1 *A Christian Anarchist Politic*

No mistake or crime is more horrible to God than those committed to power. Why? Because what is official is impersonal, and being impersonal is the greatest insult that can be paid a person.

—Søren Kierkegaard

The twentieth century was a volatile century. We witnessed countless wars, revolutions, and political ideologies rise and fall in a manner akin to fashion trends on any given high school or college campus. That the twentieth century was the bloodiest century in human history should not be lost on us. We are, supposedly, in an age of freedom, progress, and a retreating barbarism as "civilization" spans the globe. Though the past century was privy to extraordinary changes that resulted in advances in technology, aviation, and medicine, the fact that we are only a button's push away from nuclear destruction renders our advances somewhat moot.

Also indicative of the previous century was the introduction of democracy to large sectors of the world. The early part of the past century was host to many other political theories such as communism, socialism, and anarchism—all of which exercised some very real influence in the United States. Many are probably unaware, for example, that we have the anarchists and socialists to thank for the reduction of ten to sixteen hour work days to eight hour work days. Throughout the century, however, these political ideologies were heavily marginalized. While it is true that there are other cultures still operating under monarchies, theocracies, and communist orders, for the most part it is generally assumed, at least by many of us in the West, that the salvation of the world is dependent

upon these countries/cultures adopting, with the aid of the United States, democracy as the only form of politics.

The utilization of salvific language should offend our Christian sensibilities, because in the context being used it is idolatrous. Yet, the fact that the United States is often referred to by her own politicians as *the* "city on the hill" (a moniker supposedly reserved for, and claimed by, Judaism and the church) suggests that there is a soteriological motif attached to the story of this nation-state. To even hint at such language, which is far less than what recent politicians have done, is to attempt to replace the narrative of the church with the narrative of the state. No nation-state is the city on the hill, and any that purport to be are placing themselves outside of the prophetic task of the church that would hold all cities accountable to God's justice. There are no nations capable of rising above the call to repentance, not even the royal nation known as the church. It is not my task in this book to deconstruct such a narrative, but merely to remind Christians that our hope is rooted not in the illusory security offered by the state, and that salvation depends upon the Christian's participation in the reign of the heavenly kingdom.[1] Such participation is not merely an obligation imposed on the Christian for her sake, but for the sake of the world. For if Christians are not Christians, how will the world know of the political reign of God's kingdom?

This immediately begs many questions: What does it mean to be a Christian? Is Christianity merely cognitive assent to specific propositions? That is, is Christianity simply about belief qua belief? "Merely believe and you shall be saved!" shouts many a minister. In contrast, my grandmother was often quick to remind me, perhaps a little too often, that "even Satan believes." She would not allow me to think that the treatment of Christianity as a mental checklist of "yes's and no's" was much of an achievement. I think she was right. Christianity is more than a catalogue of right things to believe, because belief is rendered intelligible not by the things we believe but by the things we do. We live what we profess. We live what we believe. Our convictions are manifested in the way we live. This is not a faith versus works scenario; it is the understanding that unless we obey the teachings of Christ all of our claims to

1. For a strong critique of the state's imposed soteriological narrative, see Cavanaugh's *Theopolitical Imagination.*

know him are rendered untruthful (1 John 2:3). Faith, as Jesus makes clear in the Johannine text, is a matter of obedience. Christianity is not so much about what we believe, as it is a path we have chosen to follow. It is an embodied journey with a group of fellow believers/practitioners that strives to provide glimpses of God's peaceable kingdom for the sake of the world. Whether or not we attempt to embody our beliefs is not up for grabs, rather what is at stake is the *manner* in which we go about this communal journey—as this will determine the content and vision of the kingdom that we represent. Our very posture, as a people set apart, will give content to that which we are called to embody. That Christians are to be representatives of God demands not a withdrawal from the world, but a thoroughgoing engagement with it even as we are separate from it. Christians are to engage the same world that was engaged by, and eventually killed, Jesus. It is in the *how* of which we engage such a world that the balance of our precarious witness hangs.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE (OF THE WORLD)

