

***Machiavelli v St. Augustine, a Tale of Two Cities:
(A Philosophical Comparison between the
City of Man and the City of God)***

Martyn Amugen

The theme of this paper is that the City of God as defined by St. Augustine is incompatible with that of the state as defined by Machiavelli and therefore politics and religion are the natural antithesis of each other, unless one seems to be religious in the Machiavellian sense. This paper is primarily concerned about looking at the contemporary western state and in particular the USA. The argument here is that religion is no longer used quite in the same way as envisaged by Machiavelli. Now rather than be used to enforce moral laws, it is used merely as an influencing tool with which to garner votes and to appeal to a sense of righteousness in the electorate especially at a time of war.

Let us begin by looking at St. Augustine's idea of the nature of the two cities one belonging to man and the other to God:

One [city] consists of those living according to man, while the other lives according to God; "one is predestined to reign eternally with God, and the other to suffer eternal punishment with the devil."¹ (XV.1) Thus, these the two cities exhibit two loves; the earthly loves itself to the contempt of God, whilst the heavenly city loves God, to the contempt of flesh. The former seeks glory from men, the latter from God, saying, "Thou art my glory. And the lifter up of mine head."² (XIV, Ps.3:3)

And furthermore the ambiguous nature of 'progress':

Though the earthly city may demand strict moral obedience to its laws, true virtue will not result because there is no religion other than the true religion which has an absolute law of justice and morality. Thus, the earthly city's laws are always open to abuse, ambiguous interpretation, or "progress" [there] is no higher law than the leaders of this city.³ (Shippe & Stetson, p. 313, 2006, *The Bible and Its Influence* (Cullen Shippe & Chuck Stetson Published by BLP Publishing))

The Machiavellian position where one need only appear to be as opposed to being:

Men in general judge more by their eyes than their hands; for everyone can see but few can feel. Everyone sees what you seem to be, few touch upon what you are, and those few do not dare to contradict the opinion of the many who have the majesty of the state to defend them; and in the actions of all men, and especially of princes, where there is no impartial arbiter, one must consider the final result. Let a prince therefore act to conquer and to maintain the state; his methods will always be judged honourable and will be praised by all; for ordinary people are always deceived by appearances and by the outcome of a thing; and in the world there is nothing but ordinary people; and there is no room for the few, while the many have a place to lean on⁴. (*The Prince*. Machiavelli - author, Peter Bondanella - editor, Peter Bondanella -

transltr, Mark Musa - transltr. Publisher: Oxford University. Place of Publication: Oxford. Publication Year: 1998. P. 60)

Discussion I

1. Augustine

The thesis of this paper is that religion and politics are the natural antithesis of each other and that most if not all secular leaders who enter political office; and who espouse religion or to be religious, on the whole merely do so for the sake of appearance plus expediency; and thus are in keeping with the Machiavellian position as set out above; furthermore that if you seek to deceive, there are always men willing to believe in your deceit. Further I will add that even if your deceit is initially not intentional you will be forced to “maintain the state” as Machiavelli puts it above. I will contrast this position with that of St Augustine, which basically is that right flows from rightness and not that right which serves the interest of the most powerful.

For St Augustine, mans’ natural end is with God and all earthly manifestation should be towards serving God and leading man to what Augustine regards as his natural salvation. An eternal life, for as Augustine puts it “Happy not in their present life, but in the hope they have of the future one. This life with that hope offers nothing but pretense of happiness, which is great unhappiness”⁵ (*City of God, Book XXII*).

2. Machiavelli’s *Realpolitik*

Whereas Machiavelli is concerned with building earthly institutions that will last at least the life time of the ruler if not beyond, though he does not place himself under the illusion that any earthly institution will last beyond the span of its natural time. After all he uses some of the great Roman emperors as examples of what to do and at times what not to do, and no doubt was aware that Rome lasted nearly 1000 years, and could not have honestly thought that even his erudite advise could cause any prince to create something longer lasting. For Machiavelli to choose to live a Christian life is to condemn oneself to political impotence and being used by clever unscrupulous men, let saints and martyrs seek their rewards hereafter, but let the prince do what is practical to create a lasting state that he might enjoy the fruits of temporal power. Machiavelli realises that men in general find it hard to be all good and to be all bad, and falling between the two stools, taking this middle

