**Theocracy**

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**Theocracy** is a form of government in which a state is understood as governed by immediate divine guidance especially a state ruled by [clergy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clergy), or by officials who are regarded as divinely guided.

From the perspective of the theocratic government, "God himself is recognized as the head" of the state, hence the term [*theocracy*](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/theocracy), from the Greek θεοκρατια "rule of God", a term used by [Josephus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josephus) of the [kingdoms of Israel and Judah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdoms_of_Israel_and_Judah). Theocratic governments enact [theonomic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theonomy) laws (rules).

A theocracy may be [monist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monism) in form, where the administrative [hierarchy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hierarchy) of the government is identical with the administrative hierarchy of the religion, or it may have two 'arms,' but with the state administrative hierarchy subordinate to the religious hierarchy.

Theocracy should be distinguished from other secular forms of government that have a [state religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_religion), or are merely influenced by theological or moral concepts, and [monarchies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarchies) held "[By the Grace of God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/By_the_Grace_of_God)".

**History of the concept**

The word *theocracy* originate from the Greek θεοκρατία, meaning "the rule of God". This in turn derives from the Greek words θεός (*theos*, from an Indo-European root occurring in religious concepts), meaning "god", and κρατεῖν (*kratein*), meaning "to rule." Thus the meaning of the word in Greek was "rule by [god](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God)(s)" or human incarnation(s) of god(s).

It was first coined by [Josephus Flavius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josephus_Flavius) in the first century A.D. to describe the characteristic government for [Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew). Josephus argued that while the Greeks recognized three types of government: [monarchy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monarchy), [aristocracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristocracy), and [anarchy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarchy), the Jews were unique in that they had a system of government that did not fit into those categories. Josephus understood theocracy as a fourth form of government in which only God and his law is sovereign. Josephus' definition was widely accepted until the [Enlightenment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Age_of_Enlightenment) era, when the term started to collect more universalisticand negative [connotations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Connotation), especially in [Hegel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hegel)'s hands.

The first recorded English use was in 1622, with the meaning "sacerdotal government under divine inspiration" (as in Biblical Israel before the rise of kings); the meaning "priestly or religious body wielding political and civil power" is recorded from 1825.

The word has been mostly used to label certain politically unpopular [societies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Societies) as less rational or developed. The concept is used in [sociology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociology) and other social sciences, but the term is often used inaccurately, especially in popular rhetoric.

In the most common usage of the term theocracy, some civil rulers are leaders of the dominant [religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion) (e.g., the [Byzantine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantium) emperor as patron of the head of the official Church); the government claims to rule on behalf of [God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God) or a higher power, as specified by the local religion, and divine approval of government institutions and laws. These characteristics apply also to a [caesaropapist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caesaropapism) regime. The Byzantine Empire however was not theocratic since the patriarch answered to the emperor, not vice versa; similarly in Tudor England the crown forced the church to break away from Rome so the royal (and, especially later, parliamentary) power could assume full control of the now [Anglican](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican_Church) hierarchy and confiscate most church property and income.

Taken literally or strictly, *theocracy* means rule by God or gods and refers primarily to an internal "rule of the heart", especially in its biblical application. The common, generic use of the term, as defined above in terms of rule by a church or analogous religious leadership, would be more accurately described as an *ecclesiocracy*.

In a pure theocracy, the civil leader is believed to have a direct personal connection with God. For example, a [prophet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophet) like [Moses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses) led the Israelites, and the prophet [Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad) ruled the early Muslims. Law proclaimed by the ruler is also considered a divine revelation, and hence the law of God. An **ecclesiocracy**, on the other hand, is a situation where the religious leaders assume a leading role in the state, but do not claim that they are instruments of divine revelation. For example, the [prince-bishops](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince-bishop) of the European Middle Ages, where the bishop was also the temporal ruler. The papacy in the Papal States occupied a middle ground between theocracy and ecclesiocracy, since the pope did not claim he is a prophet who receives revelation from God, but merely the (in rare cases infallible) interpreter of already-received revelation. Religiously endorsed monarchies fall between these two poles, according to the relative strengths of the religious and political organs.

