Public Theology in the Market State

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Abstract
The accepted view that the modern state arose out of the ‘wars of religion’ is countered with evidence that the late fifteenth century reification of the state used a new category of religion as a human universal impulse to disempower the church and contain the church within the bounds of the state. As a further five successive forms of the state have come into existence new forms of communal and religious life have emerged: first, religious toleration; secondly, the development of a new ‘public’ realm; thirdly, the denominational form of church; fourthly, the appearance of mass media; fifthly, the embedding of the private citizen in a media world. In these new contexts either the church opts to reify the denominational church emphasizing individual democratic religious experience, or it realizes that an eschatological view of the gospel calls it to be a public church with a public theology.

Keywords
state, reification, religion, church, public, media

The separation of church and state in the emergent democracies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries provided a radical new context for the church and the state. Bobbitt’s book, the Shield of Achilles, points to the need to reverse the terms and specifically address the relation between state and church.1 Bobbitt’s description of the emergence of the state in the late fifteenth century, and the five forms of the state that have developed since then, focuses attention on the changing nature of the state. This article describes the various forms of the church and does what Bobbitt does not do; it directly relates the nature of the state to the nature of the church. In each case the state defines and limits the role of the church.

The history of this interchange raises two further vital questions for our understanding of our democratic context in the twenty-first century. First, the critical use by the state of the notion of religion in varying ways over five centuries has had dramatic consequences for the church and the role of religion in the state. Secondly, after the separation of the state and the church, the public domain assumes greater and greater importance in relation to the politics of successive forms of the state, the forms of the church and religion as well. The creation of this new audience—the public—impacts upon the development of both the state and religion.

The emergence of public theology in the last half of the twentieth century is an indication that the last of the states, the market state has given rise to a different sort of public realm. This form of theology has appeared, it will be argued, as a result of a re-claiming of the nature of the church as a public body. First, though, the story needs to be told of the creation of the various forms of the state, the role of religion, the development of the public realm and the effects upon the church.

**The Reification of the State**

It was not until the latter part of the fifteenth century that the six hundred year rule of the Holy Roman Empire of the Roman Catholic Church was challenged. The Pope claimed the ultimate power of God to rule in the religious realm, outsourcing to the kingdoms and city-states of Europe the right to rule under his authority. The empire was absolutely legitimated as it was by God.

In the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215 the English king renounced his rights to the degree that the king's will was bound by law to protect the rights of the king's subjects against unlawful punishment. A basis was thereby established for the fostering of legal procedures and the eventual development of constitutional processes. Resistance to the centralized authority of the Pope grew in England and Europe as cities and monarchies jockeyed for influence.

The capture of Constantinople by the Muslim Turks in 1486 was the catalyst of events that effectively limited the authority of Pope, in favour of the monarch and city-state. The Turks used gunpowder in cannons to smash a section of Constantinople's wall to rubble and pour troops through the breach. Until that time a provisioned walled city had been able to hold out against any force. Within a decade France had developed mobile brass cannons that they used to threaten the city-states of the Italian peninsular.

The five hundred or so city-states in Europe found themselves defenceless before this new military technology. If the city-state was to survive defences
had to be radically upgraded with different perimeter walls and more specialized troops. The cost of defence rocketed. This required the development of a bureaucracy that could raise the taxes necessary to support the expenditure. It also meant that with new defences the city-state was now able to withstand even the Holy Roman Empire. The reification of the state as an entity over and against the church was underway. As Cavanaugh states:

> In the medieval period, the term status, had been used either in reference to the condition of the ruler (status principis), or in the general sense of the condition of the realm (status regni). With Machiavelli we begin to see the transition to a more abstract sense of the state as an independent political entity, but only in the works of sixteenth-century French and English humanists does there emerge the modern idea of the state as ‘a form of public power separate from both ruler and the ruled, and constituting the supreme political authority within a certain defined territory.’

The process of transmuting the idea of the city-state into an absolute thing in itself with ultimate authority over its citizens was underway. As Bobbitt states:

> All the significant legal characteristics of the State—legitimacy, personality, continuity, integrity, and most importantly, sovereignty—date from the moment at which these human traits, the constituents of human identity, were transposed to the State itself. This occurred when princes, to whom these legal characteristics had formally been attached, required the services of a permanent bureaucracy in order to manage the demands of a suddenly more threatening strategic competition.

