POLITIC

BOAZ ADHENGO

BOAZ ADHENGO

POLITIC

Design and typography: Chijioke Okili Ezeonu

H^{78}91$_p$4

CC-AB-SA-4.0

www.adhengoboaz.com

@adhengoboaz

Table of Contents

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The challenges of trying to view the world of politics from so many different perspectives has threatened to overwhelm the most experienced and respected of political scientists. Politics involves change. Politics is a world of flux, tensions, and transitions; hitherto change can be global in its consequences, as in the rise and fall of world powers such as the Soviet Union. Change could also be primarily domestic, as when one political party defeats another in a country's elections. In an increasingly interdependent world, however, even those changes that appear essentially domestic in nature may resonate with international significance.

Whatever the focus, political science begins by asking questions. Why do people vote as they do? Why are some people conservative and others not? Why are other counties developed than others? What is the third-world?

Political science often traces its beginnings to ancient Greece and the teachings of political thinkers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. In its early years, political science generally involved the analysis of the formal, legal, official side of political life. This approach is known as traditionalism. Traditionalists tried to understand politics by examining laws, governmental offices, constitutions, and other official institutions associated

with politics; they tried to describe how institutions operated by formal rules and publicly sanctioned procedures. They have also been known as rationalists.

Traditionalists often tended to focus on what was going on inside government as opposed to looking at social and economic processes in the country. Rational approaches were often both historical and normative: historical in outlining the processes by which the formal rules of politics were modified over time through court decisions, laws, executive orders, and the like, and normative in the sense of hoping to provide information for improving these rules. Although traditionalist approaches are still present in political science research, additional approaches have supplemented rationalism.

Behaviourism is one alternative to traditionalism. Behaviourism became popular in political science after World War II. Behaviourist approaches stress the importance of empirical analysis. Behaviourists ask: How better to study behaviour than through careful observation of specific actions? Indeed, behaviourism is almost synonymous with empiricism, according to many political scientists. Empiricism is a means of collecting data based on observation. From an empirical standpoint, **X** is a fact if **X** is observed. Behaviourists often favour statistical,

mathematical, and economic models of analysis, insofar as they allow for a more minute empirical investigation of phenomena than would be provided by assessing the content of constitutions, laws, and governmental procedures. Given its focus on empiricism, behaviourism tends to reject historical analysis, finding little reason to explore the past (*for interpretations, insights, and opinions on matters of politics*) when observation is viewed as the most reliable route to knowledge The empirical orientation toward the analysis of what is (*observable*) also stands in contrast to an orientation that asks what should be. Observation is never ''*purely*'' an observation. Even as we observe and mentally record data, we are imposing meaning on it (*that is, interpreting it*). Observation rests on our ability to put facts together, to make sense of them, to interpret them. Because interpretation is an inevitable part of observation, personal bias or opinion in the process of interpreting may be unavoidable. Indeed, one of the defining attributes of behaviourism is its rejection of the normative questions associated with traditional rationalism.

Scientists search for ways to identify, define, analyse, clarify, and understand the world. Religion, art, and philosophy also seek to produce languages and models to make the universe comprehensible. Each of these pursuits

- *science, spirituality, religion, art, and philosophy* - may be conceptualized as ways of coming up with names and categories for what is considered to be real. Spirituality may name as real what is known by faith; some philosophies may name as real what is known through reason. Science differs from these two endeavours in terms of what and how it goes about naming phenomena as real, but, like spirituality and philosophy, science can be thought of as a type of naming system connecting what we think of as mind and world.

Science names reality by means of a scientific method, a set of procedures (for gathering information) resting on certain epistemological assumptions. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that examines evaluations of what constitutes truth; thus, epistemological assumptions are assumptions about the essence of truth. Scientific method is characterized by epistemological empiricism (insofar as it is based on the assumption that what is true is what is observable). Its procedures reflect this epistemological assumption, for pursuing truth by means of the scientific method entails the collection of data. The data selected for collection are the set of data observed (not what is assumed, intuited, revealed by faith, or judged to be good or bad on normative grounds). In this manner, scientific

method's epistemological empiricism is reflected in its methodological (*procedural*) empiricism.

Political scientists use science's methods to study questions as diverse as the causes of war and the origins of public opinions, yet we may ask: why do people hold the political attitudes they do? Despite the centrality of this question, the two guiding theoretical orientations of modern political science, rational choice and behaviourism, are surprisingly unhelpful. Rational choice (traditionalism) is content to take preferences as given and is not particularly motivated to explore their origins or grounding in reality. Behaviourism is based on the untested assertion that preferences can be understood by an exclusive focus on environmental variables; it largely ignores the fundamental issue of why people respond to the environment as they do.

