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**Review of David C. Innes, *Christ and the
Kingdoms of Men: Foundations of
Political Life***

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David C. Innes. *Christ and the Kingdoms of Men: Foundations of Political Life*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2019. 264 pages. Paperback, \$19.99.

David C. Innes is a leading voice for the twenty-first century in the ongoing debate surrounding whether Christians should engage in the world of politics and to what extent, as well as the role of the church in promoting civic responsibility. As an established author, Innes calls for politically informed Christians in his previous book, *The Voting Christian: Seeking Wisdom for the Ballot Box* (Lindenhurst NY: Great Christian Books, 2016). Innes holds a Master of Divinity from Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary and serves as a professor at The King's College. He argues for the theological and biblical framework for God's establishment of a "two kingdoms" governmental structure. That is to say, God's sovereignty is over both kingdoms through His relationship and subsequent interactions with His created humanity. The centuries-old debate surrounding a two kingdoms governmental structure is not a new theological question; however, it is given contemporary insight by Innes.

Innes is versed in the theological and political constructs that challenge both Christians and non-Christians alike regarding God's use of the framework of government in His sovereign plan for the church. In *Christ and the Kingdoms of Men*, Innes' thesis is that "God uses the blessings of good government to provide a helpful setting of peace and order in which he advances his kingdom work in this fallen world" (20). This declaration is the foundation upon which Innes develops his discourse, while acknowledging that God is sovereign over all governments, whether they be good or bad. Innes goes even further in his theological belief regarding the two kingdoms to say, "God expresses his redemptive work in political terms" (xiii). Although strong in his view of these competing kingdoms, the natural world and the spiritual world, Innes emphasizes that the roles of politics and the church may differ in the eschatological

plan of God but are not mutually exclusive of one another (xiii). Through a systematic unfolding of the interconnectedness of politics and the church, Innes' book dismantles the myopic paradigm that politics is only secular and therefore should not be addressed by the church. As Christians engage in the culture, Innes does not shy away from stating that "a Christian understanding of politics begins with the biblical account of creation from nothing, fall into sin, and redemption in Christ" (198).

Noted scholar David Van Drunen has argued elsewhere, "The Two Kingdoms doctrine has a rich historical precedent in the Reformed tradition, that its basic tenets are built on a compelling biblical foundation."¹ This idea is fundamental to Innes' case for the necessity of informed believers. The omniscient God uses men and women made in His image, living in a fallen world, redeemed from a fallen state through the redemptive work of Christ, to govern other men and women for the well-being and edification of humanity.

From the Old Testament to the New Testament, God issues divine royal decrees and establishes the nation of Israel that ushers in a natural world and a spiritual world. Innes makes it clear that God is sovereign over both kingdoms, and Scripture confirms God's intentional plan to establish the two kingdoms to carry out His plan for humanity, both in the natural kingdom and the spiritual kingdom (29).

In sum, *Christ and the Kingdoms of Men* by Innes presents a sound study of politics within the context of the biblical account of the creation, fall, and redemption of humanity (198). The coexistence of God's sovereignty in both heaven and earth is what Innes proposes must be acknowledged as a political theory with the recognition of God, man, and the universe. The

¹David VanDrunen, "Two Kingdoms and Reformed Christianity: Why Recovering an Old Paradigm Is Historically Sound, Biblically Grounded, and Practically Useful," *Pro Rege* 40, no. 3 (March 2012): 32, https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1158&context=pro_rege.

Scriptures herald that God shall reign forever, government serves His will, and He permits individuals to govern and removes them. Daniel 2:21 confirms that God has the sovereignty to remove rulers and establish rulers. Innes' book is a bold admonishment that ministry leaders should be open to the idea of teaching their congregants a solid biblical understanding of how the church and politics serve the will of God so that they are equipped to discern from among the many political ideologies emerging in the culture.