The state as a sovereign entity was born. For the state in contrast to the church’s divine history which preceded it, ‘law and strategy are not merely made in history—a sequence of events and culminating effects—they are made of history’. There cannot be a state ‘without strategy, law, and history, and to complicate matters, these three are not merely interrelated elements, they are elements each composed at least partly of the others’. As such there is no typology of the forms of the state, they are each social constructions that emerge in history and are effective for a time, before a new form of the state emerges.

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4) Ibid., p. 5.
5) Ibid., p. 6.
Bobbitt shows how the development of the technology of warfare, new forms of organization, and international constitutional agreements have resulted in six overlapping epochs of the state; namely, the princely state from 1494 defined by the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 to 1572, the kingly state from 1567 defined by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 to 1651, the territorial state from 1649 defined by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 to 1789, the state nation defined by the Conference of Vienna in 1815 to 1870, the nation-state from 1871 defined by the Treaty of Versailles to 1991 and finally the beginnings of the market state from 1989 until the present.

It must be noted that this is quite a different explanation for the emergence of the state than has traditionally been given. According to Cavanaugh:

"The modern state arose out of the 'Wars of Religion' of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in which the conflicts inherent in civil society, and religion in particular, are luridly displayed. The story is a simple one. When the religious consensus of civil society was shattered by the Reformation, the passions excited by religion as such were loosed, and Catholics and the newly-minted Protestants began killing each other in the name of doctrinal loyalties."

Instead as Cavanaugh and Bobbitt show, "These wars were not simply a matter of conflict between 'Protestantism' and 'Catholicism', but were fought largely for the aggrandizement of the emerging state over the decaying remnants of the medieval ecclesial order." What is remarkable is that the description of these wars as 'wars of religion' hides the fact that the word 'religion' was not used in this way until the late fifteenth century and then was used by the new states to co-opt the power of the church to gain control over the subjects of the state.

"It is surprising that it was not until 1474 when the Italian Renaissance figure, Marsilio Ficino, writes De Christiana Religione that he is 'the first to present religio as a universal human impulse common to all'. For Ficino, a Platonist, the various historical manifestations of this common impulse 'are all just more or less true (or untrue) representations of the one true religio implanted in the human heart. In so far as it becomes a universal impulse, religion is thus interiorized and removed from its particular ecclesial context'.

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7) Ibid., p. 22.
8) Ibid., p. 33.
9) Ibid.
Cavanaugh points out that in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there is another major change in meaning toward religion as a system of beliefs that can be taught, and the plural term ‘religions’ emerges. Later in the late seventeenth century:

Religion for Bodin is a generic concept; he states directly that he is not concerned with which form of religion is best. The people should be free in conscience to choose whichever religion they desire. What is important that once a form of religion has been embraced by a people, the sovereign must forbid any public dispute over religious matters to break out and thereby threaten his authority.¹⁰

Religion is not only removed from its particular ecclesial context; ‘Religion is no longer a matter of certain bodily practices within the Body of Christ, but is limited to the realm of the ‘soul’, and the body is handed over to the State’.¹¹ What a creative term ‘religion’ turned out to be for the rulers of the princely state: ‘The creation of religion was necessitated by the new State’s need to secure absolute sovereignty over its subjects’.¹²

The independence of the princely states had been tolerated by Rome until the Reformation, but the added independence of alternative Christian positions deeply divided Europe. Different forms of Christianity in different princely states ripped apart the feudal social fabric. The Peace of Augsburg in 1555 divided Europe into Catholic states from the old empire, and Lutheran states, but it was not until 1648 in the Peace of Westphalia, that the earlier principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* was broadened to acknowledge other major Christian groups such as the reformed. The Holy Roman Empire was no more. The principle is ‘whose reign, that religion’ or ‘in the Prince’s land, the Prince’s religion’. This principle survived through the princely state and the kingly state that followed until the treaty of Utrecht in 1713.

The state was able to relativize the differences between the various branches of the church by the use of a more general term; ‘religion’. The state retained the right to violence, but gave to the individual the right to religion as a personal impulse without direct political relevance. The new term ‘religion’ provided a particular branch of Christianity with its place within the state, but described in terms of religion and its overtones of an individual human

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 34.
¹¹ Ibid., p. 35.
impulse. The society of states had reversed the medieval order; no longer was it the church over kingdom, now it was state over a particular religion. It remained to be seen how this concept of religion, and the plural form that soon emerged—‘religions’—would influence the state and the church.