The example which Flavious gave for *theocracy*, the rule of the [Temple of Jerusalem](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_of_Jerusalem)'s [High Priest](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kohen_Gadol), would under the present definition be an *Ecclesiocracy*, since these (often worldly) priests did not claim to have any revelation or direct connection with God.

Secular governments can also coexist with a [state religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_religion) or delegate some aspects of civil law to religious communities. For example, in [Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israel) civil marriage is governed by Jewish religious institutions for Jews, by Muslim religious institutions for Muslims, and by Christian religious institutions for Christians. India similarly delegates control of marriage and some other civil matters to the religious communities, in large part as a way of accommodating its Muslim minority. Egypt was run in both a monarchic and theocratic fashion in which the pharaoh was the head priest...

**Current states with theocratic aspects**

**Islamic states**

Main article: [Islamic state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_state)

Main article: [Sharia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia)

An [Islamic state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_state) is a state that has adopted Islam, specifically Sharia, as its foundations for political institutions, or laws, exclusively, and has implemented the Islamic ruling system khilafah (Arabic خلافة), and is therefore a theocracy. Although there is much debate as to which states or groups operate strictly according to Islamic Law, Sharia is the official basis for state laws in the following countries: [Yemen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Yemen#Freedom_of_religion), [Afghanistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_religion_in_Afghanistan), [Pakistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_religion_in_Pakistan), [Somalia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_in_Somalia), [Sudan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Sudan), [Saudi Arabia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_religion_in_Saudi_Arabia), [Mauritania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mauritania), and [Oman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oman). In [Nigeria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria), the constitution provides that states may elect to use Shari'a laws and courts, though non-Muslims are not required in any state to submit to Shari'a jurisdiction and adherence varies by state.

[Iran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran) maintains religious courts for all aspects of law and have [religious police](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_police) to maintain social compliance. while its government is described as a "[theocratic republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_republic)". Iran's head of state, or Supreme Leader, is an Islamic cleric appointed for life by an elected body called [Assembly of Experts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assembly_of_Experts). The [Council of Guardians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_Guardians), considered part of the executive branch of government, is responsible for determining if legislation is in line with Islamic law and customs (the [Sharia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia)), and can bar candidates from elections, and greenlight or ban investigations into the election process.

In [Egypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt#Relgion), the constitution requires that any new legislation must at least implicitly agree with Islamic law; however, the constitution bans political parties with a religious agenda.

**Holy See (Vatican City)**

Main article: [Politics of Vatican City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Vatican_City)

Following the unification of Italy, [Vatican City](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatican_City) became the last surviving territory of the former [Papal States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papal_States). In 1929, the State of Vatican City was formally recognized as an independent state through treaties with the Italian government. The head of state of the Vatican is the [pope](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope), elected by the [College of Cardinals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/College_of_Cardinals), an assembly of senior Catholic clerics. A pope is elected for life, and voting is limited to cardinals under 80 years of age. A Secretary for Relations with States, directly responsible for international relations, is appointed by the pope. The Vatican legal system is rooted in [Canon Law](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canon_law_(Catholic_Church)) and is subject to the dictates of the pope, who *"has the fullness of legislative, executive and judicial powers."*

**Israel**

See also: [Religion in Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Israel), [Land of Israel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_of_Israel), and [Zionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zionism)

Israel operates under a [parliamentary system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parliamentary_system) as a [democratic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy) [republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic) with [universal suffrage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_suffrage). However, Israel is frequently described as being a theocratic state.

Since Israel was founded by the [Zionist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zionist) movement as a Jewish state, and Judaism as a religion is often conflated Judaism as a nationality, Israel can have the semblance of guiding theocratic principles in its government. [Mitchell Bard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitchell_Bard) writes:

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| **“** | By blurring the distinction between nationality and religion, Israelis find themselves frequently accused of living in a theocratic state and in many ways it would seem Israel fits the mold of a sacred state. | **”** |

Indeed, Israeli writer [Gideon Levy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gideon_Levy) in his [Haaretz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haaretz) [op-ed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Op-ed) opines the country is a "semi-theocracy", writing, "Between Stockholm and Tehran, Israel of 2009, with its many religious attributes, is closer to Tehran," closing with "Let's admit that we live in a country with many religious and [halakhic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halakha) attributes. Let's remove the concocted secularist guise with which we have wrapped ourselves." Others point out that Israeli citizens have diverse religions, even as the country only [grants instant citizenship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_of_Return) to Jews.