They [disciples] are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

—Jesus of Nazareth

Though we may not be of this world (post-baptism), we are, obviously, in it. There is no retreat, escape, or withdrawal; we are in the world to its very core. Perhaps a preemptive strike at possible critiques is in order: this book does not in any way, shape, or form advocate for some sort of retreat from responsible activity in the public realm. Rather, I wish to pay careful attention to what genuinely constitutes "responsible activity" as well as to not assume too early that we know what the "public realm" signifies. Part of my task will be to suggest that the ecclesial city on journey through the temporal orders of this world must bear witness to the politics of God's kingdom. This means that all of our activity is already inherently political, since Christian witness cannot but bear witness to the kind of God we worship. Concomitantly, it also means that all forms of political governance on this earth—the empires, the monarchies, the nation-states—are parodies of the heavenly kingdom; therefore, what constitutes the public and the political (and our responsibilities to these spaces) are those activities that reflect the substance of

God's kingdom, not earthly ones.[2] Christians are in no way obligated to think or act as if our only political options are those dictated to us by the state. In the United States this means we are freed from the tyranny of having to choose between the so-called left, right, or vastly similar and devastatingly uninteresting, independent. Whether or not one is a Democrat or a Republican is not the issue; what matters is that one is a witness to Christ and the kingdom that is already, though not yet in its fullness, here. This kingdom narrates all other political ideologies as the parasitical creatures they are, since the only kind of goods they can point to are both limited and fundamentally tainted by sin.

The Christian tradition has always claimed that temporal goods, even if they are at best only analogous to the goods of the eternal city, are still good. Neither they, nor the things they seek, are to be confused with the highest good, worship of the Triune God. However, inasmuch as they approximate certain standards of the good—peace and justice, food and shelter—then the temporal city functions as a simulacrum of the heavenly city. Again, this neither replaces the eternal city nor does it demand any allegiance that would conflict with our heavenly allegiance. This simply attests to the realization that the cities of earth can perform approximate services in relation to the good. It is for this reason that when the Israelites found themselves in exile the prophet Jeremiah instructed them to build houses, plant gardens, and marry—all within the confines of their diasporic existence. In doing so, the exiled Jews "seek the welfare of the city" that is not even their own (29:7). This "nation-less" people contribute to both the good of the temporal city for the sake of believer and non-believer alike. What is important here is that this is not a mere observation of how to best "get by." The seeking of the peace of the city as exiles is a purposeful command from God that tells us something about who God is. The seeking of the welfare of the city as the chosen yet exiled people of God is vocational—it is a matter of missiology. The very posture itself—an exilic body of people making their homes in a foreign land—is a socially embodied witness. Exile is the means by which God's people evangelize the world.[3]

2. For a possible critique of such thinking, one might look toward Oliver O'Donovan's *Desire of the Nations,* which suggests that there are legitimate forms of earthly governance despite a fallen creation.

3. For a detailed account of what it means for exile to be a missionary posture, see John Howard Yoder's *For the Nations.*

In a very practical sense we must ask how is it that Christians are to seek the peace of the city while maintaining their identity as God's people without falling prey to the temptation to *secure* the peace of the city. Though I will address this specific concern in the following chapter, much of what I am attempting to do, through the lives remembered in this book, is to show how to seek the peace of the city without seeking to gain a hold on such peace. This means that we must be willing to let go, to live lives out of control. Being in control is a hard habit to break as so many of us want to force on the world what we understand to be the truth. Such desires, however, pervert the kind of peace we are called to seek. I intend to show that Christian allegiance to the heavenly city presumes an exilic posture that confers a missionary stance, a nomadic and diasporic posture, ultimately even an *anarchic* posture that best gives some semblance of what it is that we are seeking.[4]

"BY THIS I MEAN ANYTHING BUT DISORDER"

The worst thing in this world, next to anarchy, is government.

—HENRY WARD BEECHER

It is important to clarify what I mean when I say that being a Christian may demand an anarchic posture. The word "anarchy" generally brings to mind a world without order, one of chaos and destruction. In his foreword to Herbert Read's *Anarchy and Order*, Howard Zinn reflects on this sentiment and quickly turns it on its head:

> The word *anarchy* unsettles most people in the Western world; it suggests disorder, violence, uncertainty. We have good reason for fearing those conditions, because we have been living with them for a long time, not in anarchist societies (there have never been any) but in exactly those societies most fearful of anarchy—the powerful nation-states of modern times.[5]

We may take Zinn to task for suggesting there have never been any anarchist societies in history (there have been many), but he is correct to sug-

4. A similar argument is made in my book *The Purple Crown*, where I claim that martyrs embody the ultimate exilic posture inasmuch as they are not only exiled from the city walls, but are exiled from life.