Bobbitt does not describe the effect of the state on the church. What follows is an overview of the impact of the changing state on the church, religion(s), and the emergence of a public realm in the English speaking world.

The Six States

The Princely State (1494–1572)

The princely state promised external security and freedom from domination while conferring legitimacy on the dynasty. The religion of the state was the religion of the monarch. In England the monarch’s national church suffered the changing religion of the ruler from the Protestant Henry VIII through Catholic Mary to Protestant Elizabeth. The forces of the reformation, calling for the preached word in the congregation and the reform of the national royal church kept getting louder. The many printing presses were carefully controlled in an attempt to stop the importing of the reformers Geneva Bible and associated religious literature from Europe.

The Kingly State (1567–1651)

The kingly state promised external security and internal security with the dynasty conferring legitimacy on the state. The King James Bible in 1612 was developed by King James to outlaw the dangerous influence of the Reformers’ Geneva Bible. Eventually religious dissension led to a civil war with the Puritans defeating the Royalists and ruling under Cromwell for just over a decade. While external security was maintained against all odds, religion divided the nation from within. This led to profound national crises which opened up the necessity for new forms of communication of what were called news books for the royalist and religious audiences. Printed circulars and handwritten accounts circulated to keep people informed of what was going on.

The Territorial State (1649–1789)

The territorial state promised that the state would manage the country efficiently and expand material wealth. During this time the concept of nation-
hood began to emerge. The major European powers protected borders with agreements that sought a balance of power. The restoration in 1660 of the national church in England led first to a purging of puritans and book censorship; within two decades this subsided and ushered in a time of toleration. Locke is clear that ‘once the state has succeeded in establishing dominance over, or absorbing, the Church it is but a small step . . . to the toleration of religious diversity’ among the subjects of the land. Most people were members of the Church of England, but as a result of the civil war there were significant numbers of Nonconformists. In 1695 the Printing Act lapsed as Royal censorship lessened. There was a surge in the growth of newspapers, with journalism being an important catalyst in the creation of a public sphere. As Conboy states:

Habermas sees the public sphere as the arena between an individual and the state where a compromise between the conflicting interests of the aristocratic and bourgeois classes was negotiated and won in the face of authoritarian state traditions by ‘the critical judgment of a public making use of its reason.’

The growing influence of the Enlightenment confidence in reason, the lessening of religious tension and an accompanying development of religious toleration, made it possible through coffee houses and salons to foster the beginning of a public audience within the life of the state. Hannay claims: ‘in order for a state to have its public there must be a system of government designed to protect the rights of individual citizens.’ In England at this time a sort of public space had emerged that was like a public commons, where people could gather and talk about what was happening. Newspapers and journals were now part of the communication network, freed mostly from censorship, though as yet not allowed to report what happened in parliament. It was a time of serene self-awareness. Hannay reveals that:

The coffee house, into which anyone with the will, education and interest could enter in order to join in conversation on the burning issues of the day, was virtually next door. Enlarged by its close links with journalism, as well as theatre and literature generally, this public space became the precursor of the enormously more complex and infinitely less transparent public sphere we know today.

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13) Ibid., p. 407.
16) Hannay, ibid., p. 36.
Voltaire in the 1760s is credited with creating what would become political journalism. He ‘developed the idea that specific heart-rending cases could be converted into great battles which would set standards and force widespread reform’; he ‘succeeded in clearing a space for the democratic exercise of good sound sense, the space we now refer to as the ‘public space’, and he regarded his role as ‘a matter of defending freedom of thought and religious tolerance against tyranny and bigotry’.17 Journalism was constrained by stamp taxes and advertising taxes. Those in power also used the newspapers more effectively to make their voice heard by a greater number of interested and educated people. The religion of the King continued to give space for those who were designated ‘non-conformists’; a religious rather than a church category.

In 1736 in the Puritan colony and in 1738 in England there was an explosion of individual religious conviction in what has been called the Great Awakening in America and the Evangelical Revival in Great Britain. The language of individual conversion brought tensions for the state-church. The growth of what was called, often in horror, religious enthusiasm occurred mostly in and through religious societies. Such societies found their place either in the national church or non-conformist groups who fostered an interest in religious experience independent of the national church. It raised the most basic question of the difference between Christian experience and religious experience. In fact there is a profound difference between baptism as the entrance into the life of faith within the church and the religious experience of conversion within the individual self which may or may not lead to baptism. It is apparent that the religious category has thus further impacted upon the church. The Awakening and The Evangelical Revival were to reinforce the role of religion in the public mind of the time.

