

Seek the Peace of the Land: Living in and Understanding Our “Babylon”

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“Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper” (Jeremiah 29:7, NIV).

This essay is intended, as the title suggests, to accomplish two main objectives. Part One is a review of what is sometimes called the Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms or, more often, Church and State. The points made here are important to grasp in order for the Christian to know how to live in his Kingdom of the Left (the State) and carry out his God-given responsibilities with the hope that there might be peace in the land. The purpose of Part Two is to explain some of the current trends in American culture that are supported or promoted by the State which at least call for vigilance on the part of the Church. This essay, therefore, deals with a paradox: Even though the State or “Babylon,” past or present, is God’s tool and servant to bless his people, because of sin it is also a kingdom that seeks to build “a tower that reaches to the heavens” (Genesis 11:4), defying both God and his Church.

Before exploring those parts, however, it is important to explain the text from which the title of this essay is derived.

An Explanation of Jeremiah 29:7

Jeremiah 29:7 needs to be put in its appropriate context and have its correct application distinguished from faulty ones. To whom was this command spoken? It was clearly intended for the Israelites captive in Babylon. But does it also have application to God’s people of all eras, including those who live in 21st century America? The answer is yes and no.

The verse is part of a letter contained within this chapter sent by Jeremiah to the exiles in Babylon recently deported from Jerusalem (597 B.C.). Jeremiah had been prophesying the invasion, destruction of Jerusalem, and the exile of its citizens for a number of years. The popular religious thinking of the day was that God would be faithful *without regard to doctrine and practice* – they could somehow claim the LORD as God even though they had rejected his Word, abandoned true worship and lived however they wanted. By the time of the last several kings of Judah, things had gotten so bad for so long that God found it necessary to bring about the curse he had promised through Moses a thousand years earlier.¹

Persistent idolatry and unbelief would be their downfall. Jeremiah simply had now come along at the command of God and told them time had run out, the curse was now to take place. King Nebuchadnezzar deported the Jews to Babylon in 605, 597, 586 and 581. It was several months after the 586 deportation that Jerusalem was ransacked, burned, and the walls and temple destroyed. Its desolation and misery were so complete and so unlike any other that God dedicated one whole Old Testament book to it – Lamentations.

But this destruction and deportation were not the final word, as can be seen by the commands given by Jeremiah to the exiled Jews in chapter 29. For some reason the Jews were

not merely to exist in despair in Babylon. They were to build houses and settle down, plant gardens and eat the produce, marry and re-populate themselves, seek the peace and prosperity of, and pray for the cities of Babylon in which they lived (29:5-7). The question is *why*? Was it merely so life would be better for them than it had been back in besieged Jerusalem? For the purpose of *temporal* national prosperity? Obviously there is much more tied to these directives to the exiles than temporal prosperity or *shalom*.² What God had planned for the exiled remnant was His *ultimate* prosperity, peace or *shalom*. This ultimate prosperity plan is described in the rest of chapter 29³ and most spectacularly in chapters 30-33.⁴

The prosperity predicted in these passages is clearly much more than the Jews ever physically experienced in Babylon or when they were released from captivity 70 years later. These prosperity verses speak of the re-establishment of the Davidic kingship and kingdom which would be both perfect and eternal. When the Jews returned to Jerusalem starting in 538, they never saw such a King and Kingdom with their physical eyes. “But when the time had fully come”—almost 500 years after the Jews had returned to Jerusalem – someone appeared on the scene with the correct royal and priestly credentials and behavior. He was a King with an eternal Kingdom – “from another world.” He brought forgiveness for all people of all time; yet he would do so not by might or power, but by the cross.

This is the real and ultimate prosperity or peace promised in Jeremiah 29.⁵ It is a promise of the Gospel and all that comes with it.

To take this verse, then, and use it *merely* as a *nation prosperity principle* would do a great injustice to the text of Jeremiah and the work of Christ. It was given to a specific people (the exiled Jews), in a specific location (Babylon), for a specific purpose (to prepare them for the return to Jerusalem in which the promised Messiah would acquire for them and all believers an eternal prosperity).

Is there, then, no connection between the command in this verse (“seek the peace”) and the temporal blessings of a country in which Christians live today? Yes. But it is in Jeremiah only indirectly. For God’s people of all times the command and promise bringing temporal benefit for a nation are found primarily in the 4th Commandment (with its extended application of honor for governing authorities⁶). As Paul says: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’--which is the first commandment with a promise— ‘that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.’ ” (Eph. 6:1-3; emphasis added). Luther expounds on this in the Large Catechism:

Over and above all this, another strong incentive to attract us into keeping this [4th] commandment is that God has attached to it a lovely promise, “that you may have long life in the land where you dwell.” Here you can see for yourself how important God considers this commandment. He declares not only that it is an object of pleasure and delight to himself, but also that it is an instrument intended for our greatest welfare, to lead us to a quiet and pleasant life, filled with every blessing...⁷

But even though the command of Jeremiah 29:7 was intended to point the Jews to the Gospel, here is the interesting and clear connection between that verse and Christians living in the 21st century: The Jew’s life in *relation* to Babylon was essentially the same as it is to be for the Christian today in relation to his State. They both seek the *prosperity* of the State in identical ways. The Christian, then, can and ought to “seek the peace of the land” or nation in which he lives with the hope that it and its citizens will prosper or have peace. The Christian, as a member

of Christ's eternal kingdom, must live in some earthly kingdom – a Babylon, if you will – during his sojourn; and while doing so he ought to make the best of it, literally – to seek its peace and prosperity. But in order to do so properly, he must understand what God says about both kingdoms in which he lives simultaneously. He must understand the Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms.

PART ONE: A REVIEW OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TWO KINGDOMS

Whereas the basis for a Christian's responsibility to his "Babylon" is an extension of the 4th Commandment, there also exist other passages that speak directly of the Christian's relation to Church and State.⁸ In studying these various sections in God's word, it is clear there are two distinct kingdoms that have several similarities but also significant differences.

What Both Kingdoms Have in Common

1. They Consist of Domains and Governing Authorities

Believers, the domain of the Church, are governed by Christ and his Word. This domain has no geographical boundaries; it is therefore the holy *catholic* or *universal* Church. The State also has its domain – people *within* certain physical borders, who are governed by rulers and their laws.⁹

2. Ordained by God

The Church and the State – both their domains and rule¹⁰ – are instituted, created and established by God.¹¹ He is the originator of both. It is from these two estates along with the Home (see below) that all other God-pleasing vocations and activities derive.

3. Moral Law

Both the Church and the State deal with the moral law of God,¹² albeit to different degrees and for different purposes. Understandably this is also one of the reasons why many will often, unjustifiably, mix the two kingdoms.

Striking Differences

1. Destinies

The Kingdom of the Right's destiny is eternal. And though it is a kingdom that is found here on earth, its "home turf" is "heaven" (Matt. 3:2) which makes it "everlasting" (John 3:16). "Other worldly" (heaven) and "eternal" are words that describe the Church's destiny. The Kingdom of the Left, the State, is limited to the here and now, and has a definite end (2 Peter 3:10-13).

2. Realms

Closely related to the concept of destiny is realm. There are three aspects to this. First, the Church deals mainly with the *spiritual* realm¹³ ("The kingdom of God is within you"¹⁴), while the State deals exclusively with certain *temporal* aspects of life.¹⁵

Second, the Church deals with the *inner* man and demands an *inner* (or spiritual) *righteousness*. The State concerns itself with an *outward* or *external* *righteousness*. The first is a righteousness that includes perfection of thought, word and deed and deals with motivation and

the heart; the latter is a matter of civilized behavior that any heathen is capable of performing even if it were done with a purely selfish motive. The postmodern atheist living next door, for example, may be an excellent neighbor and “righteous,” even though he is on his way to hell because he does not have the inner and declared righteousness of faith (Romans 3:22-24).

Finally, since the State’s focus is on civilized behavior *toward one’s neighbor*, its concern is with an outward observance of *the second table of the law* – the last seven commandments that have to do with one’s relationship with other people. The Church emphasizes both tables of the law, but in fact places a higher importance on *the first table of the law* since one’s relationship with God is much more vital than one’s association with his neighbor.

3. Purposes

The purpose of the Church is expressed in numerous ways in the Bible. For example, Christ said, “go and make disciples of all nations ...” (Matt. 28:19); and the jailer at Philippi stated the purpose of such activity in the form of a question: “What must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30). The purpose of the Church on earth is to save people from eternal death by making them into disciples of Christ.

The purpose of the State is clearly found in both Romans and 1 Peter: “For rulers hold no *terror* for those who do right, but *for those who do wrong*. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and *he will commend you*. For he is God's servant to *do you good*. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is *God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer*” (Rom. 13:3f., emphasis added; see also 1 Pet. 2:13f.). The State’s essential purpose is to maintain law and order, curb civic immorality and encourage civic morality; it deals with, as was stated above, the external righteousness of the second table of the law with the hope that its citizens, including Christians, “may live peaceful and quiet lives” (1 Tim. 2:2). As stated in our Lutheran Confessions:

The state protects not souls but bodies and goods from manifest harm, and constrains men with the sword and physical penalties, while the Gospel protects souls from heresies, the devil, and eternal death.¹⁶

4. Powers and Tools

Peter wrote: “For you have been born again...through the living and enduring word of God” (1 Pet. 1:23). Jesus said: “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17). And Paul proclaimed: “I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16). The Gospel of Christ is the Church’s power. It is purely spiritual and neither physical nor psychological. The instruments or means or tools the Church uses to distribute this effective power in order that people might believe, receive forgiveness and be saved are the Word and Sacraments. Nothing else, in heaven or on earth, human or divine, has such ability.

The tools and power of the State are significantly different. “For rulers hold no *terror* for those who do right, but *for those who do wrong*. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will *commend* you. For he is God's servant to *do you good*. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear *the sword* for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to

submit to the authorities, not only because of possible *punishment* but also because of conscience.” (Rom. 13:3-5, emphasis added). The power of the State is a sort of positive and negative reinforcement, with a greater emphasis given to the negative reinforcement, or punishment. And whereas the tools are not specifically prescribed by Scripture (as they are for the Church), it is clear that they include the ability to administer capital punishment (“the sword”). The tools of the State are such that they affect the body, mind and psyche (“terror,” “possible punishment”). But they cannot and are not designed to affect the spirit of man in any positive sense and bring eternal life.

