A Theology of National Security

Charles C. West

Whenever the word "security" is mentioned, the words of a well-known hymn run through my mind. It is one some of us sing on New Year's Day and on historic occasions. It begins, "O God our help in ages past," and the second verse runs:

> Under the shadow of thy throne,
>   thy saints have dwelt secure.
> Sufficient is thine arm alone,
>   and our defense is sure.

The author of this hymn was Isaac Watts, a divine so prolific in his day that his hymns, especially his Psalm paraphrases of which this is one, dominated many hymnals of the eighteenth century, both in England and in America.

One of the places it dominated in America was Springfield, New Jersey. In 1780 a small but critical battle was fought there to protect General Washington's army from British forces. The Continental troops nearly lost that battle. For in the middle of it they ran out of paper wadding to hold the powder and balls in their muskets for firing. At that point, however, the local Presbyterian minister appeared, rushed into his church and came out with an armful of hymnals, which he passed out to the soldiers, crying "Give 'em Watts, boys, give 'em Watts!" On the hill dominating the main street corner of Springfield that church still stands. In front of it is a statue of the minister with these words immortalized upon its pedestal.

What is the relation between praising the Lord and passing the ammunition? Between the security of the Word and the security of paper wadding? I will approach an answer to these questions by exploring two propositions:

First, the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, in sweeping away the basic idea of a system of security maintained by human actions and putting in its place a relationship of covenantal trust, placed the whole relation between church and state, faith and politics, ultimate and provisional security, on a new basis. This basis underlay humanist liberalism as well as reformed Christian faith, and recent efforts in Christian realism have also been built upon it. American society under these influences, however, has never faced squarely the risks and relativities this basis involved; it has tended to turn it into a new system of security which then breaks down of its own contradictions.

Second, if we grasp this basis radically—that is, by its biblical roots—we discover a continuing creative tension between the community of the covenant, in whose relations of trust alone true security is to be found, and the political community, which has the task of securing the external conditions of justice and peace among people by ultimate resort to compulsion. These are not two realms but two functions within one world, two dimensions of every human life, each constantly challenging and questioning the other. Political security, and the force that upholds it, is a good but relative thing. The interest of the state itself requires that it take risks with that security in order to seek covenantal relations with other states and peoples, the quality of which will reflect in some degree and form the covenant God has made with his people for the human race. When we forget this we destroy ourselves in the effort to be secure.

When Martin Luther was struggling to give expression to the liberation which justification of the sinner by grace alone brings to Christian people, he distinguished between *securitas* and *certitudo*. *Securitas* was security as we think of it today: the guarantee

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that the evil we fear will not happen to us, that our structure of life and its values will not be disrupted or destroyed. In medieval society it was hard indeed to come by. When half the population could count on dying of disease before maturity, when merchant caravans could reckon with being robbed—or taxed, which usually amounted to the same thing—and only the exceptional prince could keep order in his realm, it was critically important to all men that in one context at least, the vast drama of heaven, purgatory and hell, there was a way of securing one's position. It was the Church which claimed to provide this security. It was a human institution, but its mighty system of reason (fulfilled by infallible dogma, of confession, penance, good works and sacramental grace, including the purchase of indulgences for oneself and others, and held in place by hierarchical authority) pretended to place the human race within an eternal order here on earth which embraced, disciplined and secured even the powers of commerce, nation and empire.

Yet this is what Luther said it could not do. He did not reject the three-storey universe; he was still a medieval man. But he opposed dependence on an earthly institution to guarantee universal order as a manipulative act of human religion whereby man tries to secure himself in time and in eternity by his own actions in spite of God. There is no *securitas* in heaven or on earth. Instead there is something far more promising: the confidence, *certitudo*, that grows out of a relationship of faith and trust. This confidence gives no guarantee that one's own world will be secure, that one's own life plan will be fulfilled, or that one's own nation will survive. In the words of the first letter of John, it is "confidence for the day of judgment." It is the fruit of a covenant fellowship between man and God which owes nothing to man's contribution—indeed it may destroy any human person's or group's self-image and security—but out of which comes new life in ways which only the risk of trusting it can bring forth.

This was the theological thesis of modern politics. What the Reformers did, and Luther was only the first of many prophets, was to reinterpret the divine context of human politics. Ultimate reality is neither an order nor power but a relationship. This faith provided the spiritual basis for the venture into insecurity-with-confidence which characterized the centuries that followed the Reformation.