road leads to lack of success in either goal. Thus it may be argued that one may save one's own soul or serve some glorious state built upon the bones of innocents. To what extent does he condemn Christian morality? Well the answer to that question is quite severely in terms of *Realpolitik*, "Our religion has glorified humble and contemplative men, rather than men of action. It has assigned as man's highest good humility, abnegation, and contempt for mundane things...and if our religion [Christianity] demands that in you there be strength, what it asks for is strength to suffer rather than strength to do bold things. This pattern of life, therefore, appears to have made the world weak⁶, and to have handed it over as a prey to the wicked, who run it successfully and securely since they are well aware that the generality of men, with paradise for their goal, consider how best to bear, rather than how best to avenge, their injuries."⁷ (Machiavelli, II.2, p.278, 2003, *The Discourses*, Penguin Classics, London, UK) The deeds that win earthly glory are therefore not those that win heavenly reward, this argument is supported by Vickie Sullivan in her *Neither Christian Nor Pagan: Machiavelli's Treatment of Religion in the Discourses*. For her Machiavelli indirectly takes a swipe at Christianity for being responsible for the failure to appreciate ancient history and for the moderns' view of ancient deeds that result in such weakness; and its making people unable to appreciate the deeds of ancient history and as such leading to what she terms the world's weakness.⁸ (Sullivan, *Polity*, Vol. XXVI No. 2 Winter 93) Machiavelli condemns Christianity further by comparing its 'weakness' with an appeal to the apparent strength of paganism and the ancients. It is almost as though the 'weakness' of Christianity is its lack of appeal to a certain animal magnetism that we all have, an appeal to that which we all need to temper if we are to follow a path of meekness. Sir Isaiah Berlin puts it most succinctly in his *The Originality of Machiavelli: Against the Current*. When he says: "The ancients developed these qualities by all kinds of means, among which were dazzling shows and bloodstained sacrifices that excited men's senses and aroused their martial prowess, and especially by the kind of legislation and education that promoted the pagan virtues. Power, magnificence, pride, austerity, pursuit of glory, vigour, discipline, *antiqua virtus* - this is what makes states great."⁹ (Berlin, p. 44, 1980, *The Originality of Machiavelli: Against the Current*, Viking Press, New York, 1980)

The subtle genius of Machiavelli's analytical skills are given no better example than when he argues that this *Realpolitik* will not allow anyone using religion alone as a tool to conquer a state. For he argues that all those who have relied upon prayer without the use of force, fail! "It is necessary, therefore, if we desire to discuss this matter thoroughly, to

enquire whether the innovators can rely on themselves or have to depend on others: that is to say, whether, to consummate their enterprise, have they to use prayers or can they use force? In the first instance they always succeed badly, and never compass anything; but when they can rely on themselves and use force, then they are rarely endangered. Hence it is that all armed prophets have conquered and the unarmed ones have been destroyed.”¹⁰ (Machiavelli, p. 44, 1993, *The Prince*, Wordsworth Editions Ltd, Herefordshire, UK) What does this tell us, can there be religion without force? Well most certainly not religion sanctioned by the state. It might be argued that Machiavelli is not being as direct here as he might like to have been, when he states that prophets without the use of force could not establish a state, he is perhaps obliquely saying that the state also relies on force to some extent to keep the religious *status quo*. Therefore whilst one must respect the church one can't fully take it for being what it purports to be, if like the other instruments of state it has to rely on force to some extent?

Further to the above argument in regards to the use of force Matt Schirano in his article entitled *A Look at Religion as Interpreted by Niccolo Machiavelli's The Prince*, argues that Moses entered the perfect situation through his direct communication with God and was therefore able to achieve what he did by making use of force and was therefore an example of what Machiavelli alluded to above.¹¹ (<http://voices.yahoo.com/a-look-religion-as-interpreted-niccolo-machiavellis-8261.html>, accessed 12.9.12) Berlin offers a not too dissimilar argument in regards to Moses by putting forward Machiavelli's views that “Moses and Cyrus are as deserving of respect as Theseus and Romulus - stern, sagacious and incorruptible men who founded nations and were rightly honoured by them.”¹² (Berlin, p. 44, 1980, Viking Press, New York) Furthermore that this approach to founding religion and churches needs not be an historically irreversible one for Machiavelli; in so far that new churches might be formed by the use of ruthless and cruel measures.¹³ (Berlin, p. 44, 1980, Viking Press, New York) It is not the purpose of this paper here to argue whether or not religions need to be founded by force or not, I have included the above point because with Machiavelli this idea of strength and force is a logical continuation of how religion is to be utilised in the service of the state.

Governing bodies may have advocated moral standards, one doesn't have to look too hard to see that such bodies were less than honest, and it is still true today. Dishonesty has

been, and always will be a theme in governments. To suggest that the prince feign his religiousness isn't out of the ordinary for the time. His faith is questionable, but the influence of religion is not lost in the book.