The State Nation (1776–1870)

The state nation forged the identity of the nation and promised the civil and political rights of sovereign states. It was a time of revolution in Europe. In England it led to the increasing power of parliament, a rapid expansion of those involved in the public sphere, the power of the press to create public opinion (often called the Fourth Estate) and the emergence of the denominational form of religion. The economic benefits of the Industrial revolution gave rise to a rapid increase in population and a rise in living standards.

17 Ibid., pp. 59–60.
The limited public of the wealthy and propertied grew with the Great Reform Acts of 1832 and 1867. All males owning property or paying rent were entitled to vote; before the end of the century this was extended to all males. In addition, it was the time public education for children was made compulsory.

‘As the public grew, not just with the population but more importantly as the requirements of private citizenship (income and gender) were gradually relaxed, the further development of capitalism and the workings of the market led to new possibilities of injustice’.18 Voltaire’s practice of using the press as a voice for justice was given far greater authority than ever before. Newspapers had a greater audience to excite, inflame or inform public opinion. The individual citizen as part of this public audience was increasingly dependent on the press for news; indeed political, life-style and event news. This vast public could not meet as one assembly, and the state became ‘one among several factors in a field of forces that operate on both it and the public’.19

The role of both the church and religion was dramatically affected by the states decision to allow free religious association. It was decreed in 1828 in England that any group could form a church, or religious grouping. The state nation ushered in the responsibility of the citizen to support the state while allowing freedom of religious choice. In a few hundred years the exclusivity of the state-church had led to the toleration of non-conformists, and then to the proliferation of numerous denominational ‘religions’. In fact the state had found that the way to disempower the Constantinian church was with the category of religion, at the same time fostering the development of individual human rights. This was a time for reform as groups emerged to fight for the outlawing of slavery; unions began to fight for the rights of workers; movements sought a better education for all, the right to vote and so on.

The downside for the church was the politically endorsed break-up of the body of Christ. The creation of the denominational church was celebrated as the freedom of the individual to choose non-coercively their way of worship. No longer would the churches have political power, unless the divided groups found an issue on which they could agree to speak together (as they sometimes did). For Jefferson the fundamental religious principle ‘divided we stand’ contrasted with the political principle ‘united we stand’. There was no longer one church voice in the state nation, there were many, and the sole unified voice of authority with the means to implement its decisions was that of the state.

18) Ibid., p. 66.
19) Ibid., p. 67.
Each denomination had to justify its existence to the wider society in addition to claiming scriptural and or historical church warranty. The denomination became another organization within the state in competition with other denominational organizations for members, seeking members from other denominations and the state nation; attention focused on the decision of individuals to join and participate; recruitment through children's ministries and through adult programmes needed to be effective if the denominations were to survive; all finances for leadership and buildings had to be raised in and through the active membership and new members had to make a fundamental choice to opt in to the denomination from outside the organization if they had not grown up in that group. A consequence of all of this was the formation of a powerful boundary between those inside and those outside a denomination. More than ever before the life of the denomination depended on the ability of its leaders to encourage its members to participate and to help recruit new members. A denomination is always one generation away from annihilation.

The denominational boundary between believers and non-believers focused on the inner life of the congregation and the religious individual. It was not uncommon for denominational members to speak of the non-believer or the unchurched, which underlines the fact that for the denomination the church is the reference point for faith and belief. As the reification of the princely state was the first step in sovereignty prior to the reformation, one of the discoveries of this perspective was the way the creation of the denominational church led to the reification of the church for its members. As noted previously all the significant legal characteristics of the state—legitimacy, personality, continuity, integrity and, most importantly, sovereignty—date from the moment at which these human traits—the constituents of human identity—were transposed to the state itself.

The same legal characteristics of the church—legitimacy, personality, continuity, integrity and, most importantly, divine authority—were claimed by each denomination. The form of the organization, the place of meeting and the building became the new absolutes for the life of the denomination. The denominational world was one of ecclesiastical competition heightening the allegiance of the individual to their one true church; individuals gathered and scattered from the church at the centre. The experience of God was found most intensely at the centre of the local congregation; it was the life of the church, the continuation of the church and the integrity of the church that became the centre for its members’ lives.
The Nation-State (1861–1991)

The nation-state promised that it would better the welfare of the nation through economic security and public goods. This was the time in which those nations standing for parliamentary democracy won out against fascism and communism through two world wars and an atomic standoff. This form of government provided a more effective way of providing economic security and individual rights for its citizens. During this period there was a rapid growth in the number of societal organizations; citizens lived out their life in organizations which involved them in society. There was a proliferation of sporting groups, professional working groups, educational groups, artistic and theatrical groups, community groups and leisure groups, and in the wider sphere of public life matters of human rights, development, education, health, welfare, art and intellectual life were organized. Non-government organizations proliferated within nations and between nations; in these organizations there was a concern for the free flow of information and the right of the individual and the group to speak into the public domain.