What if behaviour does not repeat itself? If behaviour does not repeat, it is difficult, if not impossible, to observe empirically a sufficient number of instances of a particular behaviour to provide confirmation or falsification of that behaviour. This would imply that an empirically based science of politics is limited by the essence (non-repeatability, or low levels of repeatability) of the subject matter (human behaviour) under observation.

Chapter Two

NATIONS

Why do political institutions exist? This question has bedevilled political thinkers for quite some time. If people prefer the kind of societal life that is made possible by political institutions, why do they not merely lead that life in the first place? The infinite regress problem immediately scuttles most attempted explanations, but wary cooperation offers a way out: the existence of political institutions may in large part be attributed to people's intense desire for sanctions to be brought against non-*co-operators*. People may believe that, if left to their own devices, most of their compatriots would be cooperative good citizens, but the possibility of even a very small number of bad apples is enough to drive them to create institutions.

Do people not realize that those elevated to positions of power in institutions have great potential to take advantage of their positions for personal gain? Indeed they do.

Power is one of the most important concepts in political science. In fact, some political scientists see it as a defining element of the discipline. Power affects how resources are distributed, how countries interact, whether peace or war prevails, and how groups and individuals pursue their interests; that is, power affects the myriad of

topics studied by political scientists. Ironically, however, power is one of the most difficult concepts to define. We may ask, what then is power?

At its most fundamental level, power is an ability to influence an event or outcome that allows the agent to achieve an objective and/or to influence another agent to act in a manner in which the second agent, on its own, would not choose to act. The word power, with its present spelling, has been in use since the fourteenth century.

Power can either be held in reserve or deployed; that is, it can be latent (*inactive*) or manifest (*active*). You can imagine how the possession of latent power by one agent can be highly effective in producing changes in a second agent. In such cases, the mere possibility that the first agent will activate power can be feared by the second agent and elicit changes in the second agent's actions. Indeed, this is the idea behind military deterrence: A country's stockpile of weapons may be enough to preclude aggression by its enemies, who know that the weapons can be changed from a latent power to a manifest power at any time.

A number of political scientists regard culture - defined as values, ideas, beliefs, and/or attitudes held in common by

a population - as a potentially crucial agent shaping state policies. The potential impact of culture can be analysed from a variety of perspectives, including those that examine the culture of (**1**) citizens in general and (**2**) decision makers within government. Take for example these reservations: What if cultures have contradictory values? If cultures include internally inconsistent and opposed values, ideas, and attitudes, can't culture be employed as a variable to explain the opposite of the outcome it is said to explain as well as the outcome itself? Moreover, if culture itself is shaped by economic class, race, ethnicity, social standing, or other variables, should not these more basic influences be the focus of scrutiny?

A nation is a group of people with a sense of unity based on the importance the group attributes to a shared trait, attribute, or custom. A common language, religion, ethnicity, race, and/or culture are often the foundations of national identity. Indeed, the very origins of the word nation attest to such foundations because nation is based on the older Latin word *natus* (birth), and nations generally consist of people whose sense of unity is based on something shared by virtue of the group into which they are born. It is important to note, however, that not every group into which one is born becomes the basis of a nation; if, for example, you are born into the group of

right-handed people, most probably you do not feel a sense of national oneness based on this shared attribute. However, if you are by birth a member of the group of Nilotes, Jews, Lithuanians, Armenians, Serbs, or Croats, you may indeed feel a sense of national unity based on the attributes shared with others born into your ''*birthgroup*.'' A nation arises when significance is attached to that which the group shares and around which a feeling of unity develops.

Chapter Three

BIBLE AND POLITICS

Our Christian faith is, however, full of political language. We proclaim Jesus as '*Lord*'. We bear witness to the '*Kingdom*' of God. Often, we do not make the connections between these terms and how we think about politics, yet politics is an important aspect of Christian discipleship. In the narrow sense of politics and government, we should all be concerned and involved with the politics of our nation. In the wider sense of how we understand, use and respond to power and authority, our workplaces and our churches are all political worlds. The reality of worldly politics and God's response are then revealed in Exodus. Liberated Israel was shaped by the gift of the law and the early lack of centralised power seen in the period of the judges. That changed with the coming of kingship. This was a highly ambiguous development (*as evident in 1 Samuel 8*) but one that God took and used to reveal a vision of godly rule in passages like **Psalm 72**. The political reality was, of course, far from that biblical vision and Israel was judged through exile, where she again experienced pagan rule as described in our reading from Daniel.

