor - all of whom, in the political and social environment of first-century Palestine, were fully paid-up members of the "marginalised, the vulnerable and the oppressed". Furthermore, parallel to this identification with those "below" was Jesus' revulsion at what he described as the hypocrisy of the religious and political elites of his time, that is, those who were "above".

Do these principles of themselves provide a universal moral precept from which all elements of social and economic policy can be derived? Of course not. But they do provide an illuminating principle - even a "light on the hill", to borrow Chifley's phrase, which he in turn had consciously borrowed from Christ's Sermon on the Mount - that can help to shape our view of what constitutes appropriate policy for the community, the nation and the world.

What does this principle have to say about economic self-interest? What does it have to say about Max Weber's Protestant work ethic? Or about the legitimate theological basis for the accumulation of private wealth? On these questions we are left with the troubling parable about a camel passing through the eye of a needle. But we are also left with a parable about the proper tending of the vineyard, the diligence of those who work the vineyard, and the abundance of the harvest. In this context, Catholic social teaching has long argued for a proper balance between the rights of capital and labour, in a relationship based on mutual respect as well as legal protection.

Apart from the great questions of wealth, poverty and social justice, a second area of long-standing contention in church-state relations has been the doctrine of the just war. What is the Christian view of violence by the state? What specifically is the Christian view of the state itself employing violence against other states? These debates are ultimately anchored in the Christian concern for the sanctity of all human life. Human life can only be taken in self-defence, and only then under highly conditional circumstances - circumstances which include the exhaustion of all other peaceful means to resolve a dispute; and if war is to be embarked upon, then the principles of proportionality must apply. On this point, for example, it is worth noting that Pope John Paul II did not support the Iraq war as a just war.

These principles of proportionality apply also to the state's role in providing, protecting or (in the current debate) circumscribing the freedoms of its citizenry. Christian teaching is sceptical about a state's demand for more and more power. We should be sceptical of that demand today, just as we should challenge the right of the state lawfully to execute its own citizens. The Christian belief in the sanctity of life should cause us to conclude that capital punishment is unacceptable in all circumstances and in all jurisdictions.

The function of the church in all these areas of social, economic and security policy is to speak directly to the state: to give power to the powerless, voice to those who have none, and to point to the great silences in our national discourse where otherwise there are no natural advocates.

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If these are the contours of classical Christian engagement with the state, the modern forms of political engagement are in the main much cruder. Below I list five of them, of which only the fifth bears any real resemblance to Bonhoeffer's position.

1. *Vote for me because I'm a Christian*. This is the model that is most repugnant. It is the model which says that, simply on the basis of my external profession of the Christian faith, those of similar persuasion should vote for me. This is about as intelligent as saying that because I am a Sydney Swans supporter, all other Swans supporters should vote for me, because we ostensibly adhere to the same belief system. This model is alive and well in the US. Thankfully, it is much less alive and much less well in Australia, although there are some dangerous signs that for certain Christian constituencies here, it represents an increasingly appealing message. It is a model for which there is no underpinning scriptural, doctrinal or theological authority.

2. *Vote for me because I'm Christian, and because I have a defined set of views on a narrowly defined set of questions concerning sexual morality*. Regrettably, this model has an increasing number of supporters within the broader Christian community. Such supporters tend to read down, rather than read up, the ethical teachings of the New Testament, producing a narrow tick-the-box approach to passing a so-called Christian morals test. These tests tend to emphasise questions of sexuality and sexual behaviour. I see very little evidence that this pre-occupation with sexual morality is consistent with the spirit and content of the Gospels. For example, there is no evidence of Jesus of Nazareth expressly preaching against homosexuality. In contrast, there is considerable evidence of the Nazarene preaching against poverty and the indifference of the rich.

3. *Vote for me because I am a Christian, vote for me because I have a defined set of views on questions of private sexual morality, and vote for me also because I chant the political mantra of "family values"*. That is, take models number one and two and add to them the tag of "family values". Regrettably, that term has become one of the most used and abused terms in the Australian political lexicon. The concept of "family values" it involves is invariably a narrow one, and invariably leaves to one side the ability of working families to survive financially.