What for the Middle Ages was a search for ultimate order in politics became, then, for post-Reformation times the task of ordering. It was still an important task, tackled with varying degrees of insight and success. It was a God-given task to curb the powers of anarchy and tyranny and to create the relative, external conditions of peace and justice which would liberate people to hear and respond to the divine calling. But it was a task, not a structure. For the hardy believers who founded seventeenth-century Massachusetts it was a secondary task. Their primary aim was to organize a church in the wilderness where God might be properly worshipped until the day of his coming. But there was no suggestion of an escape into eternal security in this establishment of priorities. The whole of the common life was to be organized to the glory of God by sinful men sharply aware of the curbs they must place even on the power of the godly, and the experimental, reformable character of every institution they formed, yet confident that their work in this world would be forgiven, corrected and blessed as they subjected nature and human nature to God's rule. Security was a peripheral theme for the Pilgrims and Puritans. Confidence and hope were central.

A shadow, however, lay over this exercise in *certitudo*. Reformation Christians were first of all witnesses responding to a covenant relation in all of life, of which they knew themselves to be the undeserving beneficiaries. But in this response they used political and economic power with confidence, and they ordered the society in which they lived. Such power, to be sure, must serve a high moral purpose, and the order was known to be provisional. But it was power nonetheless, power to coerce others into one's own frame of reference. It remained for the saints, however conscious of the awful judgment of God on them, to decide how much nonconformity public order would tolerate and which projects were divinely blessed. Roger Williams was himself a cantankerous absolutist, but when the Massachusetts Bay Colony had to choose between trusting their own power or the power of the Holy Spirit to deal with the disorder he created, they chose the former. The saints in New England sincerely tried to reach and convert the Indians. But they also appropriated Indian land in the name of the proper use of nature for God's glory, and the long process which ended in today's reservations began. Nor was the drive for *securitas* ever completely submerged. The Puritans of old New England believed themselves beset by menacing supernatural powers, and they hanged supposed witches in whom they imagined these powers to be embodied. It is a curious fact of American history that, ever since, the witch-hunt, the search for the clandestine enemy within society, has been as pervasive a form of concern for security as defense against the potential enemy in foreign lands.

Liberalism arose in one sense as an antithesis to Reformation Christianity and an answer to its corruption. It was an antithesis, however, which took the form of turning the Reformation's basic theses into humanistic propositions. The liberals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, whose philosophy permeated American society, agreed with the Reformers that there are no ultimate structures of security in this world or the next and that this security is not needed because something more promising takes its place. For the liberals, however, this promise is located not in transforming relations with a gracious God but in the process of give-and-take among free men in a democratic society. They shared with the Puritans the belief that this world, its physical environment and its human structures, is to be organized in experimental structures open to change and that this organizing activity will be blessed. For the liberals, though, the blessing agent was not the Creator but the progress of mankind itself solving its problems along the way of history. Liberals, like the Reformers, subordinated security and urged Americans to base their policy on the confidence that a free relationship can be trusted more than a strict order to bring forth a promising future; that freedoms of speech and press and religion should be protected, for example, even though they make trouble for the state; that trade should be free between nations even if businesses fail as a result; or that those accused before the courts should be accorded due process of law and humane treatment even though they may be a threat to society.

This has been liberalism's *certitudo*. It too has been haunted by a shadow. The shadow could even be given a name: the fears and philosophy of Thomas Hobbes. The underlying faith which gives liberals their confidence is that there is a covenant rooted not in God's grace but in human nature itself. Man, in a state of nature, seeks harmony with his neighbors. In his freedom he is a person in community with others, and the formation of this community can therefore be safely left to the free interaction of private interests and ambitions. In fact, however, the operation of human power in a free society continually raised doubts about this faith and forced liberals to make decisions on premises other than their own. The benevolent free market of Adam Smith disappeared early in the warfare between the power of industry and the champions of the public interest. The nineteenth-century belief that democratic America had a mission to an autocratic world became in the twentieth century the assertion of American power all around the world in an ambiguous mixture of economic exploitation and paternal concern. Marxist communism ridiculed every article of the liberal faith as a cover for bourgeois interests and organized whole classes and societies against it, forcing liberals into ideological and sometimes physical war. It seemed as if Hobbes was right: In the state of nature, people are individuals, not persons, at war each with the other, not seeking community; and since they no longer could believe in an ultimate order, liberals found themselves acting when pressed like Hobbes's sovereign. They created the conditions of public order and peace by their own arbitrary power. They defined by their own reason and enforced by their own authority the meaningful existence in which they professed to believe.