There was a rapid increase in the number of newspapers printed using new technology, and a far greater role for marketing with wider distribution by first the train, and then the motor car. In the 1920s the discovery and rapid use of radio, followed within decades by television provided radically new and different forms of communication; the term ‘mass media’ puts it well. The mass media was a new form of the public common, set free from any particular location, ripe for communicating information to the audience and a marvellous means for marketing products. During this time the proliferation of goods and services continued to grow rapidly for a population with new levels of purchasing power; a boon for the politician able to get her/his message across.

We have to ask how this mass audience impacts on society and the role of public opinion. Hannay asserts that there is no such thing as public opinion, rather it is a matter of the audience concerned; ‘it is an opinion that has captured a public, its own public.’20 This left the public in a more reactive role, in which the public became, in political terms, ‘an amorphous assembly of clienteles, constituencies and lobbies’.21 The mass media was a vehicle for marketing ideas and products and endlessly polled to find out what the public believes

20) Ibid., p. 62.
21) Ibid., p. 67.
and wants by the groups that can afford to pay for the information, including the state, especially during elections. At the same time there was an expectation from many organizations that the Press provided a forum for public information and debate. It was during this period that the voice of the church at first strong and vibrant was gradually sidelined in the media and to some extent, the public domain.

At the beginning of the nation state, the denominational form of the Christian church was dominant in the west. If people did not attend church they still saw themselves as nominally belonging to a particular Christian denomination. After two world wars though active participation in the churches continued to decline and the churches were sidelined in public comment by a rising tide of more secular concerns and an openness to other religious movements. In the last quarter of the twentieth century major mainline Christian groups suffered significant decline in the United States, even more marked in the rest of the west, while smaller more conservative groups flourished. Major surveys show that the young parents of the last quarter of the century gave little allegiance to the denominational church without denying their own religious beliefs.22

The move from an emphasis on being part of a particular Christian church to an emphasis on individual commitment to religious belief whether Christian, or another faith system, or a sense of spirituality, developed quickly toward the end of the nation-state. During this time the state’s creation of the category of religion, that flowered with the separation of the church from the state, had now progressed so much further that it was possible to speak of a time of democratic religious individualism. In the west Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism had to live with the pressure that belief was judged by the individual to be a personal matter rather than an organizational matter; there was an atomization of belief.

One response to this pressure was the growing significance of the ecumenical movement as a way that churches countered the reification of each denominational church, which so fragmented the church after its separation from the state. Individual members in a religiously democratic society, however, have been further polarized into the fundamentalist reification of the Bible and the liberal absolutizing of rational thought.

While participation in the church in the west was at an all time low, it was still a highly significant group in society. In the so-called secular century the

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22 National Church Life Survey, Australia. In 1991 only 15% of churchgoers under the age of 50 were willing to affirm lifelong allegiance to the denominational church which they attended.
universal human religious impulse of spirituality was celebrated widely. In the west more people attended services of worship than attended any other public occasion or event.

The Market State (1990–?)

The market state promises that the state will maximize possibilities for citizens specifically as private citizens. While ‘for the Romans privacy or being private straightforwardly meant being out of public office, or not yet in it’,23 in the market state privacy is considered to be one of the fundamental rights of the citizen; and what is more, it is the responsibility of the state to protect the ‘private citizen’. Yet the state has changed; Bobbitt claims that:

the market-state will live within three paradoxes. (1) it will require more centralized authority for government, but all governments will be weaker, having greatly contracted the scope of their undertakings, having devolved or lost authority to so many other institutions . . . (2) there will be more public participation in government, but it will count for less, and thus the role of the citizen qua citizen will greatly diminish and the role of citizen as spectator will increase. (3) the welfare state will have greatly retrenched, but infrastructure security, epidemiological surveillance, and environmental protection . . . will be promoted by the State as never before.24

Yet the market state is not well suited to these spheres of government activity and will need to delegate such roles: ‘The monitoring of epidemics and diseases, of international migration, of terrorism, of espionage, and of threats to the environment’.25

This is a bleaker view than that of the nation-state, since with the opportunity to maximize the potential of the private citizen comes the issue of how the state will do this and who will be the greatest beneficiaries. Since the market state subsumes culture to the importance of the market, the state is inevitably involved in a global market setting which seeks to give a unit cost to all aspects of life that inevitably end up in tension with culture, justice and morality. Big business and government direct the concerns of the state.

