

Lutheran[®]

L I F E

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*Faith and
politics:
an honest
conversation*

THE PURPOSE OF



GOVERNMENT

“There are three things I’ve learned never to discuss with people: religion, politics, and the Great Pumpkin,” declares the character Linus van Pelt in the famous 1966 *Peanuts* movie *It’s the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown*.

While it’s rather easy to avoid discussing the Great Pumpkin, a make-believe Halloween character created for a cartoon world, getting around the topics of religion and politics isn’t quite as simple. While this well-intentioned advice is meant to skirt around heated conversations at social gatherings, I’m not convinced it is the counsel we should heed. Certainly, we need to consider how we discuss such topics, and more important, how we respectfully listen to others during such conversations. But to avoid them altogether is to ignore the proverbial elephant in the room.

Jesus makes it clear that Christians are not off the hook from giving civic leaders the respect that is due to them. When cornered by religious leaders questioning who they should give allegiance to, Jesus wisely counsels, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21; Luke 20:25; Mark 12:17).

Martin Luther explains that Christians live in two kingdoms: the kingdom of the right and the left. While God presides as King over all of creation, He has established order and purpose for all life through these kingdoms. The right-hand kingdom, the kingdom of grace, is made known through the Church. Forgiveness is her currency, as we receive mercy from God and exchange it with one another. From these gifts of faith and forgiveness flow a life of love lived out among those around us in the left-hand kingdom. This kingdom, also called the kingdom of power, is ordered and run by the civil government. Governmental structure, laws, and the enforcement of those laws provide the foundation for this kingdom as God works through it to provide security and peace throughout the land.

The purpose of the government is to create and maintain a society where people are safe to carry out their various vocations of love and service to their neighbor. In the vocation issue of *Lutheran Life*, we discussed the various opportunities we have to care for others as we consider our vocations, or callings, through which we

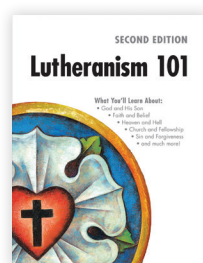
serve others. Luther explains, “A Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor. Otherwise he is not a Christian. He lives in Christ through faith and in his neighbor through love” (*Luther’s Works*, volume 31, p. 371). The government helps provide the systematized structure through which we interact with and care for our neighbor in this land.

While it’s critically important to keep the roles of the left- and right-hand kingdoms well defined, we must be careful not to put them in two separate boxes that don’t touch. Life is much more interconnected than an either-or stance. But before we think the right-hand kingdom is where we do the “spiritual stuff” and the left-hand kingdom is where we do the “earthly stuff,” we must remember the interplay between faith and works. We receive faith in Jesus and nurture it through our lives in the right-hand kingdom as members of the Body of Christ. However, it is in the left-hand kingdom where good works take place as our faith bears the fruit of love. The two kingdoms go hand in hand.

Recognizing the distinct yet connected relationship we have between both kingdoms can help direct us as we navigate topics of religion and politics. Among other things, “The doctrine of the two kingdoms allows for Christians to embrace their lives in the world in all of its secularity because God reigns here too,” say authors Veith and Sutton in *Authentic Christianity* (p. 181). God’s sovereignty over both church and state, as well as our purposed existence within each kingdom, gives us all the more reason to discuss faith and government rather than hide under the table.

The elephant in the room isn’t going anywhere, and neither is God’s truth. So pull up a chair and breathe in deeply. It’s time to put aside the rules of etiquette and dive into the reality of life where faith and government intersect. ‡

LUTHERANISM 101



Learn about what it means to be Lutheran, both as a new believer or long time Lutheran, with easy to understand explanations and graphics that tackle big theological concepts. Find this title and others from this magazine at cph.org/lresources.

POLITICIZING JESUS



Believe it or not, Jesus is not a Republican. He's not a Democrat either. Nor is He an Independent or a member of any other political party. Jesus doesn't have a political agenda for the United States of America. And yet He's also not apathetic or dismissive of what happens in the world's political spheres. We shouldn't be either. Part of what it means to be a person who lives in this country is that we have vocational responsibilities to our government and civic leaders. God cares about how we live

in America individually and corporately, though these instructions don't explicitly align us—or God—with specific political parties or candidates.