Most Christians proof that it is very wrong to get involved in politics because of Jesus' refusal to be made king by His followers. They go on to tell any would-be Christian politician that the Christian task is evangelism, not politics

that being involved in politics will cause a distraction from the Christian task of bringing lost sinners to Christ. Generally, Christians trying to get into politics are usually criticized: going into politics is going to be very tough; the pressure will be immense, one would find himself frequently walking a tight rope between remaining faithful to one's Christian principles and breaking down misunderstandings generated by popular negative perceptions against Christianity, etc. However, one concludes that it is too hard to be involved in politics, that means the whole arena of leadership and governance is surrendered to the hand of Satan, and to those who love power rather than love God which is nothing less than a disaster for the country.

The word of God command man to rule and have dominion over creation under heaven - Genesis 1: 26; Psalm 24: 1; II Corinthians 2: 10. Also, God command the believers to be involved in Great Commission, which involves discipling nations to observe all that Christ has commanded - (*Matthew 28: 19-20*). From the above, it is impossible to fulfil these two tasks effectively without being involved in this world. Believers should understand that government is of God.

Politics is variously defined as the ideas and activities involved in getting power in a country or over a particular area of the world; it is also a belief and attitude about how government should work. It can also be said to be the science and act of government, political activities, beliefs or affairs and factional scheming for power. However to be understood, is that politics can be observed in human group interactions including corporate, academic and religious institutions. It consists of social relations involving authority and power and refers to the regulation of a political unit and to the methods and tactics used to formulate and apply policy.

Politics ultimately comes from the Greek word "*polis*" meaning state or city. In Latin, it is "*politicus*" and in French "*politique*", thus it became "politics" in English. "*Politicus*" describes anything concerning the state or city affairs. The great Greek political philosopher, Aristotle, began his famous work politics with the observation that "*man is by nature a political animal*". By this, he means that the essence of social existence is politics and that two or more men interacting with one another are invariably involved in a political relationship. Men are engaged in politics as they try to define their positions in society, as they struggle for scarce resources and as they try to convince others to accept their points of view. Aristotle

then concludes that the way to maximize one's individual capabilities and to attain the highest form of social life was through political interaction with others in an institutionalized setting, designed to resolve social conflicts and so set collective goals.

The citizens of the country are looking for security, good legal system, equity, peace, integrity, honesty and transparent governance. This could only happen through a godly government that will ensure justice for all. Godly government will suppress evil, stand against abortion, gay-marriage, money laundry, killing, kidnapping, thuggery, and praise the wonderful works of upright citizens and other works. Christians should enter into politics and point to God's righteous laws that can bring good benefit for the populace and lasting happiness as well.

When Christians participate in the government system of their country, they would be in a position to influence good and godly heritage that will guarantee religious liberty for our children and grandchildren. Our children are going to inherit our work habits, our attitudes towards others, our family life and the examples we have set; they are going to inherit the education system, the health care system, justice system, political system, and religious

system. Our children are going to inherit our country and its value system. The critical issue in the life of any nation is what one's generation passes on to the next. Our challenge is to ensure we establish a government based on Christian principles and pass this on to our children and grand-children; Christians are called as the lights of the world; we must not let our lights dim in both thought and deed. This is their real inheritance.

God's claim is that He is king - King over all who worship Him now, and King in the past over the nation of Israel. He called the children of Israel to be "*a kingdom of priests, a holy nation*" (**Exodus 19:6**). Other nations and their leaders, particularly those surrounding Israel, were influenced by God, often without knowing the part they played in His purpose. One of these was king Nebuchadnezzar, an autocratic ruler of ancient Babylon who lived six hundred years before Christ. Like modern humanists who think that people can improve the world by their own devices, he refuted the supremacy of the God of the Bible in the control of human affairs. The Book of Daniel, in the Old Testament, gives us a picture of this great Eastern monarch full of pride at his own achievements. We read of him boasting out loud: "*Is not this great Babylon, which I have built by my mighty power*

as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?" (**Daniel 4:30**)

However, Nebuchadnezzar had a hard lesson to learn; three times in this same chapter the all-important principle is repeated that: "*The Most High rules the kingdom of men, and gives it to whom he will*". To reinforce this principle, Nebuchadnezzar, the great ruler, was suddenly and dramatically struck down with mental illness, was driven away to make his home with animals, and was deprived of his kingdom until he humbled himself before God. Nebuchadnezzar rose from the most humble background to be the leader of a great empire. The world saw him as a man who succeeded through his own abilities, yet his life was ordered by God to teach us that God, and not man, is ultimately in control. When Nebuchadnezzar had his sanity restored by God, he was honest enough to acknowledge these lessons. "*At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned time, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honoured him who lives for ever ... he does according to his will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, What doest thou*?" (**Daniel 4:34-35**).

