

## All authority is from God

权柄皆从上帝而来

Oliver O'Donovan

### Abstract 内容摘要

“All *authority* is from God.” Authority commands a response of freedom; it is a sufficient reason for acting presented to us by the world in which we act, comprehensible on its own terms, yet liable to be incomplete. Political authority is in some ways like the authority of wisdom, in other ways like the authority of a parent. Its “ungrounded” character poses a peculiar puzzle. It is immediately dependent on divine providence. It is inexplicable simply in terms of inter-human relations. Yet it is conferred by God *upon humans* to exercise over one another.

The paper then examines the paradox of political authority: does it lie in the power to dispose of subjects' lives? No, it lies in the state's *right*. As a claim of right, the claim of authority must be publicly intelligible; yet it is irrespective of whether we approve it. The paradox defies attempts to resolve it on purely humanistic premises.

Political authority can only be exercised when God gives it *in fact*. God gives this authority as an expression of his *will to preserve particular communities*. He preserves particular communities through the mutual service of their members. Political authority serves the “common good”, which takes concrete form in a state of law. God allows political authority to serve the state of law by *giving judgment*. However, political authority must be the last instance in resolving dispute and controversies. God sets all political authority before the horizon of his own coming judgment, the Kingdom of God.

权柄皆从上帝而来：权柄应得到自觉的响应；它有充分的理由让我们在世上采取行动，纵使这理由是不全面，但总是能被理解。在某种程度上，政权像智慧的权柄，在另一方面，它却类似家长的权柄。这毫无根据的特质带来独特的困惑。政权是凭着上帝的恩眷，不能只从人际关系的层面来阐释。然而上帝却把它赋予人类，让人能彼此间执行权柄。

文章接着探讨政权的悖论：它是否只是一种支配生命的权力？不是。它是属于国家的权利。要拥有这个权利，取得权柄就必须得到公众的理解。然而施行政权并不在乎得到我们的允许，单以人的立场来解决这悖论是徒然的。

当上帝以事实来赋予政权，才能执行那权柄。上帝给予这权柄，以表达他愿意维护个别的社体，使社体藉着成员的彼此服侍得以保存。政权是以律法的具体形式去谋求共同的利益。上帝允许政权施行审判来维持法治。然而，政权是解决纷争与争论的最后方法。上帝在他的国度降临时将审判一切，在这范畴里他竖立所有政权。