It can be so easy to fashion a version of Jesus to fit our political views, to blur the lines between the hope promised in a political campaign with the hope we cling to in Christ. For while our faith certainly should inform our political convictions, we must be careful not to confuse God's plan to save the world with a politician's platform.

People have struggled with politicizing Jesus from the beginning. The Jews understood the Messiah to be a political ruler who would restore the kingdom of Israel to all its grandeur and establish the throne of David forever. They believed the Messiah would make Israel a great, indestructible nation among all nations, and the Jewish people would return to the glory days in a land flowing with milk, honey, and unending blessings. These were their hopes—political hopes—when Jesus came on the scene.

When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the people shouted, “Hosanna, save us!” because they believed Jesus was the political leader they’d been eagerly awaiting, who would liberate them from Roman rule. Even the fictitious charge that finally warranted Jesus’ crucifixion was a political one: that He claimed to be the King of the Jews (John 19:12, 15–16). And even after Jesus’ resurrection, the disciples continued to ask if now would be the time for Him to establish Himself as an earthly king (Acts 1:6). The people were obsessed with the potential political implications of Jesus as the Christ.

We continue to politicize Jesus today. As soon as we make Jesus’ main mission about our comfortable life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, we exchange our Savior, Jesus, for a false Christ. Rev. Matthew Richard explains in his book *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?* that when we don’t distinguish between the two kingdoms, we create a God whose ideals match the American dream of individualism, innovation, democracy, capitalism, opportunity, and freedom of choice. This includes “exchang[ing] the corporate nature of the church in favor of individualism [and] . . . childlike dependence with self-made independence” (p. 91–92). Richard explains that Jesus is a crucified Savior for poor miserable sinners, not a powerful ruler who puts heretics, atheists, and unpatriotic anti-nationalists in their place. And that’s okay.

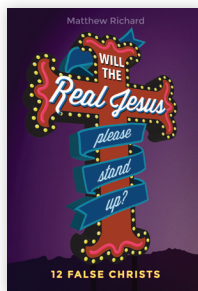
We can support and applaud our government without looking to them to carry out Christ’s plan for our salvation. We can even respect leaders who do not confess faith in Christ when they nevertheless work for the benefit and welfare of the people. When we understand the distinction between the two kingdoms, we can value them both for what they are. We can give thanks to God for the government that keeps our land in good order and executes rules and regulations for our safety without seeing our leaders as the reason for our secu-

rity. And we can look to God as the source of our hope now and forevermore. ‡

Consider these discussion questions from *Authentic Christianity* (p. 195):

- 1 What are some different ways that Christians today are confused about the relationship between the Church and the world? How does the doctrine of the two kingdoms help clarify the Christian’s life in the world?
- 2 What are some misconceptions about the doctrine of the two kingdoms?
- 3 How is God actively present in the secular realm, even amid people who do not know Him?

WILL THE REAL JESUS PLEASE STAND UP?



Today’s culture has warped the image of Jesus. Re-center around Christ as described biblically and see how to spot the 12 false Christs that have made their way into Christianity. Find this title and others listed in this magazine at cph.org/llresources.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT AND LEADERS

“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God” (Romans 13:1).

Throughout the New Testament, St. Paul makes clear that Christians are to respect and submit to their civic rulers—and in case you think Paul didn’t know how terrible government and political leaders can be, keep in mind that he wrote these words when Nero, arguably the cruellest Roman ruler, was Paul’s governing authority.

Despite the person in the seat of political power, Paul urges us to respect the office of government officials as part of the order and structure God has established in creation. This isn’t just Paul’s radical idea but God’s. God cares so much about our right relationship with the government that He included it in the Ten Commandments.

First, God makes it clear that we should have no other gods before Him. No leader—political or otherwise—should be feared, honored, or trusted above God, the one true King. Question 24 of *Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation* says that to have a god is “to trust in and rely on something or someone wholeheartedly to help us in times of need and to give us all good things.” This means we take it seriously that God is the King of kings and Lord of lords. He rules and directs all of creation, which includes entrusting power and authority to our leaders. With this in mind, let us consider what God’s gift of government is tasked to do as we look at the Fourth Commandment: “Honor your father and your mother.”