Such attributes, while appearing somewhat theocratic do not qualify the country as a theocracy, Emanuel Gutman argues:

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| **“** | The organs of government and state power neither derive their legal authority from religion or church nor their legitimation from any divine source. It cannot be claimed with any semblance of realism that state and church are coequal partners in the governance of the state. Indeed, all legal powers of the religious institutions and organs are ultimately devolved upon them by the state. | **”** |

**Central Tibetan Administration**

The [Central Tibetan Administration of His Holiness the Dalai Lama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Tibetan_Administration_of_His_Holiness_the_Dalai_Lama), although not recognized as a government by any country, has a theocratic character.

**States with official state religion**

Main article: [State religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_religion)

Though having a state religion is not sufficient to be a theocracy, it is a theocratic aspect. Many countries have a state religion without government directly deriving its powers from a divine authority. The following states, for example, recognize some form of [Christianity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity) as their state or official religion (by denomination):

**Roman Catholic**

Jurisdictions which recognize [Roman Catholicism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church) as their state or official religion:

* [Costa Rica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Costa_Rica" \o "Costa Rica)
* [Liechtenstein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liechtenstein" \o "Liechtenstein)
* [Malta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malta" \o "Malta)
* [Monaco](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monaco" \o "Monaco)
* Some [cantons of Switzerland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cantons_of_Switzerland) (state religion):
  + [Appenzell Innerrhoden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appenzell_Innerrhoden) (declared "religion of the people of Appenzell Innerrhoden")
  + [Aargau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aargau)
  + [Basel-Country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basel-Country)
  + [Berne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canton_of_Berne)
  + [Glarus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canton_of_Glarus)
  + [Graubünden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graub%C3%BCnden)
  + [Nidwalden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nidwalden)
  + [Schwyz](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canton_of_Schwyz)
  + [Thurgau](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thurgau)
  + [Uri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canton_of_Uri)

A number of countries, including [Andorra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andorra), [Argentina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argentina), [Dominican Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominican_Republic), [El Salvador](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Salvador), [Italy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy), [Indonesia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indonesia), [Haiti](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haiti), [Honduras](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honduras), [Paraguay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paraguay), [Peru](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peru), [Poland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poland), [Portugal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portugal), [Slovakia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slovakia), and [Spain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spain), give a special recognition to Catholicism in their constitution despite not making it the state religion.

**Eastern Orthodox**

Jurisdictions which recognize one of the [Eastern Orthodox Churches](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox_Church) as their state religion:

* [Cyprus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyprus" \o "Cyprus) ([Cypriot Orthodox Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cypriot_Orthodox_Church))
* [Greece](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece) ([Church of Greece](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Greece))
* [Finland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finland): [Finnish Orthodox Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finnish_Orthodox_Church) has a special relationship with the Finnish state. The internal structure of the church is described in the Orthodox Church Act. The church has a power to tax its members and corporations if a majority of shareholders are members. The church does not consider itself a state church, as the state does not have the authority to affect its internal workings or theology.

**Lutheran**

Jurisdictions which recognize a [Lutheran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lutheranism) church as their state religion:

* [Denmark](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denmark" \o "Denmark) ([Church of Denmark](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Denmark))
* [Iceland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iceland) ([Church of Iceland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Iceland))
* [Norway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norway) ([Church of Norway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Norway))
* [Finland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finland): [Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Lutheran_Church_of_Finland) has a special relationship with the Finnish state, its internal structure being described in a special law, the Church Act. The Church Act can be amended only by a decision of the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and subsequent ratification by the parliament. The Church Act is protected by the Finnish constitution, and the state cannot change the Church Act without changing the constitution. The church has a power to tax its members and all corporations unless a majority of shareholders are members of the [Finnish Orthodox Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finnish_Orthodox_Church). The state collects these taxes for the church, for a fee. On the other hand, the church is required to give a burial place for everyone in its graveyards. The Finnish president also decides the themes for the intercession days. The church does not consider itself a state church, as the Finnish state does not have the power to influence its internal workings or its theology, although it has a veto in those changes of the internal structure which require changing the Church Act. Neither does the Finnish state accord any precedence to Lutherans or the Lutheran faith in its own acts.