It is a matter of history that during the thirties of our century this shadow deepened almost unto death. It was helped to do so in no small degree by a Christian movement, growing out of liberalism and socialism itself, which launched a basic attack upon the whole liberal confidence in the perfectibility, reasonableness, goodness and continual progress of man, in the name of a biblical realism about God and history. Reinhold Niebuhr, its prophet, said not only that the will to power is a perennial expression of human sin which distorts the justice and peace of all human society but also that the power and selfishness of the economic oligarchy in the United States was such that violent revolution was inevitable and the proletarian revolutionaries would execute the rough and inexact judgment of God through it. The hope he offered and the faith by which he lived was a real option for the church: witness to the forgiveness of God for the ambiguous act and to the judging and inspiring love of a self-giving Christ which transmutes the uneasy and relative peace that the powers of this world find by compromise into higher forms of mutuality. But it was no comfort to a liberal society threatened at the very center of its faith and stability. The stage was set for a conflict that would tear it apart.

What happened instead was a synthesis, and for the first time the question of security in relation to the confidence of faith became an open issue. In F.D.R.'s modified welfare-capitalism, the U.S. found a new consensus which gave the lie to Niebuhr's prophecies of doom. Hitler confronted the world with such a demonic alternative that all sides in the domestic conflict were impressed that there was something in the framework of society that allowed conflict to take a relatively civilized form, which was worth defending. A chastened confidence grew up; Arthur Schlesinger called it "the recovery of radical nerve." Although one could no longer believe in certain progress or in the goodness of man, by a proper balancing of the powers and vitalities of society, a pragmatic approach to social planning, and a firm line against all totalitarian absolutes of right or left, human beings could still discover ways in which their interests and purposes might creatively be adjusted to those of others. For a Christian like Niebuhr this meant recognizing that the judgment and grace of God operate in and through men who, without surrendering to great ideological systems, work for particular forms of greater justice. It meant recognizing in the genius of democracy and mixed economy an operation of God's providence.

This, then, was the context in which security was to be understood. Dynamically balanced powers operating by democratic rules in competition must be secured, preserved from totalitarian interference, however imperfect the balance may be in one part of the arena or another. The very possibility of fighting for greater relative justice and freedom is threatened, the argument runs, by the rules under which a Communist state operates. This is why Communist expansion must be resisted. But this resistance, this containment, this attention to security, must always be subordinate and never the dominant theme in the "free" world. The soldiers who stand guard and the weapons they use must never dominate the scene. The object of the whole operation is to create a balance of power with the Communist world so that the latter will gradually come to moderate its ideological rigor and its strictly controlled society in order to participate in the rest of the world's experimental search for the best way of life. Containment was to be a ministry to Communist society as well as a defense against it. Furthermore, the "free" world was supposed to be asking nothing more than the conditions of open competition between Marxist and other ideologies, between socialist and modified capitalist economies, to see which would be the more attractive to the peoples of the world. The United States would prove itself in that competition by its ability to help other nations of the world to find their own pattern of development, to make their own revolution without outside interference, as Walt Rostow put it in explaining American policy in Vietnam.

Thus, in broad outlines, the synthesis with which Christian realists and chastened liberals faced the world of the last twenty years. It was a nice combination of Luther's *certitudo* as faith in the power of a free democratic society to compete on its merits for world allegiance, and *securitas* in its dependence on the power of U.S. and allied arms to maintain the conditions of the competition.

It is now a fact of history that this synthesis, too, has broken down. We were living with an illusion. We imagined that we could have both a creative relation with other nations on the basis of equality and respect *and* complete national security, could both contain Communist ideology *and* support world development and the revolutionary aspirations of peoples, could pursue both endless prosperity at home *and* world justice and peace. In fact, when the chips were down, we opted in each case for security first, with the ironic result—which Niebuhr would be the first to appreciate—that we have less security today than ever before. To cite some examples: By insisting that we must counter the capacity of Soviet arms production rather than risk a realistic assessment of Soviet intentions we have helped produce an ever more dangerous escalation of nuclear arms. We support repressive oligarchies we can control in Latin America and elsewhere rather than risk a relation with popular revolutionary forces. We have developed an enormous disproportion between our expenditure for defense and our commitments to world development of all kinds. By our trade policies both private and governmental we reinforce and increase the disparity between our own standard of living and that of the poorer two-thirds of the world. The whole time, meanwhile, we continue to proclaim the rhetoric of democracy, freedom and social progress for all, lying not only to others but to ourselves.