The Necessity of Distinguishing between the Two Kingdoms

There are at least two understandings of the phrase “*separation* (or *distinction*)¹⁷ of Church and State.” One is biblical (and explained in the following paragraphs), the other actually being used to promote a false teaching, viz., modernism. Modernism is the belief that all things can be explained by natural causes and that the supernatural and a transcendent personal God either do not exist or should be limited to one’s “personal beliefs.” Those who advocate this definition want all references to God and absolute moral law (including a correct understanding of natural law) expunged from the civil realm.¹⁸ Darwinism, abortion-rights and secular humanism are examples. Unfortunately many evangelicals who oppose this errant view of “separation” do not realize there is a correct and biblical definition. Their response to the modernistic “separation” is to advocate an inappropriate role for the Church in the affairs of the State.

The correct understanding, on the other hand, is critical. The differences between the two kingdoms listed above call for clear lines of distinction or separation, in spite of the areas the two have in common. The Church is not to encroach upon the destiny, realm, purpose, or power of the State, and vice versa. Even though the Church militant is *present* in time and space, its purpose is solely dedicated to saving souls through the preaching of the Gospel. It is not to focus on promoting civil righteousness or curbing crime and social injustice – even among Christians. Jesus forbade a man who was seeking civil justice to use him as a civil judge; those judges already existed in the Kingdom of the Left. Jesus, on the other hand, was sent to earth to be the head of the Church (Luke 12:13f.). Furthermore, it needs to be remembered that the Church has not been given the means (“the sword”) necessary to maintain civil righteousness. In fact, Scripture forbids the Church from making use of this tool: “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world” (2 Cor. 10:3f.).

A differentiation needs to be made, however, between *intent* (purpose) and *result*. That is, when the Church does its job of preaching the pure Gospel, there will not only be souls that find their way to heaven, but also very positive consequences or results for the State in terms of civil righteousness. The righteousness of faith will always be translated into a living righteousness that is equal and superior to civil righteousness – a blessing to any nation.

The State also has its limitations. It has not been given the command to proclaim the Gospel. And even if it had been given that command, it has not been given the power and tools (the Gospel in Word and Sacraments). The State has only been given the sword with its power over the body, not the spirit, and it is impossible by means of such coercion to compel someone

to believe. The State is not to further Christianity; only the Church has that right and responsibility.

This distinction is aptly explained by Luther:

And whoever is a preacher should leave the temporal government in peace so that he does not create confusion and disorder. For men are to rule the church with the Word, or the sword of the mouth, and are to use the rod of the mouth. Temporal government, however, has a different sword, the sword of the fist and a rod of wood, with which it beats the body.... Therefore we must distinguish between these two rods and swords so that one does not trespass upon the office of the other.¹⁹

The Role of Justification and the Theology of the Cross in Understanding the Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms

Justification – the teaching that one is saved by grace, for Christ’s sake, through faith – cannot be divorced from a correct understanding of the Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms. In fact, where Church and State are not correctly understood and distinguished, the Doctrine of Justification will be lost, weakened, or no longer given prominence. The opposite is true as well: where Justification is incorrectly taught, the Two Kingdoms will become confused or misunderstood. The best evidence for this can be seen in the history of the Christian Church, especially prior to the Reformation.²⁰ Whether the Church was used by the State or the Church became the State, the Church’s focus became Law instead of Gospel. Justification by Faith was ignored and the substitutionary work of Christ was put aside in favor of some sort of external righteousness or religious activity, such as emphasis on Mary, the saints, Crusades, indulgences, and purgatory.²¹ As the Lutheran Confessions explain:

This conviction [that the pope is lord over the State by divine right] brought horrible darkness upon the church and afterward precipitated great tumult in Europe. For the ministry of the Gospel was neglected. Knowledge of faith and of the spiritual realm was destroyed. Christian righteousness was equated with that external government which the pope had created.²²

It was during this time, as Professor Deutschlander put it, “the church fell. It is not too much to say that the fall was due in large measure to confusing the roles of church and state.”²³

With the rediscovery of the Doctrine of Justification and the Gospel by Luther, it became clear there had been an unbiblical and greatly burdensome mixture of the Two Kingdoms. As Justification returned, there grew a correct understanding of the realm, purpose, power and tools of the respective kingdoms. Again, as the reformers confessed:

The same power of the keys or of the bishops is used and exercised only by teaching and preaching God’s Word and by administering the sacraments... . Not bodily but eternal things and benefits are given in this way, such as eternal righteousness, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life. These benefits cannot be obtained except through the office of preaching and through the administration of the holy sacraments. For St. Paul says [Rom. 1:16]: “The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith.” Now inasmuch as the power of the church or of the bishops bestows eternal benefits and is used and exercised only through the office of preaching, it does not interfere at all with public order and secular authority. For secular authority deals with matters altogether different from the Gospel. Secular power does not protect the soul but, using the sword and physical penalties, it protects the body and goods against external violence.

That is why one should not mix or confuse the two authorities, the spiritual and the secular. For spiritual power has its command to preach the Gospel and to administer the sacraments. It should not invade an alien office. It should not set up and depose kings. It should not annul or disrupt secular law and obedience to political authority. It should not make or prescribe laws for the secular power concerning secular affairs.²⁴

Thus Lutheran insistence on the centrality and purity of the Doctrine of Justification leads to a correct understanding of the Church and State, and a correct understanding of Church and State helps preserve Justification by Faith. It is interesting, therefore, to note the teaching and practice of John Calvin (1509-1564) and his heirs regarding both these doctrines. For Calvin, God's justification of the sinner was not the heart and center of Scripture; God's sovereignty was. Without much surprise, then, his view of government was also un-Lutheran. "Mixing" would be an adequate description of what he does with the Two Kingdoms.²⁵ Neither is it surprising to see that in practice Calvin's Geneva (his "Christian" State) closely parallels the medieval Catholic emphasis on external righteousness where the Church becomes the State even to the extent of meting out physical punishment for false doctrine. In Deutschlander's words:

It is difficult to see much difference between the behavior of the Calvinists and of the Catholics in matters of church-state relations. For both Catholics and Calvinists, heresy was a political, not just a religious, matter. Neither blushed at handing over people found guilty of false doctrine for execution by the state.²⁶

If an institution is going to be a *Christian* institution, it will necessarily be trying to save souls from hell. If the State sees itself in this way, it will inevitably try to use its tools – punishment, threats, civil laws – to that end. But it cannot be done. Christianity is spread through the message of Christ (Rom. 10:17), and that message has only been given to the Church. In order spread and teach the Gospel as it should be, the Church needs to remain the Church, and the State the State. This is absolutely clear in both Scripture and the Confessions.

What is also clear from Scripture is the Church on earth will always be the suffering Church, the Church Militant – always struggling, always at odds with the world, always under threat of persecution by the world and the State, always despised. If it becomes anything else, it is no longer Christ's Church: "If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ... If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also" (John 15:19-20; see also Matt. 10:17-25; 13:24-30). This Church condition flows from the theology of cross: Christ did not come in glory and splendor; he came to offer his life as a ransom for many. Nor did he come to bestow upon his Church earthly glory, splendor, prosperity or health. Even when he healed people, he did not do so ultimately to give them a longer and better life (even those raised from the dead would again be dead soon enough). Rather he healed and performed miracles to let the world know that this Man – subjected to suffering, sorrow and eventually death – was also the glorious God in human flesh. But notice that his glory was hidden under his flesh and passion.

In the same way Christ's Church on earth is glorious, not in the sense that it experiences "glory" or prosperity here and now, but in a hidden way, like Christ. Christ's Church is glorious because it was bought by and belongs to Christ; it is his perfect bride – justified, declared perfect, washed by his blood which no eye can see. For now it lives in shame and humiliation. If it experiences any degree of earthly bliss, it is temporary at best, and dangerous at its worst. For

the members of Christ's Church to pretend that they can establish a Church that will not suffer for any meaningful period somewhere on earth is not only "pie in the sky" – utopianism – but would be no different than if Christ himself had departed from his path of suffering.

This is what our evangelical relatives, many of them the heirs of Calvin, need to understand. As it is, they too often believe there can be a Church of glory on earth; and they often think this way because of a misunderstanding and misapplication of promises such as Jeremiah 29:7.

False Views

All erroneous views of the Two Kingdoms fall into one of two camps: either the State overstepping its temporal boundaries, or the Church treading onto "alien" territory. This is the meaning behind Christ's words in Matthew 22: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" (v. 21). When one gives to Caesar (the State) what rightly belongs to God's Church, or vice versa, problems begin. When a Christian expects something from the Kingdom of the Left which only the Church has the responsibility to administer, or vice versa, troubles follow. When a believer asks the Church to focus on creating a just society, he is seeking – perhaps inadvertently – to divert this spiritual institution from its mission of proclaiming and preserving the truth of the Gospel. And whenever he encourages the State to further the cause of the Church (e.g., teach the Bible), he is giving it a job for which it is not equipped and which it will eventually distort or abuse. *Mixing* responsibilities; *usurping* the other's authority and power – these describe the essence of false teachings and practices regarding the Two Kingdoms.

1. When the State trespasses upon the Church

History is replete with examples of the State's intrusion into the life of the Church. Some cases are obvious, e.g., when King Nebuchadnezzar commanded all citizens, including the Jews living in Babylon, to bow down before the image of gold he had erected (Daniel 3). Most are more subtle, as when the government imposes a definition of science that does not allow for any critical thinking of Darwinism, thereby undermining the First Article of the Creed and belief in a transcendent Creator. In short, the State crosses the line whenever it seeks to take on those rights and responsibilities that God has given to the Church or (as will be explained) those which belong to the Estate of the Home. It sets itself up as God and his representatives on earth when it seeks to control or influence those areas of human life that are given to the other two estates. Unfortunately, the Church and the Home have often "missed the boat" by the time this error has become entrenched in culture, as is the case today.