**Anglican**

Jurisdictions that recognize an [Anglican](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglican) church as their state religion:

* [England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England" \o "England) ([Church of England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_England))

**Reformed**

Jurisdictions which recognize a [Reformed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformed_churches) church as their state religion:

* [Tuvalu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuvalu" \o "Tuvalu) ([Church of Tuvalu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Tuvalu))

**Historic states with theocratic aspects**

See also: [Imperial cult](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_cult)

The largest and best known theocracies in history were the [Umayyad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umayyad) and early Abassid [Caliphate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliphate), and the [Papal States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papal_States). And as with any other state or empire, [pragmatism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pragmatism) was part of the politics of these [*de jure*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_jure) theocracies.

**Antiquity**

*Further information:* [*Imperial cult*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_cult)*and*[*State church of the Roman Empire*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_church_of_the_Roman_Empire)

The [imperial cults](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_cult) in [Ancient Egypt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Egypt) and elsewhere deified the ruling monarch, so that the state religion was dedicated to the worship of the ruler as a deity, or the incarnation of a deity.

In ancient and medieval Christianity, [Caesaropapism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caesaropapism) is the doctrine where a head of state is at the same time the head of the church.

**Reformation**

[Geneva](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva), during the period of [John Calvin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Calvin)'s greatest influence and the [Massachusetts Bay Colony](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massachusetts_Bay_Colony) of the "[Puritans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puritans)" had many characteristics of Protestant theocracies.

During the short reign (1494–1498) of [Girolamo Savonarola](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Girolamo_Savonarola), a [Dominican](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominican_Order) priest, the city of Florence could have been considered a theocracy. During his rule, un-Christian books, statues, poetry, and other items were burned (in the [Bonfire of the Vanities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bonfire_of_the_Vanities)), [sodomy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sodomy) was made a capital offense, and other Christian practices became law.

**Mormonism**

Another ecclesiocracy was the administration of the short-lived [State of Deseret](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_of_Deseret), an independent entity briefly organized in the American West by [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints). Its original borders stretched from western [Colorado](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colorado) to the [southern California](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_California) coast. When the Mormons arrived in the valley of the [Great Salt Lake](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Salt_Lake) in 1847, the [Great Basin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Basin) was still a part of Mexico and had no secular government. As a result, [Brigham Young](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brigham_Young) administered the region both spiritually and temporally through the highly organized and centralized [Melchizedek Priesthood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melchizedek_priesthood_(Latter_Day_Saints)). This original organization was based upon a concept called [theodemocracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodemocracy), a governmental system combining Biblical theocracy with mid-19th-century American political ideals, including heavy reliance upon the U.S. Constitution.

The [treaty of Guadalupe Hildalgo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Guadalupe_Hildalgo) resulted in the [Mexican Cession](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_Cession) by which Deseret was incorporated into the United States. In 1849, the Saints organized a secular government in Utah, although many ecclesiastical leaders maintained their positions of secular power. The Mormons also petitioned Congress to have Deseret admitted into the Union as a state. However, under the [Compromise of 1850](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Compromise_of_1850), [Utah Territory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utah_Territory) was created and Brigham Young was appointed governor. In this situation, Young still stood as head of the LDS Church as well as Utah's secular government.

After the abortive [Utah War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utah_War) of 1857–1858, the replacement of Young by an outside Federal Territorial Governor, the eventual resolution of controversies regarding [plural marriage](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plural_marriage), and accession by Utah to statehood, the apparent temporal aspects of LDS [theodemocracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodemocracy) receded markedly. However, — like many Christians, Jews, and Muslims — Latter-day Saints regard some form of theocracy with God as the head (king) of a chiliastic world government to be the true political ideal. But, until the [Second Coming of Christ](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Coming_of_Christ), the Mormons teach in their 12th Article of Faith: submission to the powers that be. But true to their beliefs in individual liberty and moral accountability, they exhibit a strong preference for democratic-republican, representative government as embodied in the [Constitution of the United States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_the_United_States). *See also* [Theodemocracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodemocracy).