5. Read, *Anarchy and Order*, ix.

gest that it is by no means clear that in a world without governments we would be any less violent and oppressive than we currently are. Though the presence of governments justifies its place by our perpetuated fears that without them we would descend into chaos and violence, it cannot be ruled out *a priori* that an anarchist society, a society predicated upon voluntary associations, would be any more chaotic, violent, or uncertain than our present situation.

Semantically, the word "anarchy" means something to the effect of the state of being without a government or a ruler. Anarchy is derived from the Greek, *an* indicating without, plus *arche* implying government or authority. The first to take upon himself the moniker "anarchist" was the nineteenth-century French philosopher Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. In his treatise *What is Property?*, Proudhon adopts the term anarchist after describing, ironically, how the church disregards the teachings of Jesus so that they can justify the ownership of private property:

> What is to be the form of government in the future? I hear some of my younger readers reply: "Why, how can you ask such a question? You are a republican."
>
> "A republican! Yes; but that word specifies nothing. *Res publica*; that is, the public thing. Now, whoever is interested in public affairs—no matter what form of government—may call himself a republican. Even kings are republicans."
>
> "Well! You are a democrat?"
>
> "No."
>
> "What! You would have a monarchy?"
>
> "No."
>
> "A Constitutionalist?"
>
> "God forbid."
>
> "You are then an aristocrat?"
>
> "Not at all!"
>
> "You want a mixed form of government?"
>
> "Still less."
>
> "What are you, then?"
>
> "I am an anarchist."

> "Oh! I understand you; you speak satirically. This is a hit at the government."
>
> "By no means. I have just given you my serious and well-considered profession of faith. Although a firm friend of order, I am (in the full force of the term) an anarchist. Listen to me."[6]

In the above dialogue Proudhon suggests that part of his "profession of faith" entails friendship with order. In order to stress this reality he occasionally spelled the word anarchy as "an-archy" in order to suggest the possibility of human existence without the presence of an official governing body. It is what the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta referred to as "the state of a people without any constituted authority."[7] Anarchy, therefore, assumes no inherent connotations of being anti- or against anything. Rather, the "an" prior to the "archy" plainly suggests a lack of something. In this case, it suggests a lack of governmental authority. It is indeed a rather large conceptual leap to assume that the absence of a governing body necessarily entails disorder. For many anarchists, it is the exact opposite; it is the enforced rule of the few over the majority that produces the conditions that cause disorder. Chaos is not what the anarchist desires. When Proudhon spoke of the term anarchy (which he eventually dropped because of both the unfair and unnecessary pejorative connotations that its opponents attached to it), he said he meant "anything but disorder."[8] Rather, for Proudhon, and the early classical anarchists, anarchy is not the protest against order, it is the protest against the kind of (dis)order created and perpetuated by the nation-state. If anarchists are against anything, they are against the kind of chaos that arises from what they see as the unnatural relationships that occur through governments and its people. For anarchists such as Proudhon and Malatesta, to name just a few, disorder arises whenever power becomes centralized in the hands of the few, creating the conditions by which humans become little more than objects to be controlled/governed—even if it is for their "own benefit."[9]

6. Proudhon, *What is Property?* 270.

7. Horowitz, *The Anarchists*, 71.

8. Guerin, *Anarchism*, 42.

9. Notice the parallel with Jesus' words in Mark 10:42–44 where he demands that we are to be nothing like those Gentiles who claim to be benefactors and lord their power over others.