2. When the Church trespasses upon the State

The same can be said of the Kingdom of the Right. Whenever the Church neglects the preaching of the Gospel in its purity and truth and *instead* sees itself as that which is to influence or impact civil life (no matter how just and necessary that civil life may be), it is trespassing. Seeking civil justice may seem to be the right thing for the Church to do, such as hoping to bring about fairness in an inheritance dispute (Luke 12:13-14), but it is a step toward usurping the authority of those that God himself established in his stead. This is an error that Christians will often commit in reaction to the State undermining the work of the Church and Christian faith (the first error mentioned above) – if the State is going to use its authority against us, the reasoning

goes, then we must make the State more “Christian” in order to protect us. This is always the beginning of the Church becoming something less than the Church.

However, a word of caution: the errors spoken of here may seem somewhat obvious in theory. But what may seem like a trespass on the part of the Church may actually be an individual Christian and, in some cases, the Church itself fulfilling their God-given roles as a Christian and as the Church (see below, Christian and Church Responsibilities Impacting the State, #'s 3, 5 and 6).

The Importance of the Third Estate –The Home²⁷– Regarding the Two Kingdoms

What is frequently overlooked in discussions regarding the responsibilities of Church and State is the Estate of the Home. This, too, is a divinely ordained institution.²⁸ Its authorities – parents – are no less representatives of God than those within the Church and State. What is unique about this estate is that it overlaps each of the other two in terms of destinies, realms, purposes, powers and tools. It can be described by the following diagram:



The Home shares *spiritual* responsibilities with the Church and *temporal* responsibilities with the State. At the same time it needs to be understood that the Home has specific responsibilities given neither to the Church nor the State. In speaking to fathers in the explanation to the Fourth Commandment, Luther writes:

For if we want capable and qualified people for both the civil and the spiritual realm, we really must spare no effort, time, and expense in teaching and educating our children to serve God and the world.... But he has given us children and entrusted them to us precisely so that we may raise and govern them according to his will; otherwise, God would have no need of fathers and mothers. Therefore let all people know that it is their chief duty – at the risk of losing divine grace – first to bring up their children in the fear and knowledge of God, and, then, if they are so gifted, also to have them engage in formal study and learn so that they may be of service wherever they are needed.²⁹

This is a concept that is perhaps poorly understood and all too often neglected by Christians. For Luther it was not to be glossed over:

Think what deadly harm you do when you are negligent and fail to bring up your children to be useful and godly. You bring upon yourself sin and wrath, thus earning hell by the way you have reared your own children, no matter how holy and upright you may be otherwise. Because this commandment is neglected, God also terribly punishes the world; hence there is no longer any discipline, government, or peace. We all complain about this situation, but we fail to see that it is our own fault. We have unruly and disobedient subjects because of how we train them.³⁰

What needs to be understood, then, is that the Home has specific God-ordained responsibilities that are given neither to the Church or the State, and each of those has rights and responsibilities not given to the Home.³¹ For example, the Church has been given the responsibility to administer the Sacraments, but the parents do not have this command. Neither can parents sentence their child (or anyone else, for that matter) to jail; that authority belongs to the State. The task of raising children has been given to the Home; it has not been given to the

Church (other than spiritual instruction) or the State. So just as Church and State violate each other's territory, so they can violate the territory of the Home (and the Home can overstep its boundaries as well). But in order to better understand this trespass by the Church and State into the territory of the Home, it is necessary to define more carefully the Home's responsibilities.

The responsibilities given to Home are most clearly stated by Paul in several verses of Ephesians 5 and 6:

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything....

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.... Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (5:22-25; 6:1,4)³²

The Home Estate responsibilities are summarized by Pastor Joseph Abrahamson in the following manner:

From these passages we see that Scripture teaches:

1) The chastity of spouses and the sanctity of their matrimonial union. The Sixth Commandment describes the limits of this union. Many theologians include with this, discussions about what constitutes a legitimate marriage as well as issues of fornication, consanguinity, divorce, and remarriage.

2) The responsibilities of the father include nurturing and admonishing his wife and children to salvation with the Word of God, loving his wife and children, providing for the welfare of his wife and children, and educating his children so they become competent and useful members of society.

3) The responsibilities of the mother include nurturing and admonishing the children with the Word of God, loving her husband and children, providing for the welfare of her husband and children, obedience to her husband as Christ, and educating her children so they become competent and useful members of society.

4) The responsibilities of the children are to obey their parents as Christ, to make every effort to become wise by the Word of God, and making every effort to become competent and useful members of society through the teaching of their parents.

5) The housefather and housemother may call upon others in the case of educating their children, both in the Word of God, and in becoming competent and useful members of society. Such a call does not mean that the houseparents, and the housefather in particular, abdicate their authority and responsibilities toward their children. They retain their authority and responsibilities before God.³³

Although the actual implementation of these responsibilities may not always be apparent (especially in today's culture which hardly recognizes some of them), the Confessions find specific application as can be seen from the above quotations. In the Confessions Luther is very clear as to what is at stake:

Where a father is unable by himself to bring up his child, he calls upon a schoolmaster to teach him; if he is too weak, he seeks the help of his friends and neighbors; if he dies, he confers and delegates *his responsibility and authority* to others appointed for the purpose.³⁴

The Confessions call these responsibilities "his" – the father's – responsibilities. They can belong to another estate *only* if Scriptures say they belong to another (which is the case in

teaching God's word to children). The point that needs to be made is this: the Church and the State *may* be wandering from their respective spheres of purpose and realm not only by mixing with or usurping each other, but also by mixing with or usurping the responsibilities given to the divine institution of the Home. When either the Church or the State assumes its responsibility is to provide for the welfare of wives and children (at least under normal conditions; see 1 Tim. 5:16 and Gal. 2:10), when they assume the education of children is just as much (or more) their responsibility as (than) it is the family's, when childrearing is taken out of the home and given to either the Church³⁵ or the State, and when fathers think (or are left with the impression) they are fulfilling their "spiritual" responsibility merely by enrolling their children in Sunday School or Christian Day School,³⁶ then something is seriously out of place, mixed, and/or usurped. The difficulty is that so many of these efforts by the Church and State come from the best of motivations. But the fact remains those noble causes should not trump the God-ordained order and plan. It should not be forgotten "the road to hell is often paved with good intentions."

Christian and Church Responsibilities Impacting the State

When speaking of responsibilities it is not only important to discuss those that are owed to the State, but also other responsibilities of the Christian and the Church which might *affect* the State and its use of authority (for good or ill).

1. Honor

"Show proper respect to everyone: ... honor the king" (1 Pet. 2:17). Paul says the same in Romans 13 where he not only uses the word "honor" (verse 7) but also "submission" which carries with it the connotation of respect for those in position of authority or headship. Honor is first and foremost an *attitude* that is best explained by Luther when discussing the honor children are to have toward parents:

For it is a much higher thing to honor than to love. Honor includes not only love, but also deference, humility, and modesty directed (so to speak) toward a majesty concealed within them. Honor requires us not only to address them affectionately and with high esteem, but above all to show by our actions, both of heart and body, that we respect them very highly, and that next to God we give them the very highest place...³⁷

This attitude of honor toward authorities is owed for two reasons. First, respect is owed to those in authority because they serve the citizen and provide much of what he needs in this life.³⁸ Second, they are placed in their position by God and are acting as his representatives: "The authorities that exist have been established by God...." (Rom. 13); kings and governors "are sent by him" (1 Pet. 2:14). This second reason is why the attitude of honor cannot be conditional. As Luther explains:

It must therefore be impressed on young people [and citizens] that they revere their parents [and governing authorities] as God's representatives, and to remember that, however lowly, poor, feeble, and eccentric they may be, they are still their mother and father [governing authorities], given by God. They are not to be deprived of their honor because of their ways or failings. Therefore, we are not to think of their persons, whatever they may be, but of the will of God, who has created and ordained it so.³⁹

Within the Home this attitude of honor also results in actions, namely obedience. “The same may be said of obedience to the civil authorities.”⁴⁰ This obedience to the State is obligatory; it is not to be based upon the whims or personal political philosophy of the citizen. But unlike the responsibility of the *attitude*, obedience is conditional. That is, respect toward those in authority is necessary under all circumstances, whereas obedience to the State is required *until* it asks the Christian citizen to engage in some activity that is contrary to the will of God. “We must obey God rather than men!” said Peter (Acts 5:29; see also Acts 4:19-20).

It is this honor – both the attitude and the obedience – that God promises to bless; it is this that can bring Christians some hope for peace in the Babylon in which they live.

2. Pray

Paul wrote to Timothy, “I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” This is why the Lutheran liturgies have always included prayers for the State. For example:

Protect and bless your servants, the President of the United States, the Governor of this state, our judges and magistrates and all in authority. Fit them for their high calling by the gift of Your Spirit of wisdom and fear, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.⁴¹

The peace and quiet citizens experience can also be helpful in mission work. Right after Paul commands the Church to pray for the State for the purpose of temporal peace, he adds, “This is good, and pleases God our Savior, *who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth*” (emphasis added). One cannot be saved unless he believes the Gospel, and he cannot believe the Gospel unless he hears it, and he cannot hear the message of Christ unless one is sent to preach it (Rom. 10:14-17), and it is much easier for the Church to send out missionaries and evangelists if the roads are safe and the right of free speech is protected by the State – if there is peacefulness and quietness in the land. For both temporal and spiritual reasons, for their own sake and for the sake of their unsaved neighbors, Christians need to pray for the State.

3. Love One’s Neighbor

Christians are duty-bound to love their fellow human beings. The responsibility to love one’s neighbor is not usually seen to have any connection to the State. But the two become related more often than one may realize. The State may react either positively or negatively to Christian love. In the case of the latter, the State at times has tried to prevent Christian compassion or made it difficult. *The Christian directive to love, however, is never to be made null and void just because an issue becomes a political or State matter.* Similarly, when the State oversteps its boundaries and mixes with or usurps the authority of either the Church or the Home, that does not exempt the Christian from fulfilling his duties toward the latter two institutions. The apostles, out of love for their fellow Jew and out of duty toward Christ’s Church, preached the Gospel in public. When the authorities told them to cease and desist, they did not conclude that they must put aside such love or duty. They went ahead anyway. The result was the State then (and thousands of times since) persecuted them. Their love influenced the

activity of the State, albeit in a way that created much difficulty for the Church. When the order was given in ancient Egypt to kill Jewish male infants, midwives and parents did not say, “Since the State has decreed their death, I must be indifferent toward the lives of these children.” Instead, they “feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do,” an activity upon which God looked favorably even though they deceived the authorities (Exodus 1:15-2:10). Their responsibility to love and protect innocent human life was not overruled by Pharaoh’s edict. Because of this, oppression from the State increased.