Even the idea of being good is frowned upon for the sake of expediency ... "He who neglects what is done for what ought to be done, sooner effects his ruin than his preservation for a man who wishes to act entirely up to his profession of virtue soon meets with what destroys him among so much that is evil." ¹⁴ (Machiavelli, p, 44, 1993, *The Prince*, Wordsworth Editions Ltd, Herefordshire, UK) As Clifford Orwin puts it in his article entitled Machiavelli's *Unchristian Charity*:

There is no gap between the demands of politics and the demands of virtue-between 'what is done' and 'what ought to be done' -but only between the demands of politics and what appears to- be virtuous but is not. Whatever politics demands is virtuous. The touchstone for pretended virtue is its contribution to our security and well-being.¹⁵ (The American Political Science Review, Vol. 72, No. 4 (Dec., 1978), pp. 1217-1228, Published by the American Political Science Association)

Hence the politician need only appear to be religious in the Machiavellian sense if his objectives are governed by polity and security as opposed to a higher truth – this surely conflicts with the Augustinian City of God where the temporal is to be led by the eternal.

Discussion II

Why appear to be Religious

Why then should the politician wish to make use of religion in the running of state, surely religion is a metaphysical non-rational entity that logically should not be related to something as practical as running a secular state? The answer to this question would depend on how one defines religion, is it to be an instrument of the state towards practical ends or one in which its metaphysical appeal is simply to be made use of to achieve practical ends in a Machiavellian sense.

Religion must be promoted even though it may be false, provided it promotes manly virtues. According to Machiavelli in his *Discourses* and according to Durkheim religion provides social control, cohesion, and purpose for people, as well as another means of

communication and gathering for individuals to interact and reaffirm social norms. Durkheim suggests that man always seeks to place things above himself, to have a separation of the two worlds, sacred and profane and that whether the divine right of Kings or Thanksgiving Memorial Day, religion is an almost inescapable part of the political apparatus in that it gives a similitude of righteousness to those seeking to rule.¹⁶ (Durkheim, E. pp. 42-54, 1915. *The Elementary forms of the Religious Life: A Study in Religious Sociology*, J.W. Swain, Trans. London: Allen & Unwin)

Machiavelli acknowledges that in the 1500's men are not as religious as they once were in the past, but he also argues that religion is still useful if one wishes to convince the masses of the need for some practical task, he uses the example of Numa who doubted whether his own authority was sufficient, deceived the people of Rome; by pretending to consort with a nymph whom he said advised him to tell the people of Rome to introduce new institutions to which the city was unaccustomed.¹⁷ (Machiavelli I.11, P.140, 2003)

Berlin's interpretation of Machiavelli (of which I am in agreement with) argues that for the latter religion need not rest upon truth but merely be one that is of a cohesive nature to serve the state. In fact Berlin goes so far as to argue that part of Machiavelli's genius is his recognition of the role that religion plays in society:

As for religion, it is for him not much more than a socially indispensable instrument, so much utilitarian cement: the criterion of the worth of a religion is its role as a promoter of solidarity and cohesion - he anticipates Saint-Simon and Durkheim in stressing its crucial social importance. The great founders of religions are among the men he most greatly admires. Some varieties of religion (e.g. Roman paganism) are good for societies, since they make them strong or spirited; others on the contrary (e.g. Christian meekness and unworldliness) cause decay or disintegration. The weakening of religious ties is a part of general decadence and corruption: there is no need for a religion to rest on truth, provided that it is socially effective. Hence his veneration of those who set their societies on sound spiritual foundations - Moses, Numa, Lycurgus. There is no serious assumption of the existence of God and divine law; whatever our author's private convictions, an atheist can read Machiavelli with perfect intellectual comfort.¹⁸ (Berlin, p. 37, New York: Viking Press, 1980)

Therefore religion in a Machiavellian sense is that which serves as a tool of the state apparatus whilst at the same time giving the similitude of being something that it is not by appealing to religious sentiments but caring very little if at all for religion's moral

compasses and eschatological eschatology- for the state has replaced the latter with its own eschatological *realpolitik* at least when we compare Machiavelli's state and the use of religion to that of St Augustine's City of God.

The difference between the two cities is the difference between two loves. Those who are united in the City of God are united by the love of God and of one another in God. Those who belong to the other city are indeed not united in any real sense: but it can be said that they have one thing in common besides their opposition to God: each one of them is intent on the love of himself above all else. In St. Augustine's classical expression: "These two cities were made by two loves: the earthly city by the love of self unto the contempt of God, and the heavenly city by the love of God unto the contempt of self."¹⁹ (Bk.14, Cor 15: 28.) The earthly city glories in its own power, the heavenly in the power of God. St Augustine in book II attacks Romulus and other kings for their murderous ways and brutality this contrasts with Machiavelli's idea of awe and dazzling brutality in order to appeal to the populace. I don't want to be accused of stating the obvious here. One might assess Augustine as one condemning the irreligiousness of brutality and war which highlights a further contrast between the two cities. Once more in further contrast to Machiavelli, St. Augustine argues that Rome was decadent and cruel before the advent of Christ, he speaks of the overthrow of kings, the prevalence of tyrants and the need for the people to rise up against oppression (see *City of God*, book II chapter 18). Thus there is hardly the appeal that Machiavelli advocated earlier in Berlin's *The Originality of Machiavelli*. The appeal to the animalistic is no more than a distraction all be it a momentary one. Machiavelli believes such distractions necessary whilst Augustine condemns them as nothing more than acts of brutality.²⁰