In a mass society the search for the freedom to live one’s private life has become one of the aims of life. Hannay reinforces Bobbitt’s view of the

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23) Ibid., p. 71.
25) Ibid., p. 236.
diminishing of the role of the citizen to spectator: ‘Public space, both physical and abstract, is a playground to which it can escape but is in reality no more than an extension of its private sphere… In the forum or elsewhere, once in the great outdoors private citizens remain essentially private’. Government then has the primary function of preserving individuals’ privacy at home and in this rather more evacuated public domain. That which threatens individuals’ privacy has extraordinary political ramifications as the attack on the World Trade Center has shown. The measures designed to protect citizens from terrorists, have severely curtailed basic human freedoms on the basis of providing greater personal security. As Hannay states: ‘The citizen is an investment, an investment handled by the economic powers that determine the safe future of the state, which in turn pampers and protects those privacies upon whose consumerist possibilities and habits its sponsors depend’.

The balance has shifted in the market state; for citizens the private realm has become primary and the public realm secondary. Private citizens find themselves both outsiders and insiders; outsiders as observers in the audience of this network of massively complex publics, and yet also in this vast audience insignificant insiders with no control over what is happening.

The primary medium for the expanding public realm has been the continuing development of the media. There is however a fundamental difference between the mass media of the former state, providing a constant background of information and entertainment, and the experience now of being immersed in a growingly sophisticated electronic world of communication and entertainment. It is not unusual for homes to have multiple television sets, mobile phones and computers.

Politically there are signs that maximizing the possibilities for private citizens encourages a greater need for individuals to distance themselves from those who do not fare as well within the state, and a fear of the different ‘other’ who comes from other places. This direct enhancement of the private life of individuals is making it difficult to find the leaders and members for the community organizations that have been the primary way individuals in the past have been able to live in the public world. Yet new forms of organization concerned for the environment, human rights and the future of the planet have also appeared.

26) Hannay, On the Public, p. 78.
27) Ibid., p. 79.
Margaret Simons, in *The Content Makers*, asserts that we are living through a revolution in the media.\(^{28}\) A younger generation does not merely read the newspapers or watch television as their parents did; rather, technology is delivering interactive means of being involved in radio programmes, digital television, internet blogging and so on, relating persons and groups with others anywhere on the planet. No one is clear how the interactive possibilities of these new means of media communication affect a market dominated by a ‘tell the stories that the public wants to hear’ approach. Simons claims that different forms of journalism will emerge ‘as content makers mapping the world for smaller, more intensely engaged audiences. The challenge is to make sure that the age-old function of content makers—building cohesiveness, creating the public, lubricating democracy—is still served’.\(^{29}\) She contends: ‘This sort of content making will come in many different forms. It will be very diverse and not all of it will make money. That was the way it was, before the business of media came to dominate the content makers’.\(^{30}\) What is clear is that the media moguls are still attempting to control and keep centralized this process even as the digital world fragments the audience and makes it more difficult to make money from a common market. A ‘glocal’ sense of the world emerges with an awareness of a more uniform global located in a more diverse local. A new generation seeks to live out their life in a fuller way in the public arena from within the safety of their private world.

On the one hand there is a sense in which the greater the private anonymity, the more there is a desire to become a public celebrity, as happens in reality TV shows and the quite extraordinary ways some individuals seek to become famous. According to Hannay: ‘Personality in this sense is part of a vast and complex interchange between private and public, an interchange in which the public in its privacy seeks to escape public anonymity’.\(^{31}\) On the other hand the private citizen may choose to be an observer in the audience; an outsider looking in from the outside seeking other vantage points to view the way the state, citizens and the public audience are communicated to them. It is possible to intervene in the public arena and bring a different perspective to the morality of what is happening, or the so-called certainties of public opinion about the life of a region, a nation or the world. Hannay puts it well:

\(^{29}\) Ibid., p. 478.
\(^{30}\) Ibid.
\(^{31}\) Hannay, *On the Public*, p. 82.
Certainly it will not issue from those commercial interests that constrain even the insiders. It may need new Voltares. To a politically awakening public the injustices Voltaire brought to its notice were glaring. The truths a contemporary must try to place in the public mind are harder to see and sometimes as hard to accept. . . . if the public will not be enlightened by the media, then it must be enlightened by itself, which means those among it still able to find the time and space to look for themselves, in both senses, and to hearken to the voices of new Voltares.