For the secular anarchist, anarchy is not just the absence of government. Rather, the term is employed to provide an alternative vision of the good. The anarchist assumes that governments are the actual sources of the vast majority of our social ills. Anarchism is that "doctrine which contends that government is the source of most of our social troubles and that there are viable alternative forms of voluntary organization. And by further definition the *anarchist* is the man who sets out to create a society without government."[10] The latter part of this quote is particularly instructive as the anarchist realizes the importance of what it means to participate responsibly within the realm of society. The common notion that anarchists reject society is incorrect insofar as it is the anarchist who understands the significance of society becoming a living, thriving entity amidst the lack of a governing body. This is what Malatesta is referring to when he considered anarchism to be synonymous with "natural order, . . . complete liberty with complete solidarity."[11] Anarchists are not against something called society, they are for the kind of society in which humanity can flourish. To this end, the anarchist thinks that it is through the process of freely chosen voluntary associations that humans can better gather, live, and exist in a way not possible through coercive governing. This is what they mean when they suggest anarchism represents a natural order. A natural order, in this case, refers to an order by which the domination of the many by the few is abolished.

In the elventh edition of the Encyclopedia Brittanica, the well-known anarcho-communist Peter Kropotkin was asked to contribute by writing an article on anarchism. He wrote, "Anarchism . . . is the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government."[12] Anarchism, Kropotkin is suggesting, is the idea that people can better manage their lives—albeit collectively—without the interference of government. This is intended to be a constructive, not destructive theory toward human life. Rather, it is when humans rule over others that destruction occurs. Kropotkin imagines the possibility of a body of people living in such a way that no order from "above" would be necessary. This does not stem from a purely romanticized account of human nature as much as it originates from the idea that humans can

10. Woodcock, *The Anarchist Reader*, 11.
11. Horowitz, *The Anarchists*, 73.
12. Krimerman and Perry, *Patterns of Anarchy*, 3.

cooperatively manage themselves. In this regard it can be deduced that anarchist theory presupposes that a highly organized structure would need to take the place of centralized forms of coercive power. The twentieth-century Russian anarchist Volin agrees:

> A mistaken—or more often, deliberately inaccurate—interpretation alleges that the libertarian concept means the absence of all organization. This is entirely false: it is not a matter of 'organization' or 'non-organization,' but of two different principles of organization . . . Of course, say the anarchists, society must be organized. However, the new organization . . . must be established freely, socially, and, above all, from below.[13]

Likewise, almost all anarchists have construed their thoughts in such a way as to convince others that they are productive and not antagonistic toward society. Their particular antagonism is directed towards the *kind* of society sustained under the maintenance of the nation-state. It is this latter construction, argues the anarchist, which treats humans as mere means for the endless machinations of those in charge. Create a society free from the domination of the few over the many (or the many over the few), and the conditions that make for chaos and violence will, hopefully, dissipate. Though the Christian rightly criticizes the anarchist for adopting a posture of almost unbridled optimism in regards to the goodness of human nature (given the account of sin within Christian theology), the anarchist can rightly criticize the Christian for not living into the resurrection made possible by the kingdom that is already, yet not fully, here. To this point, we shall return. It is enough, for the moment, to agree with the anarchist who reminds us how demonic power over others routinely manifests itself. After thousands of years of recorded history in which the vast majority of humans have suffered much by the very few who have gained because of their sufferings, anarchists simply want to tip the scales in a manner that favors all humans.

Despite the anarchists' claims to the contrary, anarchism has generally been construed by its opponents as a pathway descending into chaos, confusion, and violence. Though it is the case that some anarchists have both advocated and practiced acts of violence, the term itself does not, semantically, demand anything of the sort. If violence or chaos does occur it is not because anarchism is synonymous with these terms, but because

13. Guerin, *Anarchism*, 43.

those who wish to achieve or enact an anarchistic world have employed violence as a means to affect an anarchistic condition. The state of anarchy cannot necessarily be identified with the means by which some have attempted to attain it unless we also wish to re-configure what we mean by terms like freedom and democracy (then again, perhaps we should). More importantly, it is a mistake to assume that all anarchists willfully employ, or are open to the use of, violence to achieve a desired end. Such tactics, though they are *unconditionally* the norm for the archist, are by no means a given for the anarchist. For the archist to criticize the anarchist for the possible resort to violence is hypocritical, as all archists must assume the place of violence in any governing body. This is not an assumption indicative of anarchism. Some anarchists even argue that the employment of violence is at odds with the world they wish to convey and demand a thoroughgoing pacifism.[14] There is much debate around the issue of violence, and there is no consensus in terms of whether or not anarchism as a political theory must either assume or reject pacifism. I merely point this out in order to suggest that the specter of the violent anarchist, while there have been some in history, pales in comparison to the historical reality of the violent archist. Indeed, one wonders whether or not those who assume the necessity of government can even entertain a position of nonviolence.