Luther explains that this commandment is about fearing and loving not only our parents but also other authorities. This includes pastors, teachers, employers, and government officials. All earthly authority

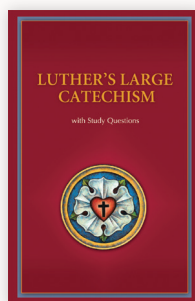
is derived from the same pattern of order found in the familial unit of parents and children. As parents oversee their household and children are submissive to their parents, so governmental leaders are responsible for parenting their country and citizens responsible for submitting to their authority.

Luther explains, “Through them [civil rulers], as through our parents, God gives to us food, house and home, protection, and security” (Large Catechism I 150). As God works through parents to care for children, so, too, has God established governing authorities to be responsible for the care of the people in their land. As those people, we fear and love God when we recognize and honor the authorities in our lives.

Even when we disagree with the policies and decisions of governmental leaders, we are still to respect them because of the vocation they hold as being responsible to God for our protection and safety. Because civil authorities are linked to the line and vocational responsibilities of parents, Luther goes so far as to say “it is our duty to honor them and to value them [civil authority] greatly as the dearest treasure and the most precious jewel upon earth” (LC I 150). These are the people and structures intended to provide us safe and orderly lives through which we live out *our* vocations of love and service to others.

When we trust God to be God, follow His commands, and submit to the systems He has established to provide us an orderly life, we will experience the joy and happiness that comes from following the Lord (see LC I 151). Let us join with King David, who penned this psalm of praise to the King even greater than he. While we recognize the authority of our earthly leaders, we give all thanks and praise to our King, Jesus, whose kingdom lasts forever. †

LUTHER’S LARGE CATECHISM WITH STUDY QUESTIONS



Explore Luther’s catechism teachings with an in-depth study with study questions, a summary of Christian doctrine, and the entirety of Luther’s Large Catechism. Find this title and others from this magazine at cph.org/llresources.

PSALM 145

I will extol You, my God and King,

and bless Your name forever and ever.

Every day I will bless You

*and praise Your name forever and
ever.*

*Great is the LORD, and greatly to be
praised,*

and His greatness is unsearchable.

*One generation shall commend Your
works to another,*

and shall declare Your mighty acts.

On the glorious splendor of Your majesty,

*and on Your wondrous works, I will
meditate.*

*They shall speak of the might of Your
awesome deeds,*

and I will declare Your greatness.

*They shall pour forth the fame of Your
abundant goodness*

*and shall sing aloud of Your
righteousness.*

The LORD is gracious and merciful,

*slow to anger and abounding in
steadfast love.*

The LORD is good to all,

*and His mercy is over all that He has
made.*

*All Your works shall give thanks to You,
O LORD,*

and all Your saints shall bless You!

*They shall speak of the glory of Your
kingdom*

and tell of Your power,

*to make known to the children of man
Your mighty deeds,*

*and the glorious splendor of Your
kingdom.*

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,

*and Your dominion endures throughout
all generations.*

*[The LORD is faithful in all His words
and kind in all His works.]*

The LORD upholds all who are falling

and raises up all who are bowed down.

The eyes of all look to You,

*and You give them their food in due
season.*

You open Your hand;

*You satisfy the desire of every living
thing.*

The LORD is righteous in all His ways

and kind in all His works.

The LORD is near to all who call on Him,

to all who call on Him in truth.

*He fulfills the desire of those who fear
Him;*

*He also hears their cry and saves
them.*

The LORD preserves all who love Him,

but all the wicked He will destroy.

*My mouth will speak the praise of the
LORD,*

*and let all flesh bless His holy name
forever and ever.*

Conflicting Ideas in

Remind them [Christians] to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. (Titus 3:1–2)

Whew! I had to double check that these verses were written in AD 68 and not AD 2020. Boy, do I need this reminder, and I bet you could use it too. As we consider our current political landscape, it's sometimes hard to submit to our rulers, avoid speaking evil, avoid quarreling (regardless of who starts it), and practice gentleness. Instead, this passage exhorts us to be ready to do every good work and show perfect courtesy toward all people.

Scripture certainly challenges us to better respect our rulers and recognize the order God has established in the left-hand kingdom through the role of government. But there is a limit. We also know the political corruption and oppression that run rampant throughout our fallen world. What happens when those in authority are not ruling in a way that upholds peace and the safety of the people?