During the latter part of the nation state, the denominational form of Christian belief and practice was not generally accepted by a post-World War II generation. They were more at home with a form of democratic religious individualism which emphasized spirituality and private belief. It is another expression of the way the citizen lived life in a private world; one atom of the public audience receiving the core public messages about the state and society. The church so often is blissfully unaware that from the perspective of the state the church is made up of denominations in which people express their interiorized religion by gathering in voluntary associations of individuals. From the perspective of church members it is quite different yet their religious experience is expressed theologically in terms of the kingdom of God as being an internal reality within the individual or within the church that mirrors the insider’s view of the private citizen. For many church leaders and members their wider society is an alien world from which people have to be rescued.

The state has successfully disempowered the church from political power through the means of religion; Christendom has been gradually dismantled. It can be argued that the state has served the church well in helping it to make plain that the church should never have reified its life as empire or national church or denomination. As that disempowered view of the church has seeped into the life of the church there has been a remarkable bubbling up of a different perspective in which the church is called to live. It is an eschatological perspective that looks to the future and the role of the church in the market state in a radically different way. The church has discovered that its task is to be a community sent by God to bear witness to the purposes of God, to be a sign of the reign of God and to be a sacrament of God’s presence through the crucified risen one. It is an eschatological community waiting for the purposes of God to be fulfilled for all creatures; it mirrors the outsider’s view of the public world by standing outside the commonly accepted views of public opinion. In this religiously pluralistic world, in which each private citizen will

32 Ibid., p. 130.
have their own particular matrix of religious beliefs, the church is discovering that it must recover its unique perspective as a community of Christian faith, a pilgrim people living in the mission of God. Its public voice, similar to that of Voltaire, has the task of calling attention to the ills and injustices of society, as the voice of a fallible people formed by Jesus Christ. It is the reaffirmation of what it means to be the people of God, the body of Christ and the community of the Holy Spirit limited to speaking the truth without a position of power within the public world of the state and the private world of its citizens. In some places the church is finding its Christian voice brings different perspectives to bear that are critical of public opinion, state market ideology, unjust judgements and religious individualism. Such voices point out that reconciliation, the environment and the future of the planet depend on questioning the accepted ways of social formation and challenging the way our world views are constructed. Such a voice and logic is essentially expressed in a public theology which calls in to question the private world, the public domain and the views of the state from a position of powerlessness, aware that there is 'no compelling public proof of the absolute character of Christian revelation'. This eschatological freeing of the church from needing to be in power lets the church live the life of resident witnesses rather than resident aliens.

It is so easy for the church to fall prey to reifying its life, making itself the reference point and looking out on the state as a place to be conquered, or as the alien world from which one withdraws. When Martin Marty used the phrase ‘public theology’ in 1981, he sought to provide an alternative framework to that of the confessional theology of most denominations which locked them into their own revelational world. The church needs to know how important its public life is in the state. Cavanaugh in his terrible description of the fascist perversion of the state shows what happens when the Pinochet state used its reified power to justify the destruction of the public in Chile.35 He states: 'Chile’s flourishing public life was driven indoors and privatized. A community leader during Allende’s government summed up his life under Pinochet: “I spent years swearing at the television set”. Cavanaugh continues: ‘The net effect of this strategy was the disappearance of social bodies

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36) Ibid., p. 46.
which would rival the state’. In addition, he claims: ‘The state does not merely wish to make its citizens feel as independent as possible from each other, but also seeks to make them as dependent as possible on the authority of the state’. The church was deprived of its martyrs by this atomization of the individual, either tortured with doctors present to prevent death, or by the disappearance of the body so that there could be no certainty as to what happened, and no body to venerate. Here the state attacked the church, disempowered its role in the public realm along with other public groups which threatened it, and was clearly anti-Christian and anti-public.