Government in the day of Christ and the apostles were imperial and arbitrary, not nationalist or democratic. Their governors were unjust and took bribes, and their tax collectors took more than their due. But the Christians were told by Christ and the apostles to obey them unless they interfered in matters of faith. If Christian were forbidden by government to preach the gospel or told to worship the emperor then, they disobeyed. As Peter said, '*We ought to obey God rather than men'* (**Acts 5:29**).

There was an occasion during his ministry when Jesus became so popular with the crowds that they wanted to take him by force and make him their king there and then (John 6:15). So how did Jesus respond to this public acclaim? Did he seize it as an opportunity to make his world a better place, by using his influence and power for the common good? Did he listen to the voice of the people? For here, surely, was a wonderful opportunity for this great leader, with such gifts of oratory and personal charisma, to use his God-given talents to help his nation in their difficulties under the yoke of Rome. How did he behave in such circumstances, and why?

It is worth remembering that the preparation that Jesus underwent in the wilderness, prior to his public ministry, included this very same challenge. One of the temptations

he faced was to use his power to reign over the whole earth there and then (*Matthew 4:8-10*). He knew that God's Kingdom on earth would one day be his. Many Old Testament prophets had promised this (including Daniel, as we have seen). The angel Gabriel had confirmed this to his mother (*Luke 1:32-33*). "All power in heaven and earth" had been promised to him by God (*Matthew 28:18*). But this would only happen in God's good time - it was God's timetable for these things which was important, not that which Jesus was tempted to implement. He had the power of God's Holy Spirit: he could do great good in the world, he could influence world politics more than any other man before or since. Yet he resisted this temptation because it was not part of God's plan. It was not for Jesus to try to seize the initiative from God, or to force his Father's hand. So the record tells us that: "*Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.*" (**John 6:15**) He had the wisdom to recognize that it was not yet the time for him to intervene in world affairs.

The Old Testament writers were convinced that the Lord, the God who had created the heavens and the earth, and who had made himself known to Israel, was supreme over all nations and all '*gods*'. The psalmist recognised that

God's Messiah, the anointed King of David's line, would exercise God's universal rule over the nations in person. Against all political opposition, 'the One enthroned in heaven laughs…"*I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.*"' Jesus came, claiming to be that Messiah, God's King coming into his kingdom. The apostles were gripped with the reality of Jesus' complete authority, as they proclaimed him both Lord and Christ (*Messiah*). They were easily understood to be claiming in Jesus a direct political rival to Caesar.

It is against this background that we must place two key passages in the New Testament on government. 1 Peter 2:13-17 follows immediately after the assertion of the new nationhood of the people of God, and its language so closely parallels that of Romans 13:1-7 that both passages may well reflect a common source in the teaching of Jesus. It is certainly of a piece with that teaching. The authority of government is legitimate, established by God, so one should submit to it. Governments exist to restrain evil by punishing the wrongdoer, and to promote good by commending those who do right. Governing is a work of God, and those who do the work of God are entitled to the support of his people.

And yet, if government is legitimate, it is also limited, in two key ways. First, government is limited by the existence of other human authorities, in particular church, family and individual. The visible church in the New Testament is not simply a spiritual or ideological movement of like-minded people. It has an order and a social presence. It appoints to offices, involving teaching and pastoring, but also social welfare. It administers sacraments. It requires some mark of differentiation between those 'inside' and those 'outside'. It resolves disputes between its members. The authority of the church, administered by its office-holders, is not derived from government but from Christ. Second, government (*civil government, of course*) is limited by the means at its disposal. The symbolic means of government is the sword; its ultimate sanction is the deprivation of life, liberty or property.

If government is limited, what, then, are its limits? Scripture leaves this question open, which is one of the reasons why Christians can legitimately disagree about politics. That said, the Bible does offer us wisdom on the ways in which government should be limited, with a particular focus on four key political values - equality, legality, diffusion and accountability - each of which poses to us a serious question.

The Bible has a remarkably exalted view of law. Law is the way in which God reveals his will. Properly understood, it is the expression of a universal love, and the exact opposite of sin. The biblical view of law has a strong subjective dimension, rooting it in individual knowledge and motivation. The people were to put the law on their hearts, impress it on their children, talk about it at home and abroad. Not only is law to be internalised, it is to be '*done*'. The language of walking is frequently used to express the regularity of daily action. '*Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord*.'

Thinking biblically about the exercise of power and authority in human communities is a major challenge for Christians. We live in a world shaped by false post-Enlightenment divisions between private personal faith and public political life. We live in a post-Christendom world where old understandings of the relationship between church, state and society no longer apply.