The disciples were arrested multiple times for preaching in the name of Jesus. When the high priest strictly charged Peter and the disciples to stop, the disciples stood boldly in their conviction, declaring, “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). That’s the same conviction we stand by today, for the call to submit to the governing authorities does not keep us from speaking out against corrupt government. Authors Veith and Sutton explain Luther’s example of both respecting authority and questioning its actions during the Reformation:

Far from being a period of political quietism and passive acceptance of authority, the Reformation provoked political upheaval, rebellion, and a thorough-going questioning of authority. Luther defied both the pope and emperor. Peasants revolted. Local princes, convinced of the truth of Lutheranism, rebelled against their feudal overlords and, specifically, the emperor. This escalated into armed conflict between the Lutheran princes and the Holy Roman Empire, first with the Smalcald War and, later, the Thirty Years’ War. Yes, Luther piously counseled submission, to the point of recommending that the princes turn him over to the emperor to be killed. Yes, Luther urged the princes to quell the peasant rebellion, which had degenerated into bloody anarchy. But Luther never held back from criticizing earthly authorities, from King Henry VIII to some of his own allies among the German princes. (Authentic Christianity, p. 179)

Understanding the two kingdoms provides a framework for relating to both church and state, recognizing God is King over both—and when the two conflict, we submit to the almighty King Jesus. As we do, we continue to uphold our vocations as citizens by respecting the leaders in office and keeping them ever in our prayers.

As Paul writes: “I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:1–4).

So, in conflict and in peace, we pray:

Church & Government

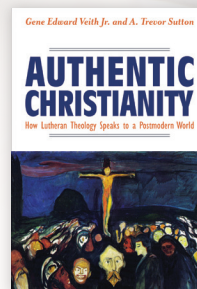
FOR GOVERNMENT

Lord God, as I pray for all who are in authority, I thank You especially for the form of government given us in our beloved country. Give me the grace with my fellow citizens to value the officers and the magistrates of our government as those sent by You. Instill in me that respect and honor that is due them. Lord, endow them with wisdom for their several duties, with a spirit of sacrifice for the common welfare, with mercy and justice, with uprightness and kindness. Correct the evils of selfishness, greed, a vain desire for honor, or abuse of power among us as well as in the other governments of the world. Grant that the true purposes of government may prevail, safeguarding peace and prosperity, so that we may live soberly and uprightly in Your sight and have opportunity to tell of You and Your kingdom. These petitions I direct to You because in Jesus I know You as my Father and Lord. Amen.

(Lutheran Book of Prayer, p. 177)