What can we do to regain our credibility as patriots, as Christians, or simply as human beings who suit actions to words? If we really have confidence in anything or anyone beyond our power to secure our own well-being in a hostile world, what is it, and how might it affect our politics?

The problem of securing the structures of life has been with mankind since the beginning of history, of course, and it has been both a political and a religious problem. The ontocratic pattern—the rule of a structure of being which has divine cosmic dimensions and is also expressed in the status and power of the political rulers—extends through the ancient and the modern world, and it represents the yearning of man for a *securitas* that embraces both heaven and earth. To provide this *securitas* has been the most general function of religion through the ages.

There has been one critically important exception, however. From this exception came the understanding of history with which we operate today. At one point there emerged in the hills of Palestine a people who confessed that they owed their existence to the exact opposite of an ontocratic structure. They had been called out of this structure by one who would not even give himself the name of a conventional deity and whom they would come to know only in the risk of following him into the future. They were defined as a people not by any mythology of their cosmic environment but by the relation to one another and to Yahweh who had chosen them, which was established in the covenant. The covenantal relation was for them, therefore, the ultimate reality to which all truth had reference and by which all power was ordered and directed to its proper ends.

In this covenant there was no *securitas*. There was no human control over the powers of the cosmos and society, no divine place where heaven meets earth and no bargaining with the gods. The covenant is suspended over a basic condition of man not unlike that described by Thomas Hobbes: the war of all against all. Into this chaos man can fall back, by disobedience and lack of confidence in Yahweh. Peace, which the covenant establishes, is not a stable order between nations or individuals, but the moving drama of human self-realization informed and reformed by God. The promise of the covenant is open-ended. It includes all that belongs to human hopes for a full and prosperous life: posterity, land, wealth, good name, rescue and help in trouble, and inspiration to all the peoples of the earth. But the condition of the covenant is utter faithfulness to the God who reveals his character in his commandments and his actions; first of all a gracious God who calls his people out of slavery and who demands a similar graciousness of his people toward the widow, the orphan and the stranger at their gates; secondly a jealous God who will tolerate no structure of security other than the living relation with himself, not even temples and structures of worship endowed with his name.

All of this is clearly illustrated in the function of the Hebrew word *betach*, which is translated most often in English as "safety" or "security." It is derived from the verb "to be confident in" or "to trust." It describes, like "covenant" and "peace," a form of human relations. Many times the phrase "dwell in safety" appears as a hope or a promise to the people, and it is clear that this includes freedom from attacks by the enemy. But the source of this safety is a confident relation with Yahweh, and what disturbs security first is not the enemy's attack but the shifting of trust or confidence to another object than him.

Here is where, in Hebrew Scripture, politics comes into sharpest conflict with covenantal faith. Despite its origin, Israel was a nation with a political structure. At times it was powerful and prosperous. The catalogue of things in which the nation trusted besides a proper relation with God and the neighbor reads like that of any modern country: fortifications (Jer. 5:17), armaments (Isa. 31:1), comforting analyses of the situation that hide unpleasant facts (Jer. 7:8), oppression (Isa. 30:12), foreign alliances (I Kings 18), wealth (Psalm 52), or man and his power (Jer. 17:5). It was not the intention of Yahweh to deny to Israel earthly political power or wealth. But the continual struggle of God with his people turned on the issue of the basis of Israel's confidence, her security and self-identity. It was a dialectical struggle. A disobedient, idolatrous people would fail in war, and the prophets would make clear the cause of the failure. At the same time, Israel would receive the covenant anew, with a new calling in her new condition. In Hebrew Scripture the climax of this was the image of the suffering servant, driven into exile and only allowed to return by the grace of a new conqueror who was called to "bring forth justice to the nations." In its greatest humiliation the people were able to hear their highest calling, to extend the covenant to those very political powers who had been their enemies.