I make these comments not because this is a book on anarchism (this is a book on Christian discipleship), but because there has been a long-standing bias against such language. I only want to suggest that such deprecatory associations are unfounded, and that if one employs the language of anarchy to describe Christian politics one is neither treading on anti-political nor anti-Christian grounds. Though I will occasionally lean on certain anarchists' insights, I want primarily to be able to employ this language without drudging up false connotations. At the same time, I hope to be very clear as to my own bias about how this term can and should be employed to describe Christian activity. I imagine this will not sit well with many contemporary secular anarchists. Anarchism has generally implied not only a lack of belief in God but also an outright rejection of any god or religion, as religion, many

14. See, for instance, Ira Chernus's chapter on pacifist anarchists in her *American Nonviolence,* 56–74; John Howard Yoder's section on anarchistic pacifism in his book *Nevertheless*, 116–17, 128–29; Jacques Ellul's *Anarchy and Christianity*; and Vernard Eller's *Christian Anarchy*.

anarchists suggest, hinders our freedom in a manner akin to governments.[15] Ammon Hennacy tells of the meeting he and Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, had with a number of Italian atheist anarchists on this very point. Hennacy describes their meeting as it took place in 1941 in the home of one of these anarchists.[16] He says that though they all remained in good spirits throughout their rather exasperating conversations, their hosts consistently demanded that the two Christians drop the language of anarchism. For the Italian anarchists, anarchism represented the rejection of all authority. Day and Hennacy countered that it was their submission to the authority of Christ that made it possible for them to be anarchical in relation to the powers of the world. The atheists complimented them on their ability to sacrifice so much in regards to their resistance to the state, but thought they were both foolish and naïve for being subservient to the authority of the church. Hennacy responded that he was only as faithful to church authorities as these anarchists were to those they so desperately revere—Berkman, Bakunin and Goldman. Hennacy's point is an important one. Flight from some sort of authority is not possible. These, and all anarchists, are in a tradition in which there are certain thinkers who carry far more weight, far more authority, than others. There are no non-traditioned responses. We all speak from somewhere because we are not ahistorical beings. It will be my contention that precisely because of one's active belief in the triune God Christians are freed from the principalities and powers of the world in a way that might escape other anarchists. This is, perhaps, most visible in the indebtedness that many anarchists have in relation to modern philosophy.

For example, within these principalities and powers is the political theory liberalism. In the seventeenth century various political theorists,

15. Cf. Guerin's two volume edited set, *No Gods, No Masters*, as well as Mikhail Bakunin's *God and The State*. Despite the incongruity that most anarchists find with the notion of obedience to God (as this goes against the primarily individualistic/liberal notion that self-rule is the only natural course of rule), Proudhon argued that in an anarchist world freedom of religion must be guaranteed. After all, what kind of anarchist tells another what they can and cannot believe? On another level, others have argued that the anti-authoritarian attitudes of certain religious bodies prior to the development of anarchism is not synonymous with this term. That is undoubtedly the case, however part of what my argument hinges on is that the Christians listed in this book are not anti-authoritarian, rather they are pro-ecclesia.

16. This is story is located in Krimerman and Perry's *Patterns of Anarchy*, 48–52.

most notably the British empiricist John Locke, promoted individual liberty to the level of primacy in matters of government. Liberalism, as a political ideology/theory, suggests that in our natural state we are, or at least should be, free to order our actions any way we choose and that any prohibition against such freedom requires justification. Governing bodies, if they are to be just, must adhere to such an account of our natural state, and its policies should reflect such an adherence. Humans, via representative or participatory forms of democracy, engage primarily in those activities or alliances that behoove one another. The governed engage in social contracts with both one another and their respective governments. For the good of all, certain activities of the individual must be limited. This is necessary for matters of social order that has as its highest goal the pursuit of liberty for each individual. From this tradition evolved language such as autonomy, free choice, individualism, and the inner self. Such language is quite apparent in our liberal democracy where both the right and the left assume, as matters of common sense, the objective truth and corresponding realties of such language. They primarily differ on to what extent certain human actions should be justifiably controlled; otherwise both the right and the left are liberals in the classic sense of the word.