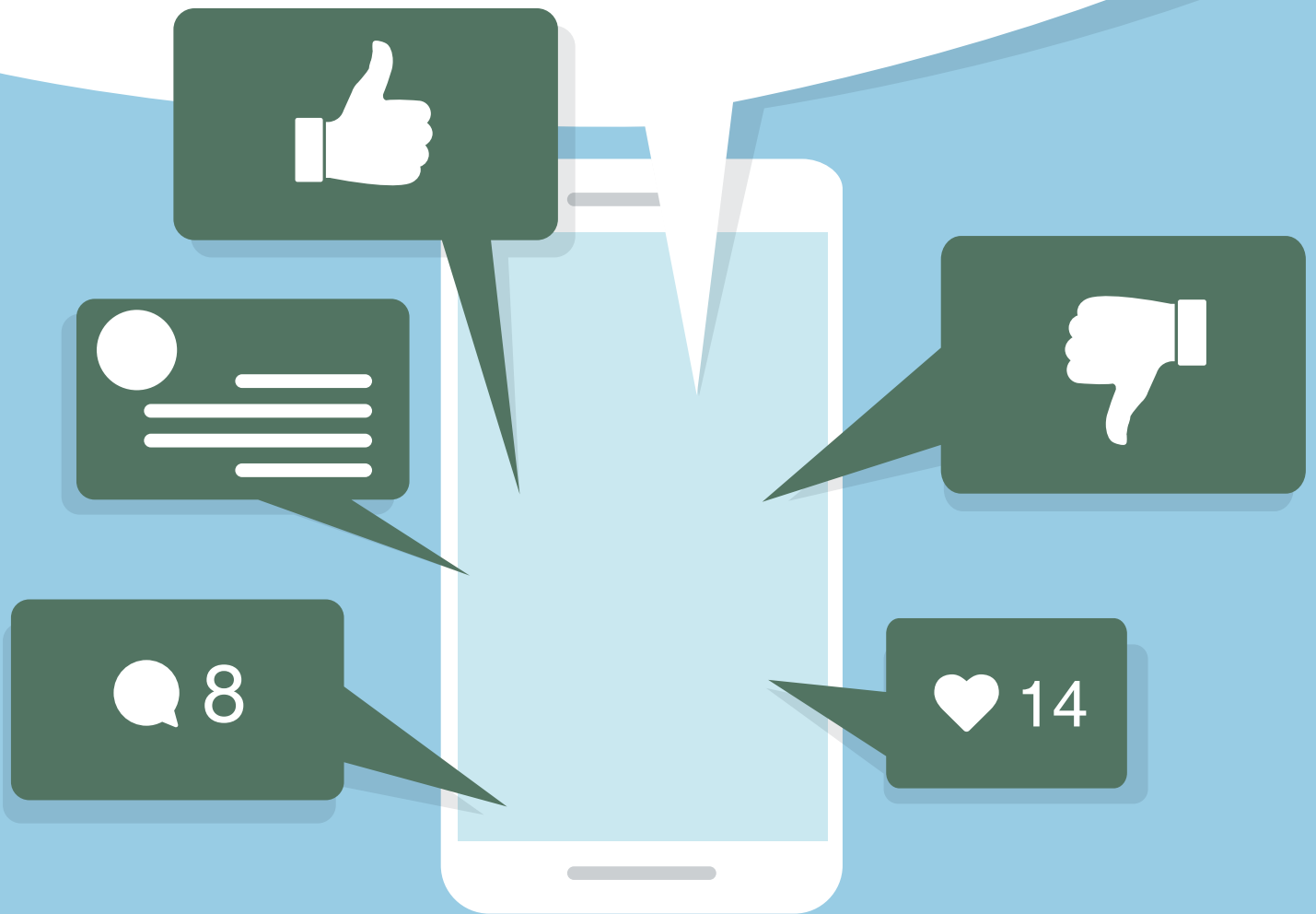


AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY



Churches across America are trying to “modernize” Christianity to fit the needs of the people. But true, authentic Christianity doesn’t need to be modernized. Rather, by being confessional, sacramental, and vocational, true Christianity can always withstand the changing of times. Find this title and others from this magazine at cph.org/lresources.

FAMILY & FRIENDS WITH DIFFERENT POLITICAL BELIEFS



It can be very tricky to navigate social gatherings when family or friends hold differing political views. This sort of tension has always existed, but it seems to be exacerbated of late by all the social media flowing at us. But why is it so difficult to listen to friends or family who have different political convictions? And why do these interactions bring out the worst in one another?

Christians are not immune to this phenomenon. We, too, feel our blood pressure rise during political debates. Moral convictions often influence political views, making people hold them even tighter.

Political rhetoric has created an us-versus-them mentality. There are wars going on around the world, yet every election season, we're reminded of the vicious combat taking place right here in our country. It's impossible to not notice all the ads on our television screens, online blogs, and attitudes at the polling booths.

But amid this conflict, Jesus says, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

Jesus doesn't tell us to love those who vote the same way we do or only pray for those who agree with us. No, Jesus tells us to love and pray for our enemies and persecutors!

Why would Jesus say this? No other leader or civilization abides by this rule. There is no expectation for interacting this way. Why should Christians seek to show kindness and respect to people they disagree with when that isn't the established rule of engagement?

Jesus is all too familiar with not following established rules. On the night He was betrayed, Jesus took a towel and poured water into a basin. One by one, He washed His disciples' dirt-stained, smelly feet—surely, an act no other leaders have done for their followers. He even washed the feet of Judas, who was actively plotting to hand Jesus over to the authorities. Immediately after Judas left to do the dirty deed, Jesus instructed the disciples to love one another as He has loved them: "By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). This kind of love serves as a sign to the world.

Who of us has loved someone who has betrayed us to the point of incarceration and death?