Chapter Four

WORLD OF NEW TESTAMENT

Geographically, it was the world of the Mediterranean, those territories embracing the inland sea that for the ancients made up the known and civilized world, the *oikoumene*. What lay outside this world was both fascinating and frightening, and all the more for being so little known. Those responsible for the security of the *oikoumene* worried about the threat of invasion from the Parthians to the east and various tribes to the north, but the NT reveals nothing of such awareness or concern. Temporally, this world began with the conquests of Alexander the Great (356 - 323 b.c.e.) and continued at least until the mid-second century of the Common Era. Although Hellenism is given a new frame by the Roman Empire, beginning with the accession of Augustus in 31 b.c.e., Hellenistic civilization continues well through the time of the early empire, so that we can accurately designate the most encompassing symbolic world of the New Testament as Greco-Roman culture.

Of far greater importance for the NT are the popular developments within Hellenistic religion that responded to the grimmer religious mood created by empire, a mood in which the classical sense of order, which saw the world as cosmos, turned chaotic. Sometimes by renewing older elements of the tradition and sometimes by fusing them with other traditions, these developments shared an

emphasis on personal religious experience and the esoteric rather than exoteric. The religious spirit of Hellenism in the early Roman Empire was one hungry for revelation, for transformation, and for a personal allegiance that would give a sense of identity in an alienating world.

Philosophy was also syncretistic in the Hellenistic period. All philosophers agreed that theoretical differences were less significant than practical results. And no tradition was more practical and non-theoretical than Cynicism, which especially affected Stoicism during the early empire. Cynicism represented a wholly individualistic approach. It eschewed doctrine in favour of freedom and free speech. Freedom meant living just as one pleased, even when - as was often the case - this meant contravening society's standards. Free speech meant the willingness to revile those who conformed to those same standards. The Cynic responded to an alienating social structure by celebrating an untrammelled individualism.

Politically, it was a world shaped by empire. By his conquests, Alexander had created an empire but died before it could be stabilized. His successors fought for control of the pieces, and for two hundred years Antigonids (*rulers of Achaia and Macedonia*), Seleucids (*masters of Asia and Syria*), and Ptolemies (*rulers of*

Egypt) battled for supremacy. The critical land bridge formed by Palestine made it, as always, a prime battleground. These internecine battles reflected disagreement not over the virtues of Hellenism or empire, but over who should rule the *oikoumene*.

During these conflicts, another power slowly but steadily came to dominate the Mediterranean. Rome had begun its territorial conquests during the time of the late republic and accelerated them by the competition between Caesar and Pompey. From the middle of the second century b.c.e., Rome commanded the *oikoumene*, and the explicit assumption of imperial prerogatives by Augustus only ratified that fact. Rome gave political stability to the ideals of Hellenization that had already been diffused by the conquests of Alexander.

Yet Greece and Rome built on a foundation that preceded and survived them both. The distinctive cultural patterns of the Mediterranean were not eliminated by these empires, only modulated. Among the features of this world we can include an economy based primarily in agriculture and villages, a taste for trade and for warfare, a delight in display and a love for language, a desire for honour and a fear of shame. It was a world of large households run by patriarchs, a world of slaves and

owners. It was a world whose severe disparities in status were negotiated by a subtle system of patronage shown by benefactors and of honour paid in return by those so assisted; a world in which the demands of quid pro quo were mollified by ideals of friendship and harmony. All these social realities were reflected in the pantheon, in the unruly households of the gods and in the intrigues and fratricidal jealousies that so often broke out among these deities. Their power was pervasive, but was distributed among a band of personalities as vivid and varied as those of the humans with whom they so frequently commingled.

Rome was preoccupied with power and used it with unprecedented efficiency. The Roman version of empire provided both security and the framework of legal legitimization for the force it required. Emperors after Augustus may have been bizarre in their behaviour and increasingly desirous of accolades due the divine, but they maintained a remarkably long-lasting peace through a complex system of governance. The empire ruled the relatively safe areas, like Africa and Asia, as senatorial provinces - run, at least ostensibly, by the senate through its governors. Territories like Palestine that were refractory or threatened with invasion, however, were under the explicitly military governance of prefects or procurators. There were, in fact, military colonies and

installations throughout the empire, and their troops were used to quell local disturbances. But Rome did not rely entirely on violence to enhance its power.

It extended the right of citizenship ever more widely, so that by the middle of the first century members of military colonies, former soldiers, even local personages like the Jews of some provincial cities, could enjoy citizenship.