This negative scenario highlights the importance of realizing what the role of the church is in the market state. Given that the state has used religion to effectively disempower and disestablish the church, and in the process has created religious toleration and freedom, the church has to decide whether to withdraw into the private world of the denomination or acknowledge its role as a public church. It is true that in all countries in the west a case can be made that the denominational church has lost out to a denominational form of interiorized personal religion that parallels the private world of the citizen. In the market state the pressure for individuals to optimize their personal possibilities will give an added impetus for those who see the purpose of the church to continue as denominations marketing only positive religious experience as the essence of faith. Already this feature of church life is evident across the globe. The aim has to be to attract and grow the voluntary association which emphasizes the religious possibilities for human life. A survey of new members who joined a wide cross section of churches in Scotland in the nineties made it clear that most had vague notions of God, and a primary focus on discovering their own self-worth. There is a real danger that church growth will be little more than religious growth focusing the private individual on the ‘kingdom within’.

Yet it is also true that the church finds itself with a new horizon; the global society of market states. Even for the private citizen embedded in a media view of the global village there is a realization that the market state cannot be safe from weapons of mass destruction or from international coercion; cannot effectively control its economic life or currency; cannot protect its culture and way of life from threat; cannot protect itself from transnational perils such as

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37) Ibid., p. 47.
38) Ibid.
ozone depletion, energy shortages, global warming and infectious diseases.\textsuperscript{40} Moreover, since 11 September 2001 religious fundamentalism and terrorism have been added to these concerns. The primarily national concerns of the nation-state have been reframed within these planet threatening issues that impinge more directly upon the market state. It is important to note that the west sees Islam and the other world faiths as world religions, but Islam sees itself as a theocratic faith, and not a religion. Whereas in the nation-state ‘other religions’ meant principally other denominations, in the market state the meaning has changed and the phrase ‘other religions’ refers to other world faiths. Twenty-first century religious fundamentalists in all major world faiths have attacked the success of the state in disempowering faith in the name of freedom, human rights and the separation of government and religion. Fundamentalists, especially those in Islam, are calling this hard won western framework into question on the basis of the truth of theocratic belief.

This new world horizon can help the church rediscover that the gospel is public as well as private and that the future reign of God is among us, not only within us. If the eschatological God is the reference point, this helps keep global concerns central, bringing a new perspective that calls for a theology of both creation and redemption of the world in relation to the particular of personal local and cultural perspectives. The nature of the public is being refashioned in the market state embedded as it is in the particular perspectives of the media. Hannay’s description of the private person, now both an outsider looking in and an insider as part of a vast mass media audience presents two clear options for the person: the individual can either go with the flow and live as one seeking to maximize his/her potential within the public world that is given by the market state, or seek the vantage point of the outsider. He states:

\begin{quote}
It is an uneasy position to hold, because from it everything you are and believe can be weighed in the balance. But that there is this resource from within is an avenue to salvation. We need occasionally to step aside. Or meet in some public space where we are put in mind of how little of what we do or achieve counts, seeing things directly and without the interfering spins and refractions of the media or of their influence on our current perceptions.\textsuperscript{41}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{40} Bobbitt, \textit{The Shield of Achilles}, p. 228.
\textsuperscript{41} Hannay, ibid., p. 122.
This reflects Simons’ call to the journalist to become content makers once more rather than marketers. It is this reimagining and repopulating of a public space that is more than media generated that is vital both for the sense of perspective of the individual and also the health of the market state.

Summary

The church has to protest against the market state’s relegation of religion to the private sphere, and protest the denominational acceptance of this in the name of the body of Christ. The church as the body of Christ in a democracy is a public body; its life is one of public worship, public witness and public service. The church acknowledges that its role is to share the public space with other denominations, religions and community groups, and respects the democratic rights of individuals and other groups, but it has a public theology and a public voice that reflects the perspective of the Lord whom it serves. Thus, even when persecuted by the state, the church continues to call people out of their private religious worlds into a public world where alternative visions as to what it is to be human can be debated and discussed. Baptism into the body of Christ occurs in the public arena and at the Eucharist a gathered public community receives the bread and the wine together as brothers and sisters. Hence, the body of Christ is a public family—a group network—and it requires people to meet together. In Cavanaugh’s words: ‘The Eucharistic community is already a foretaste of the fullness of the Kingdom’. That is, it is a foretaste of God’s public that provides a profound impetus to create a public world of social life and debate bringing perspectives into the public domain that are in tension with the logic and approach of the market state.

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42 Cavanaugh, Torture and Eucharist, p. 228.