Therefore appearing to be religious I would argue is the state seeking to glorify in its own power and to appear to set something above itself, which it appears to need to answer to. In addition the state using religion in the Machiavellian sense is to recognise it as an indispensable tool that can be used to bring about social cohesiveness and maintain social cohesiveness. In keeping with the earlier statement made by Durkheim the state seeks to demonstrate to those that it rules that it too like the individual occasionally needs to be guided by some higher force. Yet in reality the state is not really *Esse Qvam Vedri* (to be rather than seem to be). I would argue that religion is largely reduced to a political

convenience in the 21st century; a convenience that the state can use to appeal to certain sections of society. How then is this so?

The use of religion for political purposes in recent times

Franklin Roosevelt is reported to have said that every presidential address should have some of that ‘God stuff’ in it.²¹ (Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger & Gorsuch, p.199, 2003) Only one presidential inaugural speech did not site God directly, (George Washington) but he did cite the deity in his farewell speech. Let us Continue with the United States as an example, mainly because it is country that has always been democratic and has not had to throw off any antecedent religious baggage when compared with countries like Spain or Italy. The desire to keep religion in politics influences the government in ways favouring religion has for two decades been variously labelled the ‘Christian Right,’ ‘the New Right,’ the ‘Christian crusade,’ ‘Christian conservatism.’²² (*The Psychology of Religion, An Empirical Approach*, p 199, 2003, Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger & Gorsuch, third edition the Guildford Press, New York & London) Notice that the emphasis is on conservatism, giving the necessary appearance of holding society together, it could well be argued that the need for the appearance of religion in the state, is what St Augustine calls the earthly city glorifying in its own power.

In Machiavelli’s time and no doubt prior to the 20th century we could argue that religion was an essential tool of the state in ensuring obedience to the state. Whether it be the use of the *Spanish Inquisition* or the secret police of Prince Metternich. Religion is not quite used in the same way as it was in past, in a modern state like the US where religion is sometimes used to garner votes, by appealing to a sense of righteousness in the electorate especially at a time of war.

I wish here to exam the fundamentalist position though it is not my desire to enter into in depth biblical theological discussions in terms of interpretation as space will not allow such a course. What I will seek to do is to highlight certain basic areas of biblical exegesis that are usually considered to be held by Christian Fundamentalists; and in turn to show how such interpretations may shape and form a view that can be harnessed politically; and finally why such groups are appealed to from a religious political stand point.

Williams et al argue that Christian Fundamentalism is theologically rooted in 5 notions: “Biblical inerrancy, divinity of Jesus, virgin birth of Jesus, redemption through Jesus and second coming of Jesus.”²³ (Williams, Bliss, & McCallum, *Christian Conservatism and Militarism among Teacher Education Students, of Religious Review Research*, Vol.48 No. 1 (Sept 2006), pp. 17-32) What Williams et al have done is to incorporate these five factors into their theological measurement of Christian conservatism. The argument they make is that the five fundamentals are considered more important than worship itself. Now I would like to remind readers that as we examine fundamentalism here, we are not arguing that there is a contrast in the desire of conversion and eternal salvation with St Augustine’s *City of God*, but only that the end game for those who appeal to Christian fundamentalists in the USA is one of a more rational aggrandizing nature, that are more easily achieved by appearing to be rather than being religious at least in the Machiavellian sense that we have been examining above, so in some ways it might be said that we are not only attacking the Machiavellian approach but also to a lesser extent the fundamentalist approach when it ends up serving what we might venture to call harmful political aims. It is this appeal to political aims which is what distinguishes Christian fundamentalism from those who in the past have sought the same religious aims but have not sought to prosecute them politically. (Williams, Bliss, & McCallum, 2006)²⁴ In pursuit of a political agenda 75% of evangelical (Williams, Bliss, & McCallum,2006)²⁵ Christians voted for the Republican candidate in 2004 presidential elections (Williams, Bliss, & McCallum, 2006)²⁶ certainly a strong argument as to why they should be pursued politically, both in terms of votes and supporting a political agenda which agrees with their theological ideology. We would not wish to suggest here that the theological ideology limits fundamentalists to only supporting military action as detailed in the following quote, for according to Williams et al they are also active in trying to pursue political conservatism on issues such as Gay Marriage and the selection of Supreme Court Judges which Williams et al argue are of equal importance to evangelicals. The purpose of our limited study here is to see why such a group would be appealed to politically from a religious point of view to support an action or actions that we argue are incompatible with Augustine’s *City of God* and moreover that those who are making the appeal are merely using religion as a cloak and are hence in keeping with the Machiavellian position which we hold to be contrary with Augustine’s:

With respect to the war in Iraq, Christian evangelicals were among the strongest supporters of the U.S. decision to invade Iraq and have remained

steadfast in their support for the war and the U.S. soldiers who fight the war. They may view the military as an important tool in extending Christian influence to such closed societies as Iraq. To the extent that the U.S. military removes oppressive dictators and replaces them with a democratic form of government, Christian conservatives would have increased opportunities for extending their evangelism to those societies. (Williams, Bliss, & McCallum, *Christian Conservatism and Militarism among Teacher Education Students, of Religious Review Research*, Vol.48 No. 1 (Sept 2006), pp. 17-32)²⁷

Perhaps the following quote will lay further credence to the argument:

If Christian fundamentalists are to be believed, America's invasion of Iraq and the consequent brutal slaughter of thousands of innocent civilians in that country are all part of a grand divine plan that will finally culminate in the 'second coming' of Jesus Christ. Establishing an empire that will extend all over the globe, Christ will rule like a powerful monarch, saving those who believe in him and dispatching non-believers, all non-Christians and non-conformist Christians, to everlasting perdition in hell. This is no childish nonsense for millions of Christian fundamentalists, who sincerely believe this to be predicted in the Bible. Not surprisingly, American Christian fundamentalists are today among the most fanatic supporters of Bush's global imperialist wars, in Iraq and elsewhere, which they see as in keeping with the divine mandate. They are no eccentric or lunatic fringe elements, for today Christian fundamentalists exercise a powerful influence in American politics. Among them is George Bush himself, who insists that the American invasion of Iraq has been sanctioned by God, with whom he claims to be in personal communication.²⁸ [Perhaps just like Numa and his nymph] (*American Christian Fundamentalist Leader Calls For Global War* By Yoginder Sikand 17 November, 2005 Countercurrents.org, accessed 6.6.07)

Of course re the above situation we have an example of a war that has resulted in the death of perhaps 600,000²⁹ people being seen by some fundamentalists as a new kind of crusade. Boyer in his 19th February 2003 article entitled *War on Iraq: When US Foreign Policy Meets Biblical Prophecy*, noted that the then president [G.W. Bush] used Biblical apocalyptic language when he said that “our born-again president describes the nation's foreign-policy objective in theological terms as a global struggle against ‘evildoers,’ and when, in his recent State of the Union address, he casts Saddam Hussein as a demonic, quasi-supernatural figure who could unleash ‘a day of horror like none we have ever known,...’” The argument continues that Bush was using apocalyptic vocabulary. “He [Bush] is also invoking a powerful and ancient apocalyptic vocabulary that for millions of prophecy believers conveys a specific and thrilling message of an approaching end -- not just of Saddam, but of human history as we know it.”

(http://www.alternet.org/story/15221/when_u.s._foreign_policy_meets_biblical_prophecy/ accessed 23.08.2013)³⁰. Yet for the more rational and sober it is the pursuit of wealth and power under the thinly veiled guise of religion. This most certainly can be argued as being in keeping with the Machiavellian position of appearing to be rather than actually being. Moreover it can also be further argued that in the 21st century the aim of some politicians (specifically in reference to the U.S) is to pursue global deception rather than just national deception, in addition just as in the past this is now used to subjugate others under the guise of doing them good. In Barker, Hurwitz & Nelson's *Of Crusades and Culture Wars; "Messianic" Militarism and Political Conflict in the United States*, they put forward the argument that there is a link between militarism and fundamentalism.³¹ They argue that aggressive military campaigns can't be sustained without the support of the polity in a democracy. Barker et al further go to argue that there is a divide in the US along what they call "red and blue" states. "especially the distinctiveness of white, traditionalist Christians." The importance of this divide being a dove and hawk approach to foreign policy and as such the red/blue is largely influenced by religion. Williams et al argue that "Christian traditionalism and its corollaries encourage aggressive foreign policy postures and that such messianic militarism shapes vote choices in a significant way".³² (Barker, David. C, Hurwitz Jon, & Nelson Traci. L, *Of Crusades and Culture Wars: "Messianic" Militarism and Political Conflict in the States*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press on behalf of Southern Political Science Association *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (April 2008), pp.307-308) The point of including an analysis of Barker et al is that a study of their arguments concerning some of the views held by Christian fundamentalists i.e. believing that God has a covenant with the US and that that covenant is dependent on the US's reverence for the original covenant that God had with Israel; provides a strong argument as to why the such groups need to be courted by US politicians.

