

## Theology Coffee House 2 Church and State

### Kennedy

President Kennedy (speaking as a candidate) opens by mentioning the spread of Communism, poverty and hunger in West Virginia, access to medical care, substandard housing, and education. He says: "These are the real issues which should decide this campaign. And they are not religious issues — for war and hunger and ignorance and despair know no religious barriers."

At first glance, what shall we make of this contention?

Now let's analyze the statement as debaters:

What is the claim here? (What is he asking us to accept?)

What is the evidence? (What has he given us to go on?)

What is the warrant? (What is the link between the evidence and the claim?)

What kind of claim is it? For this kind of claim, what are the relevant criteria?

### Obama

If we wanted evidence for a somewhat different understanding of religion and religious issues, could we find that in the speech of then-Senator Obama?

In this speech, where does President Obama suggest possible lines of church/state, or "religion"/state, separation?

What are his most important claims, and what does he offer by way of evidence and warrants?

### Romney

In what respects, if any, is Governor Romney's speech evocative of President Kennedy's?

In what respects, if any, does it more resemble President Obama's?

In what respects is it distinctive?

Governor Romney quotes John Adams: "We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion... Our constitution was made for a moral and religious people."

What claim is he supporting? Is this an effective use of evidence?