**Other**

[Montenegro](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montenegro) offers a singular example of monarchs willingly turning their power to ecclesiastic authority (Montenegrin Orthodox), as the last of the [House of Crnojević](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_of_Crnojevi%C4%87) (styled [Grand Voivode](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Voivode), not sovereign princes) did, in order to preserve national unity before the [Ottoman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) onslaught as a separate [millet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millet_(Ottoman_Empire)) under an autochthonous [ethnarch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnarch). When Montenegro re-established secular dynastic succession by the proclamation of princedom in 1851, it did so in favor of the last [Prince-bishop](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prince-bishop), who changed his style from [*Vladika*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vladika) *i upravitelj Crne Gore i Brde* "Vladika [bishop] and Ruler of Montenegro and Brda" to Po *Bozjoj milosti* [*knjaz*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knjaz) *i* [*gospodar*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospodar) *Crne Gore i Brde* "[By the grace of God](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/By_the_grace_of_God) Prince and Sovereign of Montenegro and Brda", thus rendering his *de facto* dynasty (the Petrović-Njegoš family since 1696) a hereditary one.

**Islam**

The period when [Medina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medina) was ruled by the [Islamic prophet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_prophet) [Muhammad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad) is occasionally classed as a theocracy. By 630, Muhammad had established a theocracy in [Makkah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makkah). Most Sunni Muslims believe that only the Prophet Muhammad was able to be both a governmental as well as religious leader. Other plausible examples of Islamic theocracy might be [Mahdist Sudan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Ahmad#Mahdiyah) and the [Taliban](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban) state in [Afghanistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan) (1996–2001). Most irregular was the non-permanent rule of the [Akhoonds](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Akhoond) (imams) in the later [princely state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princely_state) of [Swat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_of_Swat), a valley in (first British India's, later Pakistan's) [North-West Frontier Province](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North-West_Frontier_Province). Theocratic movements arose in the Arab world in the 1970s.

**Buddhism**

Unified religious rule in Tibet began in 1642, when the [Fifth Dalai Lama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fifth_Dalai_Lama) allied with the military power of the Mongol [Gushri Khan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gushri_Khan) to consolidate the political power and control centered around his office as head of the Gelug school. This form of government is known as the [dual system of government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dual_system_of_government). Prior to 1642, particular monasteries and monks had held considerable power throughout Tibet, but had not achieved anything approaching complete control, though power continued to be held in a diffuse, feudal system after the ascension of the Fifth Dalai Lama. Power in Tibet was held by a number of traditional elites, including members of the nobility, the heads of the major Buddhist sects (including their various [tulkus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tulku)), and various large and influential monastic communities. Tibet during this period existed as a feudal theocracy, with a large class of serfs (consisting largely of non-noble Buddhist laymen) working on estates owned by monastic leaders and members of the secular aristocracy.

Political power was sometimes used by monastic leaders to suppress rival religious schools through the confiscation of property and direct violence. Social mobility was somewhat possible through the attainment of a monastic education, or recognition as a reincarnated teacher, but such institutions were dominated by the traditional elites and governed by political intrigue. Non-Buddhists in Tibet were members of an outcast underclass.

**Fictional Theocracies**

Depictions of a fictional society dominated by a theocracy recur in [science fiction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Science_fiction), [speculative fiction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speculative_fiction) and [fantasy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fantasy). Such depictions are mostly [dystopian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utopian_and_dystopian_fiction#Dystopian_fiction), and in some cases humorous or satirical.