Persistent love in these circumstances may appear to have been the obvious thing to do. But this is not necessarily true. Negative reaction from the State can create intense pressure to avoid one’s responsibility. It can often tempt the Christian to develop a “hands off” mentality to the extent the Christian will ignore his duty to love.⁴²

The Christian is to love the lost and the wicked. John the Baptist confronted King Herod with his adultery (similar to the love Jesus showed for the rich man in Mark 10:17ff.), for which John was imprisoned and eventually beheaded. Love also demands action on behalf of victims or the innocent. This sort of love can very easily involve the Christian in areas that are at times categorized as political or State-related. The explanation to the Fifth Commandment reads, “We are to fear and love God that we do no bodily harm to our neighbor, but help and befriend him in every need.”⁴³ From this it is understood that love not only means *refraining from* doing things that would harm our neighbor, but also doing things *for* our neighbor that would benefit him. The demands placed upon the Christian are the highest possible, especially when dealing with the helpless: “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all the destitute...defend the rights of the poor and needy.... Rescue those being led away to death, hold back those staggering to slaughter” (Proverbs 31:8,9; 24:11). The Parable of the Good Samaritan makes the same point (Luke 10:25ff.). If a child is being beaten to death by a thug, can a Christian who knows of the beating refuse to love? Must he not do *something*? If this beating happens to have State approval and backing, does that somehow relieve the Christian of his responsibility to love the victim? It is not being said here that love for one’s neighbor *has to* involve one with the State or “politics”, but it may, and sometimes it will necessarily. Just because an issue is labeled “political” does not mean it is somehow off limits to the Christian as a Christian, and it certainly does not allow a Christian to “pass by on the other side” of the road (Luke 10:31-32.). In fact, when “we love because God first loved us,” Christians are giving “to God what is God’s,” even when that love has political implications or consequences. Life issues come to mind here (holocausts, abortion, euthanasia, infanticide, racism) as do worldview issues – the teaching of “hollow and empty philosophies” (Colossians 2:8) – which not only oppose and destroy the Christian faith, but also can lead to civil disorder and the aforementioned atrocities when they are adopted and promoted by the State.

All this is especially important for the Christian parent to understand who is the primary agent in the temporal and spiritual well being of his children. If a Christian parent loves his children by seeking to “bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4), he will not only provide for and protect them physically, but oversee the care of their souls, and guard them from “misbelief, despair and other shameful sin and vice.”⁴⁴ On a practical level, this means decisions about education are extremely important. Deutschlander points out that the current dominance of the secular State in all areas of life leads to a godless society. And then he adds, “In no sphere of activity is the danger of such an equation more threatening than in the

education of our children.”⁴⁵ Most confessional Lutherans would be shocked to learn what the founding fathers of the reorganized Norwegian Synod thought about public or government education. In referring specifically to public education, the first president of the ELS, Pastor Bjug Harstad, wrote, “Ought parents send their children to religion-less schools? No.”⁴⁶ He was unequivocal. This was the mindset in a year (1919) when federal control of education was extremely minimal and when modernism had only a fraction of the influence that it (along with post modernism) does today. The bottom line for Harstad was: what or who should hold sway in developing the total life of Christian youth, Scripture or something contrary to it? If it is something contrary, then the eternal life of the child is endangered.⁴⁷

This being said, Christian parents should always seek to have available options to government schools. The establishment of Christian day schools and high schools should be pursued relentlessly. They are a most God-pleasing way parents can fulfill their responsibility to bring up their children in the Lord. Home schooling wonderfully acknowledges the primacy of parents and may in fact be more feasible than many realize. If public schools are the only option, this is sad as well as dangerous. But if this is the case, parents and shepherds – their pastors – must then always be vigilant *and* constantly teach Christian theology to their children. Christian love demands nothing less.

Acts of Christian love can and should benefit a culture. “Righteousness exalts a nation,” the writer of Proverbs says (14:34). But believers need to realize obedience to God may just as easily make life more difficult (1 Pet. 2:20f.).

4. Rebel – No, Resist – Yes⁴⁸

This responsibility – not to rebel against the State but to resist it under certain circumstances – is actually a combination of the Christian’s responsibility to honor the State and to obey God rather than man. To honor is the opposite of rebellion. Rebellion’s seriousness and ugliness is seen when one realizes it is actually directed against God himself: “The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted...” (Rom. 13:1-2). The Christian is not to seek to overthrow existing State authorities, even when such authorities are evil and serve the cause of injustice.⁴⁹

On the other hand, resistance is commanded when the State tries to compel the Christian: (a) to believe or act as if something or someone other than the Triune God is Lord and Savior, (b) to refrain from that which God has commanded, or (c) to engage or participate in something that is forbidden or immoral. “Christians, therefore, are obliged to be subject to political authority and to obey its commands and laws in all that may be done without sin. But if a command of the political authority cannot be followed without sin, one must obey God rather than any human being (Acts 5[:29]).”⁵⁰

The Jewish midwives did not rebel, but they did resist the directive to kill Hebrew children. David, though he knew he was going to be king of Israel, did not rebel against King Saul or seek to supplant him, but he did resist him when Saul sought to kill him. Daniel and his friends resisted defilement and idolatrous acts commanded by Babylon’s king and the Law of the Medes and Persians, but they did not in any way attempt to topple these ungodly governments. Peter and John obeyed God rather than man – they resisted the authorities who commanded them no longer to preach in the name of Jesus – but they did not seek to strip them of their power. Paul

was constantly persecuted and finally put to death by the State for his missionary activity, and yet he is the author of Romans 13:1-7. In fact, the Church throughout much of its history sought to carry out this balance of resisting but not rebelling.

5. Judge Teachings

The Church is to judge what is taught. Believers in Berea are an excellent example (Acts 17:11). Judging includes not only determining what is true and to be believed, but also what is false and to be rejected. This is why the Book of Concord – the Lutheran Confessions – is not lacking in stating antitheses (teachings contrary to Scripture). The words “rejected” and “condemned” are used there well over 200 times to indicate teachings which are in opposition and dangerous to the Christian faith. These confessors judged teachings and found them to be less than Scriptural.⁵¹ The Augsburg Confession includes this judging responsibility among those given to the Church:

Consequently, according to divine right it is the office of the bishop to preach the Gospel, to forgive sin, *to judge doctrine and reject doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel...* – not with human power but with God’s Word alone.⁵²

It is sometimes assumed in order for a doctrine to be labeled a “false” one it has to come from within the Church (like a denominational stance or practice that denies infant baptism, inerrancy, etc.). Perhaps that is true in a narrow sense, but the word “doctrine” simply means teaching and the word “false” is the opposite of true. In this broader sense “false doctrine” includes any teaching contrary to the Bible regardless of who or what is promoting it. The bottom line is that it really does not matter where such teachings come from; they all are opposed to Christ’s Word and they are all spiritually deadly. This is why the Church must expose them for what they are. A false teaching that comes from the State can lead astray as well as a false teaching that emanates from Catholicism or evangelicalism. To condemn one and not the other leaves the impression the one is of great concern but the other is nothing to worry about. A good example of judging a false teaching outside the Church was the ELS essay delivered three years ago on postmodernism.⁵³ Postmodernism has become a State-sponsored teaching.

When the Church abandons its responsibility to judge the false doctrine of the State, it contributes to the mixing of the Two Kingdoms and the takeover of the Church by the State. It sends the message it is just fine for the State to be in the business of establishing and promoting false doctrine. Failure of the Church to judge is not giving “to God what is God’s.”

Paul preached in Ephesus in such a way that citizens got the (correct) impression he was saying their State-sanctioned goddess, Artemis, and all other gods did not exist (Acts 19:23ff.). He obviously judged and condemned something that was protected by the State. He essentially taught, not without tact, “Damned is the worship of State-approved gods.” The riot that ensued in the city probably could have been avoided if Paul had simply not judged this culturally acceptable teaching. But he did not operate this way. He had to be faithful to his calling as a Christian, bishop and evangelist. The Church today must also not be afraid to anathematize State-approved gods and worldviews at odds with its confession. The souls of men are at stake.

6. Hinder Encroachment

Does the Church ever have a responsibility to engage itself purposely in the realm of the State with the intention of affecting civil policy? It is hard to imagine that Queen Esther's request of King Xerxes was not a request in behalf of the Church (not to mention for the protection of the Church; Esther 7:3ff.). When the State seeks to destroy, undermine, or usurp that which is the Church's, the Church has the obligation to protect itself. That may mean reminding the State to do its duty and stay out of the business of the Church, which in turn may imply telling the State to get its act together regarding laws and policies. Esther fulfilled her responsibility and as a result preserved the Church while it was in captivity. This kind of activism has been recognized by confessional Lutherans as legitimate and necessary:

But Christians have also from the beginning actively resisted the encroachments of the State upon their faith and their rights, by every legal means open to them. Thus Paul did appeal to Caesar when the Jews sought to slay him. Thus did the early Christians draw up their "apologies," defending their faith, to present to emperors and governors. Tertullian, a hundred years after the last of the apostles, "stated the right of the Christians to be left in peace by the Roman government in the name of the right of every man to worship God according to his own conscience." (Prof. La Piana, loc. cit.) Luther turned his fiery pen, not only against corrupt priests and popes, but no less boldly against secular princes who in any manner interfered with the rights of the Church. So we today should guard our Christian faith, not only against the errors and attacks of heretical religionists, but also against the wiles and violence of secular agencies who would fain use [of] the church for their own ends or else destroy its power over the hearts of men, lest it prevent them from gaining dictatorial, totalitarian control of the people.... It is, therefore, not an undue "mixing into politics" if a Christian Church warns and preaches against Socialism, as our Lutheran Church has done from the days of Dr. Walther down to the present time, in order to prevent Socialistic laws from being foisted upon our people.... We have been active, as a Church, in protesting State and Federal legislation which interfered with or threatened that right, as with the notorious Oregon and Nebraska laws 25 years ago, and, in recent years, with the so-called Child Labor Amendment to the Federal Constitution, – a thoroughly Socialistic measure in its origin, purpose and scope. Persistent attempts are being made today to put our educational system under Federal control.⁵⁴

7. Be Vigilant

"[W]atch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned.... By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naïve people" (Rom. 16:17-18). "Be self controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ" (Col. 2:8). Watch out...Be alert... See to it that no one takes you captive... The Church cannot stand on the truth without at the same time rejecting what is false, and it cannot stand on the one and reject the other without knowing them both. False teachings are deceptive and sly. The Church must pray for wisdom in order to be able to discern those teachings in culture that may sound rather benign or even good, but are actually lies of Satan. The next part is designed to help with such insight.

