

Israel, and therefore also the Church, is God-intended, as "nation," to be [Is. 49] "a light to the nations" for the glory of God in justice and joy ["shalom"] for all the earth. The theopolitical function of a national is not final, self-encapsulated, monadic, individual ["sovereignty"] but functional, instrumental ["servanthood" under the Lord of all the earth, who addresses a people as 'my servant' just as he is free to address an individual (chap.45)]. Set over against this functionalism are all sorts of political absolutism, petty and grand. In OT, Samuel's worry for God's people lusting after "a king such as the nations round about us have" [ISam.8] grows into the later prophets' denunciations both of God's people living in fear (and the consequent machinated alliances) rather than faith, and of the enviroing empires whose major clashes were occurring in "the holy land."

1. Our nation inherited both the faith [that a "nation under God" should be open and servantlike] and the fear [that our "precious heritage" must be protected against internal and external enemies]. Fear/faith abides as the core dynamic of American foreign policy in the broadest sense--which means Americans' and America's attitude toward "the stranger within the gates" and the foreigner (the poor foreigner wanting in, all the other poor foreigners, and the rich foreigners).

2. In the Statue of Liberty, the themes come together: (1) "a light to the nations" [the S/L torch, on this line-drawing], (2) prophetic compassion for the politically oppressed and for the economically impoverished ["Give me your poor...."], and (3) defiance of all kinds of oppression, combined with willingness to take risks on behalf of mankind toward a better future. "The open society," indeed--or rather in vision, hardly yet in deed.

3. Suffrage is the form of people power our society has depended on to keep collective power ["government"] both open and peoples'-needs-responsive. Sadly, this line drawing appeared in connection with an article [NYT/OpEd 28 Sept 76] announcing that its author will not vote in the presidential election for either "mediocrity," since prior candidates he helped elect all turned out to be liars. Poignantly, the author is a rabbi who has decided to "cultivate my own garden."

4. But on the line drawing, who is the person hanging the lamp over the edge of S/L's dead lamp? I pray that it's the same rabbi, and you, and I--standing not outside politics, but where the light has died.