There is no exception to whom we are to treat with love. Jesus makes that clear.

And yet love does not mean acceptance. Neither does winning an argument equate to earning respect. Listening to a family member's opposing view does not imply your agreement with that person. It may, however, convey a level of care that only active listening can impart.

Biting your tongue to keep from interrupting a friend who's passionately sharing his point of view does not strip you of your own zeal but may allow the friendship to continue for another day. Failing to convince a colleague of your convictions during an hour-long debate doesn't mean you have somehow personally failed. Instead, you may have won a seat at the next conversation.



Sometimes, it seems we can forget that all people desire to be loved and respected. So, Jesus reminds us.



And He goes one step further. He shows us what love means—undeserved love in the face of opposing views and backstabbing friends. He makes room for differing opinions and vehement debates with His arms outstretched on the cross. He goes on our behalf, pleading with the Father to forgive us for our pettiness and temporal perspective. And He makes a way for reconciliation both with God and with one another.

I can't advise you on how to navigate a family dinner with your crazy uncle or a birthday party with your wayward cousin. But I do know Jesus' words to love and pray for one another are a good place to start. In doing so, we have nothing to lose and everything to gain while the world watches on. †

FAITH THAT SEES THROUGH THE CULTURE



The Bible is filled with both-and statements that create a tension Christians live in. See how these both-and statements work to bring clarity to the paradoxes in God's Word by asking and telling you what to do in your daily life.

cph.org/lresources.

EXERCISING “TWO-KINGDOM” CITIZENSHIP IS NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER

For this is the will of God. . . . Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. (1 Peter 2:15–17)

Our world needs people living God-given free lives for others now more than ever! Would you agree? Are you living such a life? Do you want to? That’s what exercising Two-Kingdom (2KG) citizenship is about. There’s freedom, power, and purpose in that way of life because it’s rooted in God’s 2KG engagement of the world to preserve it and to save it. So, in spite of all that’s happening today, God is at work—in the church and in the public sphere of life; government included, for the sake of all. And we who are His people get to joyfully serve in both spheres for the sake of those we love. In 1 Peter 2, we see that a part of Christian freedom is to properly honor everyone, including those in authority. Written to Christians living under a government that was persecuting Christians, Peter’s epistle teaches that such freedom could mean suffering for righteousness. It means serving as Jesus served and loving as Jesus loved. Living today not under the power of the Caesars, but in the freedoms of representative democracy, we have even more ways to undergird the sphere of Caesar for the good of all. Such 2KG citizenship blesses the community while still proclaiming the unique message of the church.

But what about “separation of church and state?” Many don’t realize that it’s not “separation” but is properly the “differentiation” of the roles of both church and state role in public life. Such differentiation is a bibli-

cal, not secular, worldview. The principles of differentiation and mutual honor have undergirded the cause of individual liberty in society better than any other ever has. James Madison noted American government’s inspiration from the biblical notion of the two kingdoms in a letter to a Reverend Schaeffer on December 3, 1821:

It illustrates the excellence of a system which, by a due distinction to which the genius and courage of Luther led the way, between what is due to Caesar and what is due God, best promotes the discharge of both obligations.¹

Luther would remind us that God’s 2KG engagement goes back to Jesus Himself, who instructs us to “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21)², honoring God’s unique work in the world to preserve and save. Differentiating God’s preserving and saving work prevents us from giving into the secular or religious puritanical temptation of believing that our best “laws” will save us (law can preserve, never save). Engaging the world as God engages it also prevents us from falling into the destructive temptation to live amoral, libertine lives that destroy civil society as if the Gospel frees us to do as we please. A 2KG, sanctified, commonsense engagement of our culture can help us sustain a civil society that still yearns for God’s ultimate answers to the questions that really matter.