The empire grew by conquest, however, and two significant aspects of life within it were shaped by that fact. First, an already stratified society had its lower levels swelled by large numbers of slaves and other persons displaced by wars. They congregated in the cities and dangerously distended their populations. Such uprooted peoples were often ready for rebellion or religion or both, and tested the toleration of the empire for deviance. They also placed extreme pressure on the empire's ability to feed them. The public dole was a fact of life. Rome was fed at the expense of the provinces, especially of Egypt, the breadbasket of the empire. Rome experienced periodic crises caused by the delay of shipments or the failure of crops.

The second aspect was the constant pressure of taxation on the provinces. Taxes levied on subject peoples were

especially severe. In Galilee under Julius Caesar, as much as a quarter of a year's harvest could go as taxes to Rome. Add to that the amount skimmed by local chieftains like Herod and the agents hired to do the collecting - the publicans - and the amount gouged from local populations was even greater. Small wonder the agents of Rome were hated.

Governance and trade required efficient transportation and communication. The Roman roads were extensive - about fifty thousand miles paved by the year 100 c.e. - and well maintained. Between May and October (after which weather made passage perilous), the Mediterranean could quickly and easily be crossed. The travels of Paul and his companions show that frequent and relatively safe travel was common, though still arduous and very expensive. Hostels were often also brothels, so a mobile and separatist group such as the first Christians needed to make hospitality a prime virtue. The availability and security of travel also encouraged communication. An efficient postal system made letter writing commonplace for commerce, friendship, and literary exercise, as we can see in the correspondence of Cicero, Seneca, and Pliny the Younger. Letters were also written for mutual encouragement and support between philosophical communities.

Everyday life in the empire could be harsh. Away from the wide public spaces - and for those not enjoying aristocratic privileges - life even in the capital was difficult. Streets were narrow, crowded, and dirty; food was simple when not scarce, with meat considered a luxury item. The security offered by the totalitarian state, moreover, exacted a price in freedom.

But on balance, the Roman Empire was a significant and positive force in the spread of the Christian movement. One universally used language enabled the preaching and acceptance of the message. Great urban centres, filled with mobile and often disaffected populations, encouraged the rapid diffusion of new cults and teachings. Rapid, safe, and frequent travel and letter writing were available. All of these were enabled by the freedom from war and internal danger that marked the *Pax Romana*.

Chapter Five

CHURCH MOVEMENTS

Despite the importance of Christian churches and other religious organizations in politics, social science has often viewed religion as operating outside of conventional ideas of rational behaviour, leaving religious organizations understudied by political scientists in particular. Nevertheless, some scholars have responded to the assumption of religious irrationality by using rational choice logic to produce careful and important analyses of the political and economic activities of religious actors.

Despite advances made in the literature, the theoretical understanding of religious actors remains incomplete, partially because the theory has largely been built on a limited set of empirical cases. Much of the literature in the political economy of religion school focuses on the Catholic Church, which has unique organizational and historical features that set it apart from other religious organizations. In addition, most of the theory driven analysis has focused on high and middle-income countries, particularly the US, Europe and Latin America. In contrast, much of the work on church-state relations in the developing world, and Africa in particular, tends to be historical accounts and case studies, which are often rich in detail but theoretically light.

The critical roles played by Christian (*often Catholic or mainline Protestant*) denominations in the face of authoritarian regimes have been explained by a scripture-based commitment to democracy, justice and human rights. Theology has also been used to explain the quiescence and support offered by other denominations, including certain evangelical churches and African Initiated Churches for governments. Among studies that venture to contrast the pro-government and anti-government approaches of different denominations in the same political setting, those churches that remained uncritically supportive of governments are often labelled as conservative in their theology, with more "liberal" churches daring to serve a more critical, "*prophetic*" role.

Just as Christianity today is divided into different groups (*Catholics, Methodists, Lutherans, nondenominational evangelical churches*), so too ancient Jewish religion had distinct groups or sects. In Jesus' time in Palestine, three groups were particularly influential: the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes.

We should make clear from the start that only a small minority of people actually belonged to these sects, but their strong influence on Jewish society is undeniable. The Pharisees were the largest of the three, consisting of about

six thousand members during the time of Herod the Great (out of a total population of perhaps one million people in Palestine). These groups can be compared not only to Christian denominations but also to modern political parties. In ancient Judaism there was no sharp distinction between religion and politics. All three groups were concerned not only with religious behaviour but also with the political issues of their day amidst a dominant ethnic of Samaria.