PART TWO: UNDERSTANDING OUR BABYLON

Babylon is actually referred to in Scripture more than just in reference to the captivity of the 6th and 7th centuries B.C. In the New Testament book of Revelation (chapters 14, 16, and 17-19) Babylon is symbolic of worldly power opposed to God and His people. "Here Babylon is the type of worldly power in rebellion against God and the antitype of the heavenly Jerusalem (21:1-

22:5). John wants to show that the great shifts of nations and power which are recorded as history have a deeper historical significance.”⁵⁵

In this sense Christians living in the United States can say they live in “Babylon.” This understanding of Babylon can actually be traced all the way back to when Babylon was first mentioned in the Bible (Genesis 10 and 11), where Babylon is connected to the concept of world domination. At the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11), this lust for power and prestige clearly has a religious dimension, namely, a “human pride that wishes to storm heaven.”⁵⁶ The Tower of Babel may rightly be called the first governmental attempt to *become like God*, something that always was and will be at the heart and center of the individual’s rebellion toward God and was first introduced to the world by Satan in the Garden of Eden. Clearly, the fall of man – his depravity, his ugly revolt, his rejection of God as God, his desire to become his own god – is displayed in the thinking and behavior of groups, communities and nations as well. This is important for Christians to understand as they seek the prosperity of the Babylon in which they currently live. Two thoughts must occupy the mind of the Christian toward his government and nation: the desire to have a prosperous and peaceful country, and a vigilance toward the natural tendency of governments made up of sinful human beings. Just as Christ “would not entrust himself to them [the people], for he knew all men...for he knew what was in a man” (John 2:24), so also Christians must be wary of the State and realize that it will in the end seek to defy the lordship of God and the good will of the people as defined by God.

It should be noted that Babylon of old (along with Assyria and Persia) had respect for and even brief “love affairs” with the true religion (at least certain leaders did for limited periods – Dan. 2:46-49; 3:28-30; 4:34-37; 6:25-27; see also Jonah regarding Nineveh’s conversion; Ezra 1:2-4; 6:3-12; 7:11-28; Neh. 2:1-9; Esther 8, 9), but they always and necessarily departed from the true religion generally and ended up persecuting the Church (Esther 3; Jer. 50:24, 29, 33-38; Dan. 3; Dan. 6).

America Rather Exceptional

That being said, one must conclude that the history of the United States is strikingly unique. Prosperity has generally abounded when compared to any other nation in the history of the world. This is not to suggest America has been without its difficult times (e.g., the Civil War, the Great Depression) and national sins (the treatment of particular races, the slaughter of over 40 million children via abortion, the horrendous divorce rate, acceptance of homosexuality), but in relative terms no one can point to so blessed a nation for so long a period. One of the most important factors, if not the main one, used by God contributing to this is the *constitutional* experiment that has lasted well over two centuries. The features of this constitutional republic have kept *the governmental attempt to become like God* at bay to some extent. These features include: limited government, individual liberty,⁵⁷ a respect for natural and/or (biblical) moral law, unalienable rights (derived from absolute moral law), separation of powers, governmental checks and balances, and a rule of law. The reason these have been so constant is *not* that they have consistently occupied the thinking of the nation’s citizens or even its political leaders, but because they are *in written form*; they are codified into the founding documents and have generally been expressed in the laws of the land. In this country, in other words, there has been a system of government that is not based on people and their good judgment or votes (including the concept of *democracy*, which is never even mentioned in any of the founding documents),

but is based on, to borrow a phrase from theology, *the written word*. In other kingdoms of other eras there have been good kings and leaders who understood and advocated moral law and individual liberty and civility and respect for others. But they ruled for a few years and then were followed by despots and tyrants who cared nothing for the people or the will of God. The advantage in the United States is that even a tyrannical president will be held in check by what is written. The ultimate “governing authority” of the land is not the President, Supreme Court or Congress. It is the Constitution and the Bill of Rights which mandate individual liberty, respect for natural law, unalienable rights, limited government, etc.

It has worked quite well, at least up until the present time.

What else has been of great advantage to this nation and its prosperity is its Christian occupants and heritage. It is not necessarily wise to refer to the United States, even in the past, as a “Christian nation” except in a qualified sense. The concept of America being a “Christian nation” carries with it some baggage that too easily suggests a confusing of the Two Kingdoms. The U.S. is not a “Christian nation” in the same sense some countries, for example, are “Muslim nations” where Islam is the official religion advocated by the State and where other religions are discouraged (to say the least). However, it can be said America has been a “Christian nation” in that many if not most have confessed some of the main teachings of Scripture and lived that out in their lives. They have been the “salt” of the nation, acting to preserve the prosperity of the country by understanding and encouraging civil righteousness, showing compassion for the less fortunate, and promoting respect for the governing authorities and civil orderliness. It is Christians who, better than anyone else, hold in high esteem the Second Table of the Law and seek to: honor their father and mother, take on their God-given responsibility to guide and educate their children, respect the property of others, uphold the sanctity of marriage, understand that faith cannot be created by the power of the sword, and are willing to make sacrifices so others may benefit. It is only common sense these sorts of activities will be of great benefit to any nation. They have been here, to the glory and praise of Christ.

America Still a Babylon

But this Christian activity is a double-edged sword. Whereas on the one hand it brings blessings to a nation, it can within a short period of time bring hardship and persecution on Christians who merely seek to help others and their Babylon prosper. When Christians follow Christ there eventually will be pain and suffering. When they give an answer to those who ask them for the reason for the hope they have (1 Pet. 3:15) or they seek to serve as Christ served (John 13), maltreatment is sure to follow. And since governments, even the best of them, are “Babylons” with the intent or at least the potential to want to become like God, they will be more than willing to trample the Son of God, his Word, and his people, not only by outright persecution, but also by promoting false teachings and worldviews. Confessional Christians may know what to do when the authorities tell them to stop preaching Christ (Acts 4:18-19), but will they recognize and be able to respond righteously when the authorities advance, for example, a utilitarian view of man in school?

What follows are examples where the State displays its Babylonian character: where the Church and the Home come under attack and the rightful limited vocation of the State is ignored.

Worldviews (“Hollow and Deceptive Philosophies”)

Two truths need to be understood before explaining several popular worldviews. First, false worldviews are always “deceptive;” they sound good, beneficial and even necessary. For example, globalism promotes world peace, equality, environmental protection, and so forth. There is much more, however, below the surface. Second, at least some parts of false philosophies and religions are good in and of themselves. But that which is good should not be used to justify or overlook the ungodly intentions of the entire movement.

1. Globalism

A globalist, philosophically speaking, is one who believes some sort or degree of world government is preferable to individual sovereign nations. It includes the thinking, at least in modern times, that this global governance should impact many areas of a person’s life, including those over which the Church and Home are to have jurisdiction. Personal views about globalism range from extreme support to extreme opposition to skepticism whether or not such a movement even exists. For those who do not think such a movement is alive and well, they are ignorant or deceived.⁵⁸ For those who think globalism will or could become a reality, they do not understand God’s Word. The definition above makes it clear globalism has been a part of history. There have always been attempts at world domination: the dynasties of Egypt, the empires of Assyria, Babylon, the Medes and Persians, Alexander the Great, Rome, the Holy Roman Empire, the British Empire, Fascist Germany, Soviet Communism, etc. Attempts at globalism have always existed. The question is not whether there will be a one-world government – God’s word at the Tower of Babel answers that. But it is clear that in the process of attempting to create such a beast there always has been great human carnage, holocausts, loss of freedom, takeover of the Estates of the Church and Home, forced idolatry, loss of vocational rights and responsibilities (including those that belong to pastors and parents), persecution, doctrinal compromise, suppression of religion (especially the true religion), etc.

Is America attempting to dominate the world? No, not at the present time (at least not in the estimation of the essayist). However, within and outside of the United States there are bold efforts to compel this country to become a part of or submit to a higher worldly government.⁵⁹

Any attempt – whether by an individual, group or entity – to deprive “the authorities that exist” of the sovereignty that God has given them, is opposing God himself (Rom. 13:1ff.). This is what globalism does. It is opposed to the concept of national sovereignty upheld by Roman 13 and 1 Peter 2 and recognized by the country’s founding documents.⁶⁰

The weakening, to put it mildly, of American national sovereignty is fostered by the United Nations. In a recent UN book, *Global Governance and the United Nations System* (2001), this intention is stated:

The main focus of this volume is the prospect of global governance based on the UN system. ...The United Nations has been founded by sovereign states. However, by the ratification of the Charter, they renounced part of their sovereignty and headed towards a federal world republic.⁶¹

Over the years, the UN’s creeping influence has been seen in the areas of education and environmentalism. At its 1990 *Education for All* conference, the UN’s education branch, UNESCO, developed “world education goals.” These in turn were used to shape federal education goals in 1994 (*Goals 2000*) which were then forced upon each of the 50 states. Most recently they have been reinforced and further entrenched by the federal education bill of 2002 –

No Child Left Behind.⁶² Last fall, the U.S. Secretary of Education said at a UNESCO gathering: “[The U.N.’s] *Education for All* is consistent with our recent education legislation, the *No Child Left Behind Act*... Now I spend my days, along with thousands of educators throughout the United States, implementing these historic reforms.”⁶³ It is no coincidence that *No Child Left Behind* mandates a teaching of civics education in schools that undermines national sovereignty.⁶⁴

UN environmental treaties provide direction to countries for almost every area of life: land use and ownership, businesses and workers, agriculture, food, road building, recreation and, again, education. ⁶⁵ The very troubling aspect is that America can become beholden to a non-ordained global entity in areas that should fall under the custody of the sovereign State, Church, or Home. The U.N. Biodiversity Treaty came within two hours of ratification in Washington, D.C.,⁶⁶ but it was scrapped at the last minute because Congress found out that, among other things, private ownership of businesses, homes and land was to be immensely curtailed *and* because pantheism was a basis of the treaty.⁶⁷

The main concern here is not some coming “one world government” (it won’t happen), but the undermining of the sovereignty of both the Home and the State as the UN grows in authority, seeks to influence so many areas of life, spreads anti-Christian teachings, and (given the history of Babylons) brings about much human suffering. The responsibility to honor governing authorities in this country means refuting globalism.