Anarchism is basically an expansion on some of the fundamental precepts of modern political theory.[17] Many anarchists will agree with the basic insights of liberal theorists such as Locke, Hume or Rousseau. Anarchists often employ the language of rights, choice, and autonomy with absolute uncritical acceptance. The primary objection that anarchism has toward political liberalism is the assumption that behavior needs to be controlled by a governing body of people (whether elected or not). Many liberal theorists share the common judgment that humans are both by nature free and good. Anarchists tend to extend such an account by suggesting that it is the exertion of control on these free and good entities that is the cause of much human misery. Although the anarchist wishes to be free from the kind of governing bodies created in moder-

17. Some anarchists would disagree with this statement. In his book *The Political Animal*, Stephen R. L. Clark argues that anarchism has its roots in the political philosophy of Aristotle. There have also been numerous communities who lived in a manner that could be described as anarchical well prior to the modern age. Nevertheless, to use the language of anarchism in these cases, while avoiding the grammar of speech that led to its rise, is to speak anachronistically and to be found 'guilty' of one of the cardinal virtues of modernity: ahistoricism.

nity (nation-states), they are not free from the philosophical conditions that paved the way for the nation-state.[18] It is in this sense that Christian anarchists are capable of providing their secular kin a witness that is not being determined by the very thing that gave rise to anarchism. The Christian anarchist is neither determined nor created by the forces of liberalism, but via the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Given this reality, Christians are liberated from any and all political theories, including anarchism, which are contingent upon fallen historical forces for their intelligibility. Due to Jesus' resurrection, and the believer's hope of sharing in his resurrection, Christians are freed from the constraints of time itself while being freed into Christ's apocalyptic mode of timefulness, thus being liberated to enact or perform an ontology of *peace*. We are free to be in the world like no other because Jesus' resurrection has redeemed all of creation. We have the time and space to be free in a manner unimaginable by others as our freedom extends beyond the secular (the time between times). This is not a call away from participation in temporal orders, rather it changes the discourse altogether. Christians can act in this time and space unlike any other people because they are already freed from the tyranny of death. What can the world possibly do to a people who are already resurrected? To live into this resurrection is to live free—including free from the restraints of an historically contingent political theory like anarchism.

JESUS, NOT PROUDHON (OR GOLDMAN, KROPOTKIN, ETC.)

Christ was a free man, the freest of the sons of men.

—NICHOLAS BERDYAEV

Despite being an ideology that espouses the absence of government as a better means to adjudicate the "natural" forces of freedom with humanity, anarchism is but another political ideology. It is what William Stringfellow referred to as a lapsed manifesto of what some have turned to in the absence of a viable alternative.[19] I will, however, continue to use

18. I am indebted to Halden Doerge for reminding me that these philosophical conditions did not *simply* pave the way for the nation-state, rather they are the very foundation of its conceptual architecture. The notion that such edifices could be used to create or imagine a different vision of human life is simply not possible, or even intelligible.

19. Stringfellow, *Conscience and Obedience*, 55–74. Unfortunately, Stringfellow

this term because Christians are free to live anarchically even in relation to anarchism.[20] The Christians of the early church (up to the fourth century), the various ascetics and monks throughout the middle ages, the Waldensians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Peter Chelčický and the Bohemian Brethren in the fifteenth century, the development of the Anabaptists in the sixteenth century, the English Diggers or True Levellers of the seventeenth century, Tolstoy and Ballou in the nineteenth century, or the Catholic Workers of the twentieth century: these are but a few examples of a history of people whose only authority was the path laid out for them in the manner of a cross. These Christians do not necessarily need the resources of the secular anarchists (though, their employment of such should be, and often is, welcomed), nor do they require an object of protest in which to base their convictions. The convictions of the Christian stem from the nexus of practices or forms of life derivative of such practices that include the Eucharist, baptism and the proclaimed Word. It is at the Eucharistic table where all of us remember the broken body and spilled blood of Christ that makes our redemption, and participation in the divine life, possible. It is because of the atonement that we are who we are as well as whom we need to be for the world. If that leads to a posture that some may call anarchical, then so be it. Our identity, however, and thankfully, is by no means dependent upon such an appellation.