Can a nation, a political unit with powers of enforcement, be such a covenant community? How is the function of compulsion related to the community of promise? The covenantal relation was also basic to the New Testament understanding of the common life, but with a difference. The New Testament church, following Jesus himself, recognized that the covenant of the people of God could only be bound together by its relationship to Christ and protected by the power of the Holy Spirit, not by any form of political coercion, and that it was by its very nature not a national but an ecumenical community. In Christ the last vestige of religious nationalism in the covenant people is swept away. The church is called to be defenseless in the world, to share the service, suffering and sacrifice of its Lord, and thereby bear witness to the world of what God is doing for it and in it toward justice, reconciliation and peace. In terms of Luther's contrast, it is to reflect pure *certitudo* with no concern for its own *securitas*.

In this witness, the church confronts the principalities and powers of this world, of which political power and authority is one. The New Testament recognizes that there is a legitimate political function in this world. The fifth thesis of the Confession of Barmen puts it succinctly: "Scripture tells us that, in the as yet unredeemed world in which the church also exists, the state has by divine appointment the task of providing for justice and peace. It fulfills this task by means of the threat and exercise of force according to the measure of human judgment and human ability." Any profession of faith by this political power is at best irrelevant and at worst idolatrous. The state obeys God by creating the relative, external, very real conditions in which man can be free to hear and respond to (or reject) the full possibilities of life which God's covenant offers. It is called to be a just and a secular state. Its function, furthermore, is essentially universal. It is not tied to the survival of particular nations, peoples or states.

The principalities and powers have, however, a life of their own rooted in human nature and yet transcending it. The religious nationalism of first-century Israel was one example of this. They will exalt themselves to divine status if allowed to do so. Christians must resist these powers as they resist temptation (Ephesians 6:12). They are parts of God's creation with inordinate ambitions of their own which are constantly being subjected to Christ and forced despite themselves to serve a constructive purpose in His covenant relation with men. This is the sense in which the Apostle Paul says that men should be subject to the authorities and give them their due (Romans 13:1-7). This due may be active participation in the state's affairs, it may be a challenging expectation that the governing power will do justice even against its own interests (as in the case of Paul before various Roman magistrates), or it may be active opposition to the particular actions of the state even to the point of undermining a particular state's security. Christians will do all these things, however, for the sake of the proper exercise of the political function toward justice and liberation for all men. "We are in fact of all men your best helpers and allies in securing good order," wrote Justin Martyr to the Emperor, "convinced as we are that no wicked man, no covetous man or conspirator, or virtuous man either, can be hidden from God." Of course, the good father neglected to mention that supporting the Emperor meant for Christians in the second century refusing military service, undermining the economy by their suspicion of commercial gain and the public morale by their opposition to brutal games and, ultimately, refusing to pledge allegiance to the Emperor by sacrificing before his image. Tertullian put the same point in saltier prose: "We sin then against the imperial majesty in this, that we do not make him subject to his own possessions; that we do not perform a mockery by offering a service for his safety when we do not suppose that safety to rest in hands soldered with lead. . . . For we call upon God for the safety of the Emperor, upon God the eternal, God the true, God the living whose favor beyond all others the Emperor desires." The church gives the state security by turning it away from dependence on its own possessions (tangible ones like wealth and armaments or intangible ones like gods and patriotism) toward the true God who defines by his covenant what the promise and function of politics are.

This has been the message of the Jewish and Christian faith from then to now: The safety of the state lies not in the *securitas* which it builds up by its own power and by the worship of its own image but in the *certitudo* with which it seeks to enable covenants of justice and peace among men. It and the nation are relative, secular goods. They destroy themselves when instead of taking risks to establish broader and deeper relations with other classes and peoples they make their own interest and structures absolute. The community of the covenant is placed in their midst to remind them both of this promise and of this danger.

Let me conclude with two present illustrations of this tension. The first concerns security within our nation itself, the second with our national security within a world of competing powers. Concerning the first, Hannah Arendt, in a recent article in the *New Yorker*, points out that American society rests on a *consensus universalis*, which is not identical with our Constitution but underlies it, and is derived from something like a covenant on which this nation was founded. Built into the American consciousness is the sense that we have contracted to be together. The Mayflower Compact was the first expression of it. The Declaration of Independence and the preamble of the Constitution say it again. The writings of the founding fathers are full of it.