4. Apply models one, two and three above, and then add the following offensive play. Unleash a political fusillade against anyone who dares suggest that Christianity might have something concrete to say about the broader political, economic and social questions, and justify this fusillade with that hardy perennial, "Religion should be kept out of politics." This is a view which says that should anyone seek to articulate from a Christian perspective a view on the Iraq war, on poverty in the world, on asylum seekers, on indigenous Australians, or on workplace relations, then judgement may be rained down upon them from the heavens above, as in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. Bonhoeffer's critique of the doctrine of the Two Kingdoms was, of course, a response to this.

5. In the fifth approach, the Gospel is both a spiritual Gospel *and* a social Gospel, and if it is a social Gospel then it is in part a political Gospel, because politics is the means by which society chooses to exercise its collective power. In other words, the Gospel is as much concerned with the decisions I make about my own life as it is with the way I act in society. It is therefore also concerned with how in turn I should act, and react, in relation to the state's power. This view derives from the simple principle that the Gospel which tells humankind that they must be born again is the same Gospel which says that at the time of the Great Judgement, Christians will be asked not how pious they have been but instead whether they helped to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and visit the lonely. In this respect, the Gospel is an exhortation to social action. Does this mean that the fundamental ethical principles provide us with an automatic mathematical formula for determining every item of social, economic, environmental, national-security and international-relations policy before government? Of course not. What it means is that these matters should be debated by Christians within an informed Christian ethical framework. It also means that we should repudiate the proposition that such policy debates are somehow simply "the practical matters of the state" which should be left to "practical" politicians rather than to "impractical" pastors, preachers and theologians. This approach is very much in Bonhoeffer's tradition.

A Christian perspective on contemporary policy debates may not prevail. It must nonetheless be argued. And once heard, it must be weighed, together with other arguments from different philosophical traditions, in a fully contestable secular polity. A Christian perspective, informed by a social gospel or Christian socialist tradition, should not be rejected contemptuously by secular politicians as if these views are an unwelcome intrusion into the political sphere. If the churches are barred from participating in the great debates about the values that ultimately underpin our society, our economy and our polity, then we have reached a very strange place indeed.

Some have argued that Bonhoeffer provides a guide for Christian action "in extremis", but not for the workaday problems of "normal" political life. Stanley Hauerwas, Professor of Theological Ethics at Duke University, argues, though, that this fails to comprehend Bonhoeffer's broader teaching on the importance of truth in politics. In fact, it accepts the "assumption that truth and politics, particularly in democratic regimes in which compromise is the primary end of the political process, do not mix".

Here lies the searing intensity of Bonhoeffer's gaze, cast across the decades into our own less dramatic age: the need for the church to speak truthfully, prophetically and incisively in defiance of the superficiality of formal debate in contemporary Western politics. In other words, beyond the sound-and-light show of day-to-day political "debate", what are the real underlying fault lines in the polity? Most critically, within those fault lines, who are the "voiceless" ones unable to clamour for attention in an already crowded political space - and who is speaking for them?

In Australia today, much is being written about "Australian values". Much less, however, has been written about another debate, that between neo-liberals and progressives, concerning whether the balance of our national values lies with the individual or with the community. On the neo-liberal side of the debate, values of liberty, security and prosperity are taken to be paramount. On the progressive side, these values are largely shared, but to them another three are added: equity, community and sustainability.

What is the dividing line between the two? When stripped bare, neo-liberal values are an aggregation of individual interests: in Thatcher's truism, "there is no such thing as society". However, progressive politics argues that the mandate of the state goes beyond the exclusive celebration of self. Furthermore, we hold that a properly functioning society embraces the interests of both self and other - not just the first, to the absolute exclusion of the second. That is why the progressive values of equity, community and sustainability concern others as much as they do ourselves.

Social-democratic values are a check on rampant individualism, in part because rampant individualism, unconstrained by any responsibility for interests beyond the individual, is inherently destructive. That is why liberal capitalism, left unfettered, is capable of destroying any social institution that inhibits the maximisation of individual self-interest. That includes the family itself. A practical manifestation of this destructive impulse can be found in the radical 2006 reforms to the Australian labour market, under which the last remaining protections for preserving family time are sacrificed at the altar of market utility. In this area, at least, conservatives and old-fashioned social liberals share a common commitment to social institutions against uncompromising market fundamentalism.