In his essay *Slavery and Freedom*, Nicholas Berdyaev discusses the conditions necessary for both physical and existential escape from tyranny and bondage. Though much of his work, like many of the leading Christian anarchist theorists (e.g., Ballou, and Tolstoy), is not always aligned with Christian orthodoxy, Berdyaev's theology reminds us that there is only one guarantor of freedom: "God is the guarantee of the freedom of personality from the enslaving power of nature and society, of the Kingdom of Caesar and of the object world."[21] As beings freed from the Kingdom of Caesar we are capable of enacting the cruciform and resurrected politic of Jesus—that freest of all free humans. Caesar's politic is

chooses to make a distinction between anarchism and anarchy that I think is unfounded. He views the former as a distinctive kind of political ideology while the latter he uses in the generic sense of referring to chaos. I am unclear as to what necessitates this move.

20. Laurence Veysey notes in his book *The Communal Experience* that it was originally religious impulses that created the possibilities for anarchy (vii).

21. This is quoted in Krimerman and Perry's *Patterns of Anarchy*, 153.

a politic of slavery. This is not because we are ruled, but because to be a ruler is to be enslaved to this world. Berdyaev comments on this reality:

> Caesar, the hero of imperialism, is a slave; he is the slave of the world, the slave of the will to power, the slave of the human masses, without whom he cannot realize his will to power. The master knows only the height to which his slaves raise him. Caesar knows only the height to which the masses raise him. But the slaves, and the masses, also overthrow all masters and Caesars. Freedom is freedom not only from the masses but from the slaves also.[22]

The freedom that Christian anarchism prizes, at least within this book, is not to simply be confused with liberation or emancipation from tyrannous regimes and orders. Though it is this, it is much more as it seeks to free those rulers who are themselves enslaved to this will to power. The Christian anarchist is not one who just does not want to be told what to do, as the juvenile anarchist would have it, but is the one willing to embody the kind of freedom that poses an alternative to those in charge so that they too can know genuine freedom. Sometimes, as we will see through the witness of Dorothy Day and Clarence Jordan, such freedom takes the posture of servitude toward others. This may seem paradoxical as the anarchist is supposed to be one modeling freedom—freedom from *both* ruling *and* being ruled. Alan Lewis captures this handily in his description of the political threat posed by Jesus:

> What damage could be done to the mighty structures of the empire by one who gave Caesar his due, who scorned the bigotry which hated an infidel and punished the ungodly, and who pictured a kingdom of freedom, peace, and love in which the distinction between friend and foe would lose all meaning? Yet, with their unseeing eyes, the Romans had rightly perceived a radical and dangerous subversion—with clearer intuition, it seems, than those who still characterize the preaching of Jesus as spiritual and therefore not political. What, in fact, could be more 'political,' a more complete and basal challenge to the kingdoms of this world, to its generals and its lords, both to those who hold power and to those who would seize it, than one who says that his kingdom is not of this world, and yet prays that the kingdom of his Father will come and his will be done on earth. This is an aspiration for the world more revolutionary, a disturbance of the status quo more

22. Ibid., 157.

> seismic, an allegiance more disloyal, a menace more intimidating, than any program which simply meets force with force and matches loveless injustice with loveless vengeance. Here is a whole new ordering of human life, as intolerable to insurrectionists as to oppressors. It promises that forgiveness, freedom, love, and self-negation, in all their feeble ineffectiveness, will prove more powerful and creative than every system and every countersystem which subdivides the human race into rich and poor, comrades and enemies, insiders and outsiders, allies and adversaries. What could an earthly power, so in love with power as to divinize it in the person of its emperor, do with such dangerous powerlessness but capture and destroy it? It could change everything were it not extinguished, and speedily."[23]

Yet, this is the great scandal, or as some may have it the folly, of Christian anarchism: it is the freedom to be as that freest of all humans. Berdyaev claims that Jesus was "free from the world; He was bound only by love."[24] It this kind of freedom that we are privileged to enact. This demands more than an anarchistic politic, this requires an apocalyptic politic. Apocalypticism, as a Christian politic, is the subject of the next chapter.

23. Lewis, *Between Cross and Resurrection*, 49–50.
24. Krimerman and Perry, *Patterns of Anarchy,* 157.