The key point being that religion can be the dupe by which those opposed to the above can be kept silent or denounced by the majority. Did not Machiavelli argue above that one need but keep the majority on your side (and there is no room for the few, while the many are protected by the majesty of the state.) Perhaps one might illustrate this further:

While the Western press is awash with stories, real and exaggerated, about 'Islamic fundamentalists', rarely is mention made about Christian fundamentalists, who, with their vast resources and close links with the [then] current American administration, are a potentially more menacing

threat than their Muslim counterparts. According to newspaper reports more than a third of Americans are associated with one or the other Christian fundamentalist outfit, most of which are fiercely anti-communist, anti-Muslim and are passionate advocates of free-market capitalism, global American hegemony and the myth of the civilizing mission of white America. In recent years, these fundamentalist groups have been engaged in aggressive missionary work in other countries as well, including in the so-called 'Third World'. Fired by a passionate hatred for other religions, which they dismiss as 'false' and even 'Satanic', they are today among the most well-funded missionary groups in large parts of Asia and Africa. Crusading for Christ, these fundamentalist groups are not simply out fishing for souls. Rather, for them Christianity is only part of the agenda, which also includes aggressively promoting American and Zionist interests. Today, these groups preach not only Christ but also *Pax Americana* and even American-led imperialist wars, which they bless as holy causes to usher in the final arrival of Jesus.³³ (Yoginder Sikand 17 November, 2005 Countercurrents.org, accessed 6.6.08)

Thus here we have religion being used against religion, in that one group is being painted as a threat, as it seem to be convenient to do so for the moment, Islamic militants, fundamentalism. Thus whilst the above is certainly in keeping with the Machiavellian position of appearance for the sake of expediency, how does this contrast with that of the Augustine position? Most certainly Augustine believed that those who did not follow God and looked for their salvation here in Earth would rot eternally in hell. The fundamentalist position is similar in so far that it believes non-believers will perish, but where they differ surely is the means by which such matters should be achieved. Augustine did not believe in using force for conversion or in repression of those who might share a different religious view, though he appears to have later retracted this position somewhat, believing that persecution might be acceptable if done with “loving concern for your correction, as opposed to the malice of an enemy”. A very thin line and at most times an indistinguishable line, one would have thought:

...For originally my opinion was that no one should be coerced into the unity of Christ, that we must act only by word, fight only by arguments and prevail by force of reason, least we should have those whom we knew as avowed heretics feigning themselves to be Catholics... We disapprove of every one who, taking advantage of this imperial edict, persecutes you, not with loving concern for your correction, but with the malice of an enemy.³⁴ (*Augustine, Letter 93*, Trans: J.G. Cunningham, Nicene Fathers, ser. 1, vol 1, adapted. Edited by Philip Schaff. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887.)

However the fundamentalist position is that those of other races should be subjugated,³⁵ the principle difference is that the fundamentalists are attempting to interpret the bible literally for their own political ends; whereas St Augustine warns us that, the Biblical text should not be interpreted literally if it contradicts what we know from science and our God-given reason. In an important passage on his "*The Literal Interpretation of Genesis*" (early 5th century, AD), St. Augustine wrote:

It not infrequently happens that something about the earth, about the sky, about other elements of this world, about the motion and rotation or even the magnitude and distances of the stars, about definite eclipses of the sun and moon, about the passage of years and seasons, about the nature of animals, of fruits, of stones, and of other such things, may be known with the greatest certainty by reasoning or by experience, even by one who is not a Christian. It is too disgraceful and ruinous, though, and greatly to be avoided, that he [the non-Christian] should hear a Christian speaking so idiotically on these matters, and as if in accord with Christian writings, that he might say that he could scarcely keep from laughing when he saw how totally in error they are. In view of this and in keeping it in mind constantly while dealing with the book of Genesis, I have, insofar as I was able, explained in detail and set forth for consideration the meanings of obscure passages, taking care not to affirm rashly someone meaning to the prejudice of another and perhaps better explanation.³⁶

– *The Literal Interpretation of Genesis 1:19–20, Chapt. 19 [AD 408]*

Therefore literal interpretation of the Bible for political expediency may well be in keeping with Machiavellian principles but not those of St Augustine, who argues that all should be towards God with natural God given reason. Thus how then can any Christian possessed of such reason, be happy in oppressing his fellow man for the sake of gain.