* [*The Earthquake in Chile*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Earthquake_in_Chile), By [Heinrich von Kleist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinrich_von_Kleist) (1807)
* *Voyagers VI The Return, By Ben Bova*
* [*If This Goes On—*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/If_This_Goes_On%E2%80%94)*/*[*Revolt in 2100*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolt_in_2100) by [Robert Heinlein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Heinlein) (1940, revised and expanded 1953)
* [*Gather, Darkness*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Gather,_Darkness&action=edit&redlink=1) by [Fritz Leiber](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fritz_Leiber) (1943)
* *The Lovers* by [Philip Jose Farmer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Jose_Farmer) (1952 novella, expanded to full length 1961, revised 1977)
* [*A Woman a Day*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=A_Woman_a_Day&action=edit&redlink=1) (also *"Moth and Rust"* and *"The Day of Timestop"*) by [Philip Jose Farmer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Jose_Farmer) (1953 novella, expanded to full length 1960, same universe as *"The Lovers"*)
* [*Messiah*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Messiah_(1954_novel)&action=edit&redlink=1) by [Gore Vidal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gore_Vidal) (1954) [ISBN 0-14-118039-0](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:BookSources/0141180390)
* [*Lord of Light*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_of_Light) by [Roger Zelazny](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Zelazny) (1967)
* [*The Last Starship from Earth*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_Starship_from_Earth) by [John Boyd](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Boyd_(author)) (1968)
* [*The Goblin Tower*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Goblin_Tower) by [L. Sprague de Camp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L._Sprague_de_Camp) (1968) (episode set in the theocratic city-state of Tarxia)
* [*The Stork Factor*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Stork_Factor&action=edit&redlink=1) by [Zach Hughes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zach_Hughes) (1975)
* [*Run, Come See Jerusalem!*](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Run,_Come_See_Jerusalem!&action=edit&redlink=1) by [Richard C. Meredith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_C._Meredith) (1976)
* [*The Handmaid's Tale*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Handmaid%27s_Tale) by [Margaret Atwood](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margaret_Atwood) (1985)
* [*Candle*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candle_(novel)) by [John Barnes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Barnes_(author)) (2000) . New York: Tor. [ISBN 0-8125-8968-8](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:BookSources/0812589688).
* [*The Sky So Big and Black*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sky_So_Big_and_Black) by [John Barnes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Barnes_(author)) (2003) . New York: Tor. [ISBN 0-7653-4222-7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:BookSources/0765342227)
* [*The Accidental Time Machine*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Accidental_Time_Machine) by [Joe Haldeman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Haldeman) (2007)
* In [*Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fire_Emblem:_The_Sacred_Stones), Pontifex Mansel leads the Theocracy of Rausten.
* The alien alliance known as "the Covenant" in the [*Halo*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halo_(series)) series.
* [Atlantis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantis) in [Age of Mythology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_Mythology) is supposed to be governed by a theocrat. The politics are not explored however, and it is not stated how the theocrat kept himself in power when the gods abandoned the civilization in the expansion pack's campaign.
* The Amarr Empire in [EVE Online](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EVE_Online)

**See also**

* [Christian left](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_left)
* [Christian right](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_right)
* [Establishment of religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Establishment_of_religion)
* [Faith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faith)
* [Khalistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khalistan)
* [List of forms of government](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_forms_of_government)
* [Religious left](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_left)
* [Religious right](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_right)
* [Sacred king](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacred_king)
* [Separation of Church and State](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Separation_of_Church_and_State)
* [State church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/State_church)
* [Theodemocracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodemocracy)
* [Unification Church and political involvement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unification_Church_and_political_involvement)

**Christian:**

* [Christian Exodus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Exodus)
* [Christian Reconstructionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_Reconstructionism)
* [Christianism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianism)
* [Divine Right of Kings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_Right_of_Kings)
* [Dominionism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominionism)
* [Falange](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falange)
* [National Catholicism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Catholicism)
* [Rexism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rexism)
* [Ustaše](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Usta%C5%A1e)

**Islamic:**

* [Iranian Revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iranian_Revolution)
* [Islamic Banking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_Banking)
* [Islamic republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_republic)
* [Islamic state](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_state)
* [Islamism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamism)
* [Political aspects of Islam](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_aspects_of_Islam)
* [Religious police](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_police)
* [Qutbism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qutbism)
* [Taliban](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taliban)