2. Postmodernism

Postmodernism, as a worldview, is opposed to both confessional Lutheranism and the false teaching of modernism regarding absolute truth. For comparison purposes, see the chart below.

WHAT QUALIFIES AS ABSOLUTE TRUTH?	Christianity	Modernism	Post-modernism
The truth of the Revealed Knowledge of God (the Bible)	✓		
The truth of Natural Knowledge of God and Natural Law	✓		
Other truths discovered by man in the arts, sciences, history	✓	✓	

Modernism, starting with the premise all things can be explained without reference to the supernatural, ends up with only a segment of truth at best. Postmodernism denies any kind of absolute truth. This in turn has led to two of postmodernism’s main tenets, constructivism and tolerance, both of which pervade much of current State policy, especially in education.

Constructivism

Constructivism is simply relativism, usually at a group level: there are no transcendent absolutes, natural laws, historical or other facts that are true for all people of all times. Truth is constructed by each culture, subculture, or individual. Whoever or whatever is dominant determines “truth.” Truth is therefore relative and varies from person to person, time to time, culture to culture. Constructivism pervades education, both internationally and locally. The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) of UNESCO has established educational programs used in schools throughout the world, including 502 in the United States. Grants are

now being awarded by the Department of Education to expand these programs in this country. According UNESCO,

The IBO programs promote a constructivist approach to learning.... Teachers recognize that students bring prior knowledge to any learning situation and will come into contact with the curriculum through activities designed by the teacher. The students make sense of their experiences to construct meaning.⁶⁸

The same is true for other schools in America, especially public schools. A study done by the University of Minnesota on the state's education system called the Profile of Learning, imposed on all public schools, said:

Underlying the development of [the Profile of Learning] is a constructivist philosophy toward teaching and learning... [S]tudents "construct" meaning by engaging in activities that require them to manipulate and synthesize data, rather than reproduce information.... Some teachers were critical of what they perceived to be a shift away from teaching content towards a constructivist focus. ...One teacher said, "In our district, they don't value the content area. It's all about process...the content has no relevance anymore."⁶⁹

Constructivism is even a basis of the new math, often referred to as "integrated math" or "connected math" (versus traditional math). Based on the federal math standards of 1990, this "fuzzy" math has come under much criticism and helps explain "why Johnny can't do math." But more importantly, the heavy emphasis within integrated math on "discovery learning," group projects, non-directed learning, multicultural math, and the use of calculators not only reinforces the concept that math is relative and subject to group consensus, but also weakens the reality of objective truth. According to a *Connected Mathematics Program Teacher's Guide*, students will "learn that mathematics is man-made, that it is arbitrary, and good solutions are arrived at by consensus among those who are considered expert."⁷⁰ If math is a social construct, then why not religion as well? Under constructivism, nothing has true and lasting meaning.

Tolerance

Tolerance⁷¹ flows from postmodernism's constructivist nature. If there are no truths beyond those created by one's culture, then there is no transcendent standard against which to judge the teachings, values, beliefs, and lifestyles of any given culture. The bottom line, then, is the "truths" of one culture are as valid as those of any other. Tolerance is "[t]he strongest ethic taught by postmodernism.... No belief or lifestyle should be judged. Every belief and lifestyle is as valid as the other."⁷² This is actually reflected by a subtle change in the definition of tolerance. Webster's dictionaries, right up through the 1960s, defined tolerance as "putting up with that which is not wholly acceptable," along with several similar variations.⁷³ The newer, postmodern definition is exemplified in *The Houghton-Mifflin's American Heritage Dictionary*: "The capacity for or practice of recognizing and *respecting* the opinions, practices, or behavior of others."⁷⁴ The first allows a person to disagree with another – even call him wrong in a transcendent or absolute sense – while at the same time "put up" with him in a civilized manner. The second postmodern twist does not allow for such discernments of right or wrong (at least beyond an individual or cultural context) and actually compels one to consider all opinions, practices and behaviors to be worthy of positive value (as "respecting" would require). This is insanity. If consistently followed, one would have to consider a terrorist or the mentality of a

mass murderer worthy of respect. Though few people would want to carry postmodernism tolerance this far, American culture has made long and ugly strides in that direction. Before they went on their rampage in Littleton, Colorado, the two Columbine teenage killers were called “creative” by their teacher for their sadistic views. This last year in Spooner, Wisconsin, a 17-year old wrote numerous articles for the high school section of the local newspaper advocating nihilism (the doom and gloom worldview that advocates death and whose theme is “you are really nothing at all”). No one objected. Everyone was “tolerant.”

Postmodern tolerance not only flies in the face of the responsibility of the Church to judge teachings (responsibility #5, above), but is also the very opposite of Christian love (responsibility #3, above). If a person is living in sin, unbelief, or some false worldview, the new definition of tolerance provides no reason for me even to hope he may consider an alternative, let alone provide me with motivation to encourage him to change or turn to Christ. If anything, tolerance suggests apathy toward the lost and his choice. Love or compassion, on the other hand, allows the Christian truly to care and help the lost reconsider his views that are temporarily or eternally harmful to himself and others. But this compassion (whether merely external or real Christian compassion) is forbidden and even attacked by postmodern tolerance.⁷⁵

Tolerance is found in virtually all American schools,⁷⁶ including private. A major connection between tolerance and schools are the federal education bills of 1994 (*HR6*) and 2002 (*No Child Left Behind*). These two laws established national standards in civics and government for all states that are “to be fostered *not only...in the [civic] curriculum, but also in related subjects such as history, literature, geography, economics, and the sciences and by the informal curriculum of the school...*”⁷⁷ One would hope, then, such standards would underscore natural law as foundational to a civilized country, as do Scripture and the nation’s founding documents. Based on what was said above, one would hope the emphasis would not be tolerance or diversity (the most common synonym for tolerance). What is the emphasis? *The National Standards on Civics and Government* reference natural law once; diversity is referred to 42 times. It is this sort of lopsidedness that finds its way, by federal law, into the schools.

The National Standards for Civics and Government – to be found in the various curriculums and extra-curriculums, to be taught in the textbooks, to be assessed by tests, etc. – teach and promote postmodern tolerance. This is not an understatement.

There is hardly a school, public or private, not affected. For example, all 9th graders in Spooner, Wisconsin, are submitted to the theme of tolerance for four out of eight weeks in the required Literature I course. They also must take a school day to be bussed to an extra curricular character education seminar where they are guided by a “facilitator” who is to be “non-judgmental, tolerant” and who is to “hold and model moderate beliefs and attitudes (does not hold or model extreme beliefs and attitudes).”⁷⁸ A confessional Lutheran, by definition, is excluded from facilitating. His beliefs, though true, compassionate and good, *are* extreme. Who then is left to facilitate their character education? This goes on throughout the country. And if parents and churches are not in tune to the anti-Christian nature of postmodern tolerance and the extent to which it is advocated in the schools, Christian youth will develop a mindset that is diametrically opposed to confessional Lutheranism.⁷⁹

Homosexual “Marriage” – a Definitive Postmodernist Proposal

One of the most important battles that needs to be fought in the war against postmodernism is over homosexual civil unions and marriage. Postmodernists say that marriage is a social construct – an institution created by and for those in control. It only has value for the culture which has approved it; traditional marriage has no absolute status, inherent goodness, or transcendent approval. The next culture can change it, if it so desires, without violating any timeless moral law. Therefore one definition of marriage is in reality no better than another. All need to be tolerated.

The agenda of the homosexual activists has led to both the legalization of “civil unions”⁸⁰ and the push for “same-sex marriage.” What is at stake here is the autonomy of the Home – founded upon the marriage of one man and one woman – and its ability to carry out its God-given responsibilities; it is being undermined to a degree never realized. As soon as marriage is redefined as something other than what it truly is, then marriage is devalued.

The State may give gay unions the label “marriage” and the same legal benefits, they may gain more worth in the minds of most people, but they are no more sacred than before. Homosexual marriage is an oxymoron – it will never attain to the status of marriage. It is impossible. It is a lie. That is because real marriage, as all cultures attest to, is much more than two people agreeing to love each other and live together as partners. Real marriage is really sacred because it is defined by something above the courts, special interest groups and culture. Marriages are “made in heaven” (even the bad ones) and consist of one man and one woman who have “become one flesh” not only to provide companionship, but also to curb adultery and raise children.

Far from truly elevating homosexual unions to the level of real marriage, this movement degrades and diminishes true marriage. When same sex marriages are given legal equality with real marriages, it is not homosexual marriages that are in fact elevated (other than before law and in the minds of people), but it is the sacred union between a man and woman that suffers loss and becomes less sacred. If no-fault divorce and “living together” have devalued marriage (which they have), then the legalization of same-sex marriages will bring God-ordained marriage down to a depth never known. This is a mockery of God. This is a blow to the bedrock of civility and civilization. It is the State recklessly undermining both the Home and the Church.