Conclusion

The love which unites the citizens of the heavenly city is disinterested love, or charity. The other city is built on selfish love, or cupidity. Now there are two reasons why only one of these loves - charity - can serve as the foundation for a happy and peaceful commonwealth. The first reason is metaphysical: charity is a love that leads the will to the possession of true values because it sees all things in their right order. It sees creatures for what they are, means to the possession of God. It uses them only as means and thus arrives successfully at the end, which is God. But cupidity is doomed from the start to frustration because it is based on a

false system of values. It takes created things for ends in themselves, which they are not. The will that seeks rest in creatures for their own sake stops on the way to its true end, terminates in a value which does not exist, and thus frustrates all its deepest capacities for happiness and peace.”³⁷ (*The City of God*. Augustine, *The City of God*. Trans: Marcus Dodds. Intro: Thomas Merton, Editor: Gill Evans, New York: Random House, 1950 Rpt. 1994)

The argument surely is that nothing material can be an end in itself as it will lead to unhappiness- as it will frustrate out capacities for profound peace and happiness. For Machiavelli the happiness is to be sought here in this world, he speaks of Rome as being happy through the religion introduced by Numa as being a main source of happiness because it led to the formation of good institutions that led to as he puts it good fortune and from the latter arose happy results of undertakings. So the political leader need only appeal to the metaphysical in-order to achieve the practical.

Those who love God love a supreme and infinite good that cannot be diminished by being shared. Those who place their hopes on the possession of created and limited goods are doomed to conflict with one another and to everlasting fear of losing whatever they may have gained. Hence the city that is united in charity will be the only one to possess true peace, because it is the only one that conforms to the true order of things, the order established by God. The city that is united merely by an alliance of temporal interests cannot promise itself more than a temporary cessation from hostilities and its order will never be anything but a makeshift.” (*The City of God*. Augustine, *The City of God*. Trans: Marcus Dodds. Intro: Thomas Merton, Editor: Gill Evans, New York: Random House, 1950 Rpt. 1994), which then of the two are the Christian Fundamentalist advocating, certainly the option of self- love, the love of self-interest; St Augustine is making it clear that no matter what you achieve materially it is bound to fade and only bring limited happiness.

It can be concluded that religion in politics is diametrically opposed to religion in the literal sense, the Augustinian sense of two cities one serving God and the other man, how is it possible that one can enter into political office and serve the heavenly city as opposed to the city of man? There are of course those who would enter the political arena of debate for the sake of change and affirmative action for change; Dorothy Day, Gandhi and Martin Luther King being a few modern day examples. Whilst they sought change through

political action on the part of governments, they did not enter political office, had they done so then how would they have been able to serve the City of God? Even if they had by some chance complete and absolute power they would soon find themselves compelled to do that which served the interests of the state rather than the City of God. Anyone entering political office inadvertently signals his seeking of salvation here on earth; and in so doing uses politics not to praise God but for self-praise or at least praise of the state. Thus Machiavelli takes a practical position in regards to world affairs and this attitude to how the ruler should use religion is merely in keeping with that. The appearance is more important than the substance. Thus I would conclude that politics is the platform of the Devil, for the interest of the state must transcend those of God, and in so doing, from the Augustinian position, it is the road of the second city which in one of damnation. Moreover one may liken those Christian Fundamentalists to what Augustine calls “the philosophers of the ungodly city who claim divine beings as their friends.”³⁸ (Augustine, *City of God*, Book 19.9, Translation editors *Bibliothèque Augustinienne*) Until such time as a more Kantian approach is taken, in that people are treated as an end in themselves and the state is merely a means to bring this about rather than *visa versa*. Politics will always be thus tainted, and those great figures that seek to transcend its narrow and primarily self-serving limitations of state, such as Gandhi or Martin Luther King, are more likely to be assassinated by those who consider them a threat to a system of control that has deceived and continues to deceive, for the state has to place the earthly city above the heavenly one. Therefore the majority of politicians making use of religion are merely doing so to glorify the second city, for which to appear religious is all that is required.

¹ Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*, Trans: Henry Bentenson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972) XV.1

² *Ibid.*, XIV, Ps. 3:3

³ Cullen Shippe & Chuck Stetson, *The Bible and Its Influence*, (New York: BLP Publishing, 2006) 313

⁴ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, - editor, Peter Bondanella - trans, Mark Musa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 60.

⁵ Augustine, *City of God*, Book XXII

⁶ See Mark Hulliung's *Citizen Machiavelli*, pp-66-68, in which the author argues that Machiavelli considers Christian values as corrupt when compared with those of the Pagans; the conclusion being that a 'Womanish mankind of postclassical times whose histories are as ignoble as those of Rome's was noble'. (Princeton University Press, 1983)

⁷ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Discourses* (London: Penguin Classics, 2003) II.2, 278.

⁸ Vickie. B. Sullivan, *Neither Christian nor Pagan: Machiavelli's Treatment of Religion in the Discourses*

(Polity, Vol XXVI No. 2 Winter 93)

⁹ Isaiah Berlin, *The Originality of Machiavelli: Against the Current* (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 44.