So God’s 2KG engagement of the world clearly differentiates His preserving and saving work. Christians humbly need to be knowledgeable of the curbing, preserving power of God’s Law applied to us all. We

2KG believers also need to be well-versed in the saving truth of His Gospel, offering to all Christ freely without coercion. People rightly speak about the “apolitical” Jesus because Jesus didn’t come into this world to “re-order” a sinful world. But that doesn’t mean that the Bible is indifferent to a moral view for civic engagement. Jesus wasn’t sent to re-order God the Father’s preserving work—He fulfilled it. While the Gospel has no political policy component, the preserving Law of God surely does. The biblical, moral worldview has distinct notions concerning parental authority, governmental authority, the sanctity of life, just laws, and unjust laws. The moral code of the Bible isn’t indifferent to a society’s definition of marriage, chastity, civility, thievery, false witness, and the like. There is a moral worldview that is clear in the Bible, and it emanates from the very character of the God who freely created and redeemed us. Thus, 2KG citizens are called to represent God’s moral ordering and His gracious saving activity in the world for the sake of every human being on the planet.

I bet you never thought that’s what you were doing when you engaged in the cultural issues of the day, did you? To proclaim the sanctity of life is to proclaim God’s preserving view of life for all. To speak and embody the truths of “religious liberty” protects the inherent dignity and liberty of all people. To defend the institution of marriage is to bless the community, to undergird God’s most basic building block of a healthy society.

Faithfully exercising 2KG citizenship matters, and the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty is your “advocating voice in Washington, DC,” that ensures that our

government honors the Constitution’s First Amendment protections for the church so that she might freely, publicly be Christ’s Church for others without fear! And the LCRL seeks to be your educational/training resource to empower your 2KG civic engagement for the sake of the community and the church. See what we are up to at lcrifreedom.org. Religious liberty, the sanctity of life, the institution of marriage, educational freedom—such things are worth fighting for. The good news of the Gospel is worth the sacrifice needed to share it with others.

Living freely and learning how to exercise 2KG citizenship faithfully to God in service to our neighbor are things the world needs now more than ever! ‡

¹ <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/04-02-02-0357>

² Even then, it is to be noted that the realm of Caesar is created and directed by God according to His Law, written into the consciences of people and to be exercised in love by fulfilling one’s God-given vocations in the world for the sake of its preservation.



The LCRL is a religious liberty organization in Washington, DC. The Center provides input, education, advice, advocacy, and resources in the areas of life, marriage, and religious liberty and seeks to engage in discussions in Washington, DC, to establish partnerships and resources in our nation’s capital for the sake of our churches, schools, universities, and seminaries.

www.lcrlfreedom.org

EPILOGUE: *WHO IS ON THE THRONE?*

I'm not sure about you, but reading and writing about the role of government in the left-hand kingdom alongside hearing the ongoing news cycle is a bit unsettling to me. While I can recognize the beautiful system God has established through the vocation of civic leaders, I also worry about the abuse of power and lack of care for the most vulnerable of society as a direct result of our broken world. So I want to leave us with this final thought: Jesus still sits on the throne.

Regardless of what happens today in Washington, DC, Jesus still sits on the throne.

Regardless of how elections play out, Jesus still sits on the throne.

Regardless of the future of this nation, Jesus does, indeed, still sit on the throne.

No matter what transpires in the left-hand kingdom, Jesus still reigns supreme. "Jesus' kingship in the right-hand kingdom is not derived from the left-hand kingdom or dependent on the world's affairs. . . . Furthermore, this right-hand kingdom brings and gives forgiveness, regardless of which political party is in control" (*Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?*, p. 94). Praise be to God that His grace and blessings aren't dependent on who our leaders are in Washington but on what Christ has done for us on the cross.

While Jesus made clear to Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:33–40), His kingdom does come into the world. Jesus comes into the world to

proclaim Good News to the poor and set captives free. He heals the sick and liberates the oppressed, as stated in Luke 4:18. Jesus come to fulfill the saving need for a Messiah, and He does so in a way beyond what anyone could have asked or imagined. Instead of simply releasing prisoners in political conflict or oppression, He frees all people from the eternal bondage of sin. More than healing people's physical ailments, He goes to the source and mends our broken, rebellious hearts.

Yes, Jesus comes as the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords. He comes not to rule one nation during one period of time but to prevail over all of creation across all time to redeem, restore, and lead us in perfect peace and harmony forever. Until that day, we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus, come." †

About This Issue's Author



Amy Bird is a child of God and wife of Aaron. She holds an MA in systematic theology from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and is continually amazed at how precisely God's Word speaks to life today.

It is the proper
office of this
King to
preach the
Gospel,
to proclaim good
news.

- MARTIN LUTHER



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