Sadducees

The name Sadducees most likely comes from the name Zadok, a priest who anointed David's son Solomon as king (see **1 Kings 1:32 - 40**). The descendants of Zadok, the *Zadokites*, were recognized as the only legitimate priests by Ezekiel (see **Ezekiel 44:9 - 31**) and the author of the Book of Chronicles. It's likely that the Sadducees were *Zadokites* who supported the Hasmonean (descendants of the Maccabees) kings and priests. The Sadducees were apparently of the elite, wealthy class, and were closely allied with the high priestly families. Josephus says the Sadducees had a following among the rich only, while the Pharisees had a greater following among the common people. In the Acts of the Apostles,

the Sadducees are associated with the high priest and the Jerusalem Temple (see 4:1–2, 5:17).

In New Testament times, the high priest was appointed by King Herod, the client king of the Romans, then by Herod's son *Archelaeus*, and later directly by Roman rulers of Judea. With their connections with the high priestly families, the Sadducees were closely tied to Roman rule in Palestine.

Members of the Sadducees tried to show that the belief in resurrection was not logical when they asked Jesus about a hypothetical case in which a woman had married seven men. In the life after resurrection, whose wife would she be? (see **Mark 12:18 - 27**). Jesus answered them, "*When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but they are like the angels in heaven*" (12:25). In other words, the normal standards of marriage do not apply in the resurrected life.

Pharisees

Many scholars think the Pharisaic party evolved from a group known as the *Hasideans*, zealous supporters of the Torah who joined the Maccabean revolt: Then they were joined by a group of H*asideans*, valiant Israelites, all of

them devout followers of the law. The name *Hasideans* comes from the Hebrew *hasid*, meaning "*pious*" or "*devout*."

Most scholars also believe the Pharisaic movement later developed into rabbinic Judaism. This Judaism, based on the Scriptures as interpreted by the Mishnah and Talmud, is the form of the Jewish faith that has survived into modern times. Thus careful study of early rabbinic documents, such as the Mishnah (ca. AD 200), allows us to gain some insights into the Pharisees' teaching at the time of Jesus.

The Pharisees are often portrayed in the Gospels as hypocritical, concerned more with outward show than with sincere faith, "for they preach but they do not practice" (*Matthew 23:3; see also 23:4 - 5,25 - 28*). Jesus contrasts the prayers of a self-righteous Pharisee with a humble tax collector; it is the tax collector who goes away justified by God (*see Luke 18:9 - 14*). It is not surprising that the Gospel writers tended to focus on negative aspects of the Pharisaic movement, as early Christians and Pharisees were in serious conflict over basic issues, such as the observance of Torah. The primary aim of the Pharisees was to apply the details of the Torah to everyday life. Many of the commandments of Torah are

vague, and at times they are inconsistent or even contradictory. The Pharisees worked out practical methods to overcome these challenges.

They were well known for "traditions" that they taught as a supplement to, or as an interpretation of, the commandments of the Torah. The synoptic Gospels report that the Pharisees were meticulous about washing their hands and purifying themselves before eating (see Mark 7:3–4); they apparently applied some priestly purity laws to their own daily meals. Another tradition was the declaration of something as *qorban* - a dedication of a possession to the Temple that allowed a person to continue using it for himself and not sharing it with others (see 7:11).

Although the Gospels often portray Jesus in conflict with the Pharisees (*see Mark 2:23–28, 3:1–6*), the relationship between the Pharisees and the early Christian movement was more complex. Followers of Jesus and the Pharisees (in contrast to the Sadducees) shared a belief in the resurrection of the dead and punishment and rewards in the afterlife. The Apostle Paul was a Pharisee (*see Philippians 3:5, Acts of the Apostles 23:6*). Pharisees were also part of the first church community at Jerusalem (*see Acts of the Apostles 15:5*). Besides Paul, other notable

first-century Pharisees were Gamaliel, an influential member of the Sanhedrin who was "*respected by all the people*" (5:34), and the priest, general, and historian Josephus.

Essenes

Many scholars identify at least one branch of the Essenes with the community that lived in the desert wilderness at Qumran (although other scholars reject this connection). Qumran is the site on the north-western end of the Dead Sea at which the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls were found. The Qumran community was governed by a strict hierarchy headed by priests; the so-called Teacher of Righteousness (*often mentioned in the scrolls*) was apparently the founder of the community.

The community seems to have begun when a group of priests left Jerusalem because of a dispute with the Temple priesthood. They disagreed with the interpretation of Torah practiced by the Jerusalem priests, and especially with interpretation of laws of purity. It is likely that the Qumran community members, with their belief that only a *Zadokite* should be high priest, rejected the *non-Zadokite* Hasmonean high priests. The community further disagreed with the Hasmonean adoption of a solar calendar in place

of the old lunar one. This dispute was important, as knowing the precise date was essential for keeping the festivals mandated in the Torah.