But even more, what’s in the balance is the very existence of marriage. If there is any doubt regarding this, one merely has to look at what is happening in the Scandinavian countries which have the longest history of State-approved gay unions. “Marriage in Scandinavia is in deep decline, with children shouldering the burden of rising rates of family dissolution. And the mainspring of the decline – an increasingly sharp separation between marriage and parenthood – can be linked to gay marriage.”⁸¹ In Nordland County, one of Norway’s most “tolerant,” the ramifications of gay rights have become very clear: “[I]n a place where de facto marriage [civil union] has gained almost complete acceptance, marriage itself has almost completely disappeared.”⁸² And if marriage all but fades away, then who will raise the children? The State.

Needless to say, one of the saddest and most evil aspects of this movement has to do with the impact on children, both civilly and spiritually. There are now numerous examples in public schools,⁸³ and even preschools,⁸⁴ where children are taught to accept homosexuality.⁸⁵ More seriously, The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) that has been the main source of state standards for social studies throughout the country has published a canon of literature for

children in its book, *Children's Literature in Social Studies: Teaching to the Standards*. One of the recommended books, for example, is described in this manner:

MY TWO UNCLES, Elly loves her two uncles – her father's brother Ned and his partner Phil. ... An unusually realistic account of a young child's struggle to understand the complexities of homophobia within her extended family...⁸⁶

These books are recommended for children between the ages of 3 and 12 years old. Can a 3rd grader critically analyze what he reads, hears and the pictures he is shown? Do parents even know what literature is being used, let alone grasp the essential flaws of tolerance?

Holding to the biblical understanding of marriage already *has* become a reason for persecution.⁸⁷ The Bible does not teach Christians to respect the false views and the immoral behavior of others. It teaches Christians to love both God and man. Because of this, though, Christians may be excluded and scorned by “Babylon,” and others whose worldview is intolerant of Christ and his truth. But this must not hinder Christians from loving them, including – and especially – sharing with them the message of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

3. *Pantheism*⁸⁸

Paul wrote in Romans 1:25: “They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised. Amen.”

He is describing idolatry. Pantheism is this same idolatry. The unique thing about pantheism is that instead of worshipping an individual creature or selected creatures, *pantheism worships all creation collectively*.

The basic teachings of pantheism are:

- 1) **Nature is God.** The earth and everything in the universe is God. There is no distinction between the Creator and the created. All living and non-living things – man, animals, trees, rocks – are God.
- 2) **God is impersonal.** This is the god of *Star Wars* – “the Force.” God is not the *persons* of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- 3) **Man is not above nature; man is one with nature.** Man is neither the pinnacle of God's creation nor was he made, more than anything else, in the image of God. All is God. For this reason pantheists see animals and trees as man's “brothers.” Man is also therefore not the steward of nature. Nature is man's steward. Even proper consumption of the resources of the earth for man's good and enjoyment needs to be discouraged for this, they say, reflects an arrogance on the part of man over that which is his equal.
- 4) **People are not individuals.** “The Circle of Life” song in *The Lion King* expresses this teaching. Identity is ultimately collective among all that exists.
- 5) **All things are one.** This applies not only to the natural or material realm, but also to the ethical and spiritual realms. There is no difference between good and evil, God and Satan, man and nature, Church and State, male and female. They are all blurred together so all proper and necessary distinctions are lost. Paradise is simply defined as being one with nature.
- 6) **The nature religions, the earth religions, are correct.** These include those that in some form or another worship nature: many primitive and “indigenous” religions, the occult, Wicca, astrology, religions that worship the heavenly bodies or have rain and fertility gods,

the New Age religion, Hinduism, Buddhism, Native American religions, Nazism, the paganism of early Scandinavian and Germanic tribes, and a host others.

7) Moral virtue is treating nature as sacred. Sin is not viewed as something committed against a personal God who is above nature (like teaching or living contrary to God's word). Nor is it seen as an act done against man (like abortion, adultery, infanticide, euthanasia, etc.). Rather sin is viewed as an act against nature: cutting down trees, building new subdivisions, and drilling for oil in the Alaskan wilderness. Man must fear, love and trust in nature above all things. Nature is lord.

8) Christianity is the enemy. Though Christianity is the worldview that establishes the best basis for proper care and respect for nature,⁸⁹ pantheism opposes it for a number of reasons. First, Christianity claims that God created nature and stands apart from it. Second, Christianity says that man stands above the rest of creation since he alone was made in the image of God. Third, the Bible claims that man is the earth's steward – he is to subdue and rule it (Gen. 1:28).⁹⁰ Finally, Christianity is exclusive – only Jesus saves.

It is not difficult to find many of these points reflected in radical environmentalism. As was mentioned above, they are also found in U.N. treaties. Most disturbing, though, is that these teachings are found in the schools of America. Eight percent of the books recommended in *Children's Literature in Social Studies: Teaching to the Standards*⁹¹ published by the NCSS, contain a pantheistic message. Books such as *Aani and the Tree Huggers*, *The Indian Way: Learning To Communicate With Mother Earth*, *Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message*, *Musicians Of The Sun*, and *The Little Lama of Tibet* approve of communion with and worship of "Mother Earth," trees as brothers, pantheistic myths, reincarnation and Buddhism.⁹²

Again, these books are for young children. Will they (or even their teachers) be able to distinguish between pantheism and Christian theism? Will they be taught (or will their teachers even know) that one is false and the other is true? Pantheism is quickly becoming a State-approved religion via school literature⁹³ (used also in private schools). 34 years ago Francis Schaeffer predicted, "Pantheism will be pressed as the only answer to ecological problems and will be one more influence in the West's becoming increasingly Eastern in its thinking."⁹⁴ As he pointed out, though, pantheism, unlike Christianity, gives no real reason for respecting nature. And far from elevating any aspect of creation, "pantheism must push both man and nature down into a bog...man becomes no more than the grass."⁹⁵ Worst of all, people end up worshipping and serving "created things rather than the Creator" (Rom. 1:25).

4. Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism is the worldview that man has value to the extent that he is *useful* to culture, society or the State. He has value because of what he *produces*. He does not have value intrinsically as Christianity teaches. Government now supports utilitarianism through education legislation. Traditionally the purpose of education in public schools has been to give students a broad-based, liberal arts, academic education. Such an education was valuable in and of itself – it "liberated" the mind and gave them a grounding in what is true, noble, good and beautiful. It therefore prepared them for much of life and to be citizens who could maintain a constitutional republic that recognized natural law and unalienable rights. Christian schools have greatly invested in this as well, but also included, because of their connections to both the Church and

the Home, education that would prepare students for eternal life and direct them to the One who would “liberate” them from sin, death and Satan. Education was never merely career preparation. But the tide has changed.

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STW) became law in all 50 states in 1994. STW changed the direction of education’s purpose. Rather than acquiring knowledge, education under STW emphasized job skills and career preparation. There has always been a job-preparation component in education, including the option of vocational education in the last years of high school, but it has never been *the* focus, not to mention federally directed. Under STW *all* education, even down to kindergarten, is geared toward career preparation.⁹⁶

In STW students are often described by the dehumanizing words “human resources.” “Resources” implies they are valuable for something, in the same sense that business resources are. In STW, that something for which they are valuable is the job market. It is the school’s responsibility, in working with local industries, to prepare these “human resources” for their vocation that will give them “value.” Knowledge gained in school is no longer an end in itself; it becomes a means to an end. This is a utilitarian view of human life.

A director at the U.S. Department of Education described how the STW approach was being implemented in the various states:

All STWO programs require the integration of vocational and academic curricula...and linkage between education and employers. ...[F]ederal legislation is being used as an instrument for reshaping how young people are being prepared for work. The federal role is as catalyst; the local and state role is as activators... . Educators now include not only school-based instructors... but also workplace mentors, supervisors, and managers. ...[T]his developing school-to-work system will bring cohesion...to the highly decentralized American approach...⁹⁷

Again, this became law in all 50 states in 1994. The extent to which it has been actually implemented varies from state to state and school to school. Yet the new “system” was established and each state received funding. STW was translated into policy in each state.⁹⁸ For example, in order to comply with the federal law the state of Minnesota would “create a seamless system of education and workforce preparation for all learners, tied to the needs of a competitive economic marketplace” (Minnesota School-to-Work Initiative Mission). This new system is intended to “Restructure schools around career majors. ...Engage employers to assist schools with curriculum restructuring” and “[R]equires an informed local network of partners who help prepare young and old students and workers to become contributing members of the skilled workforce.”⁹⁹ The Minnesota system includes STW benchmarks for elementary, junior/middle and high school grades, including “career pathways for all students” beginning in high school. All 8th graders in Minneapolis and St. Paul are *required* to choose a career pathway like cosmetology, business, automotive, etc. If they don't choose one, one is chosen for them. Their last four years of education center on related skills, internships, job shadowing, at the expense of knowledge.¹⁰⁰

Children are becoming educated for a career, a vocation, so they can take their useful position in society. And once they have acquired the education necessary for their job, there is really no need for them to be educated beyond that. After all, it is a school-*to-work* system. Parts of the STW system may be harmless and even good in and of themselves, but the sum of the ingredients – adding them altogether – makes it utilitarian. Children become mere machines. But students are not robots. At least they haven't been in America.