What is the basis of this consensus? Who is included in the covenant, and from what source do we all learn the character of the common life and the relation to other peoples which is demanded of us? In fact we have seen in our history that our original consensus was anything but inclusive. The Indians, the blacks and the Spanish-speaking Americans have never really been a part of it. Other minorities have begun as aliens and, by civil disobedience which challenges the covenant, have won a place within it. But today rapid changes in the ethos and social structure of our society have produced an alienation from the consensus, from the trust which underlies our security and our laws, such as our society has not seen before. In this withdrawal of trust by other Americans, our security is threatened in two senses: we are physically endangered, and we are placed in moral doubt about the rightness and goodness of institutions against which so many others inwardly rebel.

What, in this condition, is the point of reference from which the covenant of American society can be understood anew and reformed? The experience of the Hebrew people with their God might, I suggest, teach us two things:

1. When the covenant breaks down, it is those who have given it social structure and upheld it with their laws who must bear the major fault and take chief responsibility for its reformation. The protest of the alienated and the weak, even when violent, reminds the powerful that they have not reached out, as God does, to include the poor and the outsiders. They have not shared the promise and power of their society with them. The biblical story may remind us who still share the political consensus of our country that a repentant and witnessing use of what power is left us, as a form of service, is the key to extending the covenant to those "nations" in our midst whom we have hitherto excluded. The task is to empower them to be our equals, and to limit our dominance.
2. The covenant of any society is a human relationship first, not a structure of laws. When it breaks down, the *first* question to be asked is not, how may the law be strengthened, but, how are the human relations to be reconstituted? The central issue is not what is legal but what is faithful to the neighbor, what structure of relations, what conditions of life, express a true appreciation of his need?

Second, what of the security of our nation in a world of competing powers? The political function is, says the biblical witness, universal. The welfare of all people is its object. Into this calling to establish for all the external conditions of justice, freedom and peace, the nation-state in modern times has introduced a new complication. On the one side, national power, like structures of power built on race, class and other particular groups, has been a providential correction of the ideological pretensions which attend universal political structures, even when, like the Christian Roman Empire and its successors, they claim to recognize the superior realm of God and the church. Nationalism has even operated in places as a relative instrument of the general against particular interests, as in the unification of modern European states, or today in India. On the other hand, the principalities and powers of this world are such that no nation has ever been able to maintain its political structure purely on the basis of the promotion of common interests, despite the pleas of political realists. Sovereign states, like revolutionary movements, tend to justify their power with reference to universal values which transcend the interests of the group they represent, and yet which they claim to embody even if only in setting an example to the world. They try, and they often succeed, to enlist the church on their side. Such is the tribute which particular political powers must pay to their universal function in the year of our Lord 1972.

Here is also where the witnessing church comes to grips with modern international politics. It stands squarely on the side of those who understand national interest—to which one must add racial, class and other group interests—to be in fact the fundamental factors determining national and other group policies. To recognize that policies are determined by interest and not by universal principle, and that these interests are relative to different interests which other political powers may have, is the first step toward taking idolatry out of politics and reducing it to its proper secular function. Instead of claiming to embody the universal in a structure, one recognizes that it must be found in the interaction of powers that are strong enough to check and balance each other.

But with this, the search for Christian realism has only begun. It is a tragedy that in the past generation so many theologians who espoused this position have stopped there. The fact is that the claim to have found the righteous method whereby one power can balance another for the welfare of all, or the economic development of all the peoples be reconciled with the continuing prosperity of the rich, can also be a form of idolatry. Power which is relativized in theory may be absolutized in practice, as in the case of a critic of this paper who said that the statesman's task is to provide the basic *securitas* on the basis of which the rest of us might explore in peace the dimensions of *certitudo*. Even if these forms of misplaced faith can be avoided, power politics based on national and group interests tends to be an empirical art which rewards those interests which in fact have power and override the powerless. It is the business of the church, if it is faithful to its Lord, not to be indifferent to group and national interests but to stand in tension with any state or movement that promotes some interests at the cost of others and to be advocate of those poor whose interests have been trampled under in the power struggle. The church, which if true to itself is a fellowship whose interest is only in its witness to God's purpose for all men, has the task of helping political powers continually to reinterpret their self-interests (sometimes so radically that even their self-identity is threatened) to include a concern for the rights of others. This is the process of justification which leads toward justice. If the biblical message is true, there is no other way to be secure.