¹⁰ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Herefordshire: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1993), 44.

¹¹ Matt Schirano, *A Look at Religion as Interpreted by Niccolo Machiavelli's The Prince*, (<http://voices.yahoo.com/a-look-religion-as-interpreted-niccolo-machiavellis-8261.html>), accessed 12.9.12

¹² Isaiah Berlin, *The Originality of Machiavelli: Against the Current* (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 44.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁴ Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Herefordshire: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 1993), 117.

¹⁵ Clifford Orwin, *Machiavelli's Unchristian Charity* (The American Political Science Review, Vol. 72, No. 4th Dec., 1978), pp. 1217-1228.

¹⁶ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary forms of the Religious Life: A Study in Religious Sociology*, Trans J.W. Swain, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1915) 42-54.

¹⁷ Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, I.11, .140.

¹⁸ Isaiah Berlin, *The Originality of Machiavelli: Against the Current* (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 37.

¹⁹ Augustine, *The City of God*, Bk. 14, Cor.15: 28.

²⁰ I would go further and argue that such brutal distractions are a sign of an ill governed state, see for an analogical example see chapter 5 of Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty Four*, in which one of the periphery characters Syme, delights in the brutality of the hangings of prisoners: "It was a good hanging", said Syme reminiscently. "I think it spoils it when they tie their feet together. I like to see them kicking. And above all, at the end, the tongue sticking right out, and blue-a quite bright blue. That's the details that appeals to me." Orwell, George, *Nineteen Eighty Four*, Chapter 5 P. 64. Free EBooks at Planet EBook.com

²¹ Bernard Spilka, Ralph Hood, Bruce Hunsberger & Richard Gorsuch, *The Psychology of Religion, An Empirical Approach* (New York & London: third edition The Guildford Press, 2003) 199

²² *Ibid.*, 199

²³ Robert L Williams, Stacy L Bliss, & R. Steve McCallum, *Christian Conservatism and Militarism among Teacher Education Students, of Religious Review Research*, Vol.48 No. 1 (Sept 2006), pp. 17-32

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 17-32

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 17-32, Williams et al use Marsden's argument that whilst every evangelical doesn't embrace all the theological criteria of a fundamentalism, there is 'considerable overlap in the theological perspectives of the two groups', even though it is argued that not every fundamentalist 'emphasizes evangelism'. Therefore for the purposes of my argument I will be happy not to make an absolute distinction unless I feel it necessary.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 17-32

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 17-32

²⁸ Yoginder Sikand, *American Christian Fundamentalist Leader Calls For Global War*, 17 November, 2005, (Countercurrents.org, accessed 6.6.07)

²⁹ See the surveys in *the Lancet* 2004 & 2006

³⁰ Mark Boyer, *War on Iraq: When US Foreign Policy Meets Biblical Prophecy* http://www.alternet.org/story/15221/when_u.s._foreign_policy_meets_biblical_prophecy/ accessed 23.08.2013

³¹ Like Williams et al, Barker et al rely on Marsden's definition of Christian traditionalism/orthodoxy though Williams' points out that these beliefs are not necessarily confined to fundamentalists and evangelicals see David. C Barker, Jon Hurwitz, & Traci. L Nelson, *Of Crusades and Culture Wars: "Messianic" Militarism and Political Conflict in the States*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press on behalf of Southern Political Science Association *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (April 2008), p. 309.

³² *Ibid.*, pp.307-308.

³³ Sikand *American Christian Fundamentalist Leader Calls For Global War*

³⁴ Augustine, *Letter 93*, Trans: J.G. Cunningham, Nicene Fathers, ser. 1, vol 1, adapted Edited by Philip Schaff. (Buffalo, New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co,1887)

³⁵ “‘New World’ can be traced to ‘covenant theology’. Based on biblical accounts of God’s relationship to Israel, covenant theology asserts that God identifies with some nations, either blessing or punishing those ‘chosen’ nations according to their faithfulness. Such thinking, in conjunction with end-times visions, infused the Crusades as well as many other military escapades throughout the past two millennia. In the North American Colonies, the Puritans believed very strongly that their new home represented the ‘New Jerusalem.’ where God’s kingdom would be ushered in.” David. C Barker, Jon Hurwitz, & Traci. L Nelson, p.310

³⁶ Augustine of Hippo – *The Literal Interpretation of Genesis 1:19–20, Chapt. 19* (AD 408)

³⁷ Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God*. Trans: Marcus Dodds. Intro: Thomas Merton, Editor: Gill Evans, New York: Random House, 1950, Rpt. 1994) xv.

³⁸ Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, Book 19.9, Translation editors *Bibliothèque Augustinienne*

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