This STW education was also the dream of one whose ambition is all too well known and who was quite successful in implementing the system. He stated his vision this way:

[T]he childish brain must in general not be burdened with things ninety-five percent of which it does not need. ... In many of the individual subjects the material to be learned has increased to such an extent that only a fraction of it sticks in the individual's head, and only a fraction of this abundance can be used, while on the other hand it is not enough for the purpose of a man working and his living in a certain field. ... Take the ordinary civil servant who has graduated from secondary school... when he is thirty-five or forty; and test the school learning which he once so painfully acquired... How little of all the stuff that was then drummed into him still remains. ... Summing up, the populist state will have to put general scholastic instruction into a shortened form, including the very essentials. Outside of that, opportunity must be offered for thorough, specialized... training... *It is enough if the individual person is given a training in the field which will be his later in life.* ... [T]he principle must be incessantly pounded in that industry and technology, trade and commerce can flourish only so long as an idealistically-minded national community provides the necessary conditions.¹⁰¹

A few Christian churches in Nazi Germany had the foresight to see what was really at stake. In a joint statement, the Barmen Declaration, they said: "We reject the false doctrine that beyond its special commission the State should and could become the sole and total order of human life and so fulfill the vocation of the Church as well" (1934). Nevertheless, most churches either approved of Hitler's attempt at globalism or "stood aloof" (Obadiah 11) as he committed his acts of terror. Most Christians abdicated their responsibilities to resist the State and to love their fellow man; they did not understand or heed the warning that the State was usurping the Church and the Home. The atrocities that took place no doubt found utilitarianism useful. Dr. Leo Alexander, a consultant from the U.S. to War Crimes Counsel in Nuremberg, put it this way:

[T]he guiding philosophic principle of ... the Nazis, ... "rational utility," ... has replaced moral, ethical and religious values. ... Medical science in Nazi Germany collaborated with this ... trend particularly in ... the mass extermination of those considered socially disturbing or racially and ideologically unwanted; the individual, inconspicuous extermination of those considered disloyal ... and the ruthless use of "human experimental material" for medico-military research. ... [Before Hitler came to power in 1933] a propaganda barrage was directed against the traditional, compassionate, nineteenth-century attitudes towards the chronically ill, and for the adoption of a utilitarian, Hegelian point of view.¹⁰²

According to utilitarianism, if the State determines that certain people are not "useful" to society, then they have no value. They can be disposed of. In the words of Dr. Alexander, the exterminations in Germany "started with the acceptance of the attitude basic in the euthanasia movement, that there is such a thing as life not worthy to be lived."¹⁰³ Again, the important thing – the frightful thing – is not necessarily the particulars of STW, but the idea advocated by the particulars as a whole. And ideas do have consequences, for the State, the Church and the Home. Utilitarianism is a "hollow and deceptive philosophy."

Conclusion

What will happen to America? Will there be peace and prosperity in the land, or will it go the way of all Babylons? We do not know, but we do care. If it prospers it will likely be because there are at least some who not only honor and pray for the State authorities, but also participate

in the rule of the land out of love for their neighbor and Lutheran theology. After all, this is to be a “government of the people, by the people and for the people.” B.W. Teigen wrote:

While Luther recognized that a ruler or judge, to be an effective one, need not be a Christian (LW 45, 99. 127), he nevertheless strongly urges that Christians participate in government, and he believes that their participation will be a blessing to the land. In a general way he says ... that it would be fine and fitting if all princes were good true Christians. For the sword and authority, as a particular service of God, belong more appropriately to Christians than to any other men on earth. ... Luther ... exclaims: “Would to God that they (i.e., the worldly rulers) were all Christians or that no one would be a prince unless he were a Christian! Things would be better than they are now and the Turk would not be so powerful” (LW 46, 166).¹⁰⁴

Of course Luther knew this could never be. Nevertheless, in America Christians – especially confessional Lutherans – could be much more involved in the political process. And they would be, according to Luther, “a blessing to the land.” Christians need to stay informed and understand the times (1 Chron. 12:32). They can let their views be made known to those in public office (write, call, visit, rally). Many more should run for public office. They can participate in organizations that promote the proper role of the State, the Home, civil righteousness and compassion for others. They must love their fellow man, even when the State wants to stifle them. Perhaps above all, they must make sure the education of their children is not opposed to their confession of faith and, in the case of Lutheran and home schools, held accountable to Lutheran theology in all that it teaches. Make sure children – the next generation – are immersed in Lutheran theology.

If, however, temporal blessings diminish, if the State becomes more and more of a Babylon, if government-sponsored tolerance and pantheism grow, if terrorism increases, if another world war breaks out, if true Christianity is declared illegal, and if confessional Lutherans are told to deny Christ or die, there still remains the real and ultimate prosperity for which Christians live: “I know that plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (Jeremiah 29:11). That future plan of prosperity for the Church will be in a “kingdom not of this world.” That ultimate prosperity was purchased by the “holy, precious blood, and” the “innocent suffering and death” of the One who “made every nation of men...and determined the times set for them” (Acts 17:26). It is he who has been guiding the history of the world all along. And when that kingdom comes, “our present sufferings” will not be “worth comparing with the glory” – the real and ultimate prosperity – “that will be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18). This life will not even have been a drop in the bucket. In the mean time, the life of the Lutheran must be consumed with the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament, for it is that Gospel that enables him to endure and remain within the Church until it is finally glorified. We are “convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38-39). In the words of Luther:

Still must they leave God’s Word it might,
For which no thanks they merit;
Still is He with us in the fight,
With His good gifts and Spirit.
And should they, in the strife,

Take kindred, goods, and life,
We freely let them go,
They profit not the foe;
With us remains the Kingdom.¹⁰⁵

To God Alone Be the Glory

Activity that Promotes Peace in the Land

What Christians Are *Commanded* to Do¹⁰⁶

- Honor the governing authorities in the State and the Home.
- Pray for governing authorities in the State.
- Love our fellow man, including the lost, the wicked and the helpless.
- Oversee the education of our children: prevent them from being taught error and teach them Lutheran/biblical theology.
- Recognize and reject false teachings promoted by the State – stay informed.
- Hinder the State from encroaching upon the Church and the Home.
- Establish and maintain a God-pleasing family.
- Participate in the political process – somehow to some degree.
- “Live such good lives among the pagans, that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us” (2 Peter 2:12).
- Proclaim boldly and clearly the saving Gospel of Christ, which provides lasting citizenship in a kingdom that is perfect and eternal (Phil. 3:20, 21).

What Christians *Can* Do

- Establish and support Lutheran Schools that teach the whole counsel of God and avoid every error.
- Establish a home school that teaches the whole counsel of God and avoids every error.
- Involve oneself as much as possible in the child’s education if public school is the only reasonable option.
- Vote, especially for those who understand Natural Law and the limited role of the State.
- Get involved in a political campaign.
- Run for office.
- Engage governing authorities in discussions regarding policies and their proper roles: write, call, visit, rally, etc.
- Support and participate in organizations that promote the well-being of the State and the Home (charitable, pro-family, pro-life, pro-freedom organizations).
- Read books and periodicals that keep us up to date regarding worldviews, the family, politics, education and other civil matters (like abortion, homosexuality, etc.).
- Attend conferences, workshops and seminars that will keep us informed about worldviews, the family, education, politics, and other civil matters (like abortion, homosexuality, etc.).

- Have your pastor lead a Bible study on the Two Kingdoms and related matters.

Recommended Reading List

- *The Church and Her Fellowship, Ministry, and Governance* by Kurt E. Marquardt (St. Louis: The Luther Academy, 1990).
- “Church, State, and Home: A Look at the Scriptural Doctrine of the Three Estates,” by Joseph Abrahamson, delivered 4-27-03, Circuit 8 of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, (<http://clearwaterlutheran.org/clearwater/theology/3Estates.pdf>).
- *Civil Government: God’s Other Kingdom* by Daniel Deutschlander’s (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1998).
- *Fed Ed: The New Federal Curriculum and How It’s Enforced* by Allen Quist, (St. Paul, MN: Maple River Education Coalition, 2002).
- *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life* by Gene Edward Veith, Jr. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002).
- *The Large Catechism* (explanation to the 4th Commandment) by Martin Luther (included in *The Book of Concord*, various editions).
- “The Lutheran Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms and Its Significance for the American Bicentennial” by B.W. Teigen, *The Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, volume XVI (Mankato, Minnesota: ELS, Fall, 1976).
- *Pollution and the Death of Man: The Christian View of Ecology* by Francis A. Schaeffer (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale, 1970).
- *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture* by Gene Edward Veith, Jr. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1994).
- “The Principle of the Separation of Church and State Applied to Our Times” by George O. Lillegard (Mankato, Minnesota: *Report of the 23rd Regular Convention of the Norwegian Synod*; June 13-19, 1940).
- “The Truth Shall Set You Free: A Critique of Postmodernism,” by Pastor Mark Bartels, *Synod Report* (Mankato, Minnesota: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 2001), p. 35ff.

Endnotes

- ¹ “I will turn your cities into ruins and lay waste your sanctuaries, and I will take no delight in the pleasing aroma of your offerings. I will lay waste the land, so that your enemies who live there will be appalled. I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out my sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins.” (Lev. 26:31-33; see also Deut. 28:62-63)
- ² The word translated “prosperity” in verses 9 and 11 is the Hebrew word generally translated “peace.”
- ³ Also predicted in Deuteronomy: “When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the LORD your God disperses you among the nations, and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. . . . He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your fathers.” (Deut. 30:1-5).
- ⁴ “The time is coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah... ”I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” (31:31-34); “In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: ‘The LORD Our Righteousness.’ For this is what the LORD says: “David will never fail to have a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, nor will the priests, who are Levites, ever fail to have a man to stand before me continually to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings and to present sacrifices” (33:15-18; cf. also 30:8,9).
- ⁵ It should be noted that the Jews both during and after the captivity in Babylon experienced a temporal prosperity of sorts. They were allowed to live in relative safety and security in comparison to the ravishing they had experienced *in* Judah at the hands of a foreign king. This temporal prosperity was also the intention of the promise of verse 7, albeit poor in comparison to the ultimate prosperity. It was a prosperity to serve the greater prosperity found in the Messiah.
- ⁶ When Paul discusses obedience and honor to human authorities, he includes not only the honor of children toward parents, but also the submission of wives toward husbands and the obedience of slaves toward masters (Eph. 5:21-6:9; Col. 3:18-4:1) as does Peter who also includes the submission of the citizen toward government (1 Pet. 2:13-3:7). This is why Luther in discussing the 4th Commandment in the Large Catechism also includes sections on government, employment and church authorities.
- ⁷ The Large Catechism, The First Part: The Ten Commandments: 131-132, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, edited by Robert Kolb & Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), p. 404.
- ⁸ Key among these are Matthew 22:21, Matthew 16:18, Roman 13:1ff., 1 Peter 2:13ff., John 18:36, Acts 4:19-20.
- ⁹ It should be noted the term State can refer to the country as a whole with its people, rulers and land (State in the wide sense) or it can simply imply the governing authorities (State in the narrow sense). For example, when people speak of the U.S. they may mean the whole nation or