The Dead Sea Scrolls include many copies of biblical books, commentaries on Scripture, hymns, prayers, and rules for governing the community. One scroll, the "War Scroll," describes a final battle at the end of history in which the Sons of Light (the Qumran community), aided by God, will destroy the powers of darkness (the forces of the community's Jewish opponents as well as Gentiles).

With their withdrawal into the wilderness, their strict lifestyle, and their emphasis on God's coming judgment, the members of the Qumran community are similar to John the Baptist, who preached his apocalyptic message of repentance in the Judean desert. Some scholars, in fact, speculate that John was once a member of the Qumran community.

The Gospel writers associate Isaiah's prophecy "A voice of one crying out in the desert: / 'Prepare the way of the Lord, / make straight his paths'" (*Mark 1:3, see Isaiah 40:3*) with John the Baptist; the Qumran community applied this same prophecy to their own group.

The Essenes thought of themselves as the only faithful remnant of Israel; they believed their community replaced the Temple as the site of the true, uncorrupted worship of God.

Samaritans

Samaritans are inhabitants of Samaria, a district in central Palestine, between Galilee and Judea. After the split of Israel into the northern and southern kingdoms after the death of King Solomon, Samaria formed part of the northern kingdom of Israel (*see 1 Kings, chapters 11 - 12*). Its capital was the city of Samaria, constructed by King Omri and his son Ahab in the ninth century (see 16:24). At this time the people were simply known as Israelites.

The city of Samaria was conquered by the Assyrians in 721 BC, and many of its leading citizens were deported. The Assyrian king settled colonists from Babylon and other cities in the region of Samaria (see 2 Kings 17:24). The religious rites of the colonists (*including worship of the Babylonian god Marduk*) were mixed with the worship of the Lord (see 17: 29–33). According to the biblical record, Samaritans in Jesus' time were descendants of these colonists. The Samaritans themselves, however,

claimed direct descent from the Israelite tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. It is after the Babylonian Exile that the people are called Samaritans.

From the time of the return of the Judean exiles from the Babylonian Exile, tensions between Jews and Samaritans arose. The major dispute involved the proper worship of the Lord. The Samaritans were opposed to the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple (*see Ezra 4:1 - 4, Nehemiah 2:18 - 20*), favouring their holy place built on Mount Gerizim in Samaria. The dispute is reflected in the words of the Samaritan woman to Jesus: "Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain [Mount Gerizim]; but you people say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem" (*John 4:20*). In addition, Samaritans accepted only the first five books, the Pentateuch, of the Old Testament as their Scriptures. Their version of the Pentateuch differs slightly from other ancient Hebrew versions. The most striking difference is the addition of a commandment to build an altar at Mount Gerizim (*see Exodus 20:17*). Samaritans shared with Jews the expectations of a Messiah (*see John 4:25*); Samaritans focused especially on the prophecy that God would raise up another prophet like Moses (*see Deuteronomy 18:18*).

At times the conflict between Jews and Samaritans turned violent. The Hasmonean King John Hyrcanus destroyed the holy place at Gerizim in 128 BC; Samaritans massacred some Jewish pilgrims in AD 52.

Jews in the time of Jesus thus despised Samaritans as foreigners who worshipped the Lord in the wrong way. Jesus seemed to have had some wariness of the Samaritans as well. He warned his disciples, "Do not go into pagan territory or enter a Samaritan town" (*Matthew 10:5*). Yet in other ways, Jesus, as a first-century Jew, had a remarkable openness to Samaritans. His Parable of the Good Samaritan contrasts a priest and Levite who ignore a man in need with a Samaritan who stops to help (*see Luke 10:25–37, see also 17:11–19*). This parable would have deeply offended Jesus' Jewish listeners. Most striking is Jesus' conversation with a Samaritan woman at a well (*see John 4:4 - 42*).

The early followers of Jesus continued his openness. Philip (a member of the first church in Jerusalem), Peter, and John preached about Jesus in Samaria. As a result many Samaritans accepted the Gospel and were baptized (*see Acts of the Apostles 8:5–25*).

This book is made available for free download due to the generous donations of many who appreciate reading from Boaz Adhengo. You too can make a donation using the M-PESA method.

Mr. Boaz Adhengo is President to Creative Arts Society of Kenya, a leadership coach, business for arts consultant and a cultural policy strategist. Having published twenty books, he manages the Adhengo Boaz & Associates consulting group and is co-founder of the Buruburu Basketball Ministry, Inc.

He has been recently ordained as a Life Coach Minister by the Christian Leaders Ministries, Michigan, U.S.A.