This progressive social-democratic impulse is also reflected in an entire tradition in modern Western politics, now over 150 years old, called Christian socialism. Keir Hardie, the founder of the British Labour Party, was a Christian socialist, as was Andrew Fisher, the first majority Labor prime minister of Australia. For his part, Bonhoeffer was a committed social democrat, although he did not use the term "Christian socialist" to describe his own politics. Nonetheless, his writings on "otherness" and "the oppressed" fit well within this perspective. It is a view of politics which seeks to enlarge society, rather than contract it into a colony of self-contained white picket fences. It also attaches a primacy to the most critical social institution of all: the family.

If we apply a Christian socialist critique to contemporary Australian politics, the precise nature of the widening values divide in John Howard's Australia becomes starkly apparent. Mr Howard is a clever politician who often succeeds in masking the essential self-interest of his political project with a veneer of "duty to the nation". Mr Howard's politics are in the main about concealing the substantive truth of his policy program because - as with his new industrial laws - when fully exposed to the light of public debate, their essential truth is revealed: a redistribution of power from the weak to the strong. That is why some of the churches (consistent with Bonhoeffer's injunction to the church to boldly tell the truth to the state) have set about the task of exposing the truth of what the industrial-relations changes mean for working families. This is part of the continued prophetic mission of the church, however politically uncomfortable that may be for the state or its critics at any particular time. The purpose of the church is not to be socially agreeable; it is to speak robustly to the state on behalf of those who cannot speak effectively for themselves.

The church's increasing engagement on the environment - and specifically on global climate change - falls into a similar category. By definition, the planet cannot speak for itself. Nor can the working peoples of the developing world effectively speak for themselves, although they are likely to be the first victims of the environmental degradation brought about by climate change. Nor can those who come after us, although they are likely to be the greatest victims of this inter-generational injustice. It is the fundamental ethical challenge of our age to protect the planet - in the language of the Bible, to be proper stewards of creation. The scientific evidence is now clear, and the time for global, national and local action has well and truly come. In fact, in some cases it may have already passed. So is it ethical to engage in the deliberate sabotage of global co-operative efforts, under the Kyoto Protocol, to roll back global climate change? Or is it ethical instead to become an active, constructive part of the global solution? It is ethically indefensible for the current government to have spent the last decade not only refusing to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, but also actively working with the government of the US to marginalise it.

A further challenge is global poverty. Bonhoeffer's principle again applies: who speaks boldly to the state for those who cannot speak for themselves? Today, 1.4 billion people live below the poverty line defined by the World Bank of US$1 per day. Who speaks for them? For them, there is a great and continuing silence. In the absence of total catastrophe, they cannot capture the television sets of our collective imagination. They are, in part, victims of the great immorality of our age: if it's not on the six o'clock news, it's not happening. The UN's Millennium Development Goals represent a partial response to this. The failure to give effect to those goals represents continued ethical failure - including from Australia, where lip-service, not moral leadership, is the order of the day.

Another great challenge of our age is asylum seekers. The biblical injunction to care for the stranger in our midst is clear. The parable of the Good Samaritan is but one of many which deal with the matter of how we should respond to a vulnerable stranger in our midst. That is why the government's proposal to excise the Australian mainland from the entire Australian migration zone and to rely almost exclusively on the so-called Pacific Solution should be the cause of great ethical concern to all the Christian churches. We should never forget that the reason we have a UN convention on the protection of refugees is in large part because of the horror of the Holocaust, when the West (including Australia) turned its back on the Jewish people of Germany and the other occupied countries of Europe who sought asylum during the '30s.

How would Bonhoeffer respond to militant Islamism and the broader challenge of international terrorism today? Unlike climate change and global poverty, where there is a gaping silence in the national debate, when the topic turns to terrorism the political cacophony is deafening. But much of this noise is made up of the soundbites that are part of the colour, movement and superficiality of contemporary Australian politics. Islamic terrorism is a complex phenomenon that demands an integrated, complex response. An appreciation of complexity is not a recipe for inertia. It should instead be a recipe for effective rather than rhetorical action.

Bonhoeffer's voice, speaking to us through the ages, would ask this simple, truth-based question: what is causing this phenomenon? He would also caution against inflammatory rhetoric that seeks to gain political advantage, rather than to respond substantively and find a way forward. Of discomfort to certain elements of the far Left would be the truthful conclusion that there *is* a fundamental problem within militant Islamism, which values violent jihad in its own right and is not amenable to engagement, dialogue or persuasion. Of discomfort to the Right is the conclusion that the politics of economic underdevelopment in much of the Islamic world breeds resentment, denies opportunity and therefore provides fertile recruitment fields for jihadists. The World Bank gives us the unsettling statistic that an extra 80-100 million jobs will need to be created in the decade ahead if the *current* level of unemployment for young males in the Muslim world is not to deteriorate further.

Within settler countries like Australia, the challenge of integration is doubly complex. John Howard is correct when he says that a knowledge of the English language is an important component of social inclusion. But he is an unreconstructed hypocrite when he says that and increases the immigration intake (including from the Muslim world), while at the same time reducing the budget that funds the teaching of English to migrants. Australian sporting clubs, social organisations, churches, chambers of commerce and trade unions could be formally involved in the re-settlement process. Policies such as these would form part of an integrated, complex response to the challenge of inclusion. Such policies would produce good fruit in proper season. But they do not provide the radioactive soundbites that some in the political class deem necessary.

Radioactive language is an aspect of Mr Howard's overriding project to retain his incumbency at all costs, distracting the body politic from the reality of his faltering program for government. The substance of that program now makes for a less robust political message as he moves into his second decade in office: rising interest rates, declining housing affordability, slowing productivity growth, an Americanised industrial-relations system, a regressive consumption tax, the skyrocketing costs of university education and the steady undermining of universal health insurance. Add to these the escalating failure of the Iraq war and the deteriorating security in our immediate region, complicated by our distraction in Iraq - all compounded by a failure to tell the public the truth on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, Iraqi prisoner abuse and the $300-million wheat-for-weapons scandal.

The role of the church is not to agree that deceptions of this magnitude are normal. If Christians conclude that such deceptions are the stock-in-trade of the Kingdom of the State in Luther's Two Kingdoms doctrine (and hence of no relevance to the Kingdom of the Gospel), then we will end up with a polity entirely estranged from truth. When the prime minister states that migrants should have a better grasp of the English language, while at the same time removing major funding from the program that enables them to learn English, this represents a significant prostitution of the truth. Therefore, if the church is concerned about the truth - not the politics - of social inclusion, then in Bonhoeffer's tradition of fearlessly speaking the truth to the state, it should say so.

There is a danger that John Howard's form of political statecraft will become entrenched as the national political norm. The prime minister's now routine manipulation of the truth poses significant problems for the long-term integrity of our national institutions, including the great departments of state. As time goes by, all are in danger of becoming complicit in protecting the political interests of the government rather than advancing the national interest of the country. There must be a new premium attached to truth in public life. That is why change must occur.

There is an alternative vision for Australia's future: one which seeks to take Chifley's vision of a "light on the hill" into an uncertain century. This is an enlarging vision that sees Australia taking the lead on global climate change, rather than continuing to play the role of saboteur. This is an Australia that takes the lead on the Millennium Development Goals both in word and deed, and leads by example in dealing with the chronic poverty in our own region. This is an Australia that becomes a leader, not a follower, in the redesign of the rules of the international order that we helped craft in 1945, to render future genocides both intolerable under international law and impossible through international resolve. This is an Australia which takes the values of decency, fairness and compassion that are still etched deep in our national soul, despite a decade of oxygen deprivation, and breathes them afresh into the great debates now faced by our country and the international community. The time has well and truly come for a vision for Australia not limited by the narrowest of definitions of our national self-interest. Instead, we need to be guided by a new principle that encompasses not only what Australia can do for itself, but also what Australia can do for the world.

This essay began with Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who went to the gallows at Flossenbürg concentration camp on 9 April 1945, just two weeks before the camp was liberated. Hitler had personally ordered the execution of all those who had been charged with conspiracy against him. Bonhoeffer was hanged, together with his brother and two of his brothers-in-law. He died a Christian pastor, committed social democrat and passionate internationalist. I believe that today, Bonhoeffer would be traumatised by the privatised, pietised and politically compliant Christianity on offer from the televangelists of the twenty-first century. Bonhoeffer's vision of Christianity and politics was for a just world delivered by social action, driven by personal faith. Bonhoeffer's tradition therefore acts still as an eloquent corrective to those who would seek today to traduce Christianity by turning it into the political handmaiden of the conservative political establishment. Bonhoeffer's Christianity was, and remains, a more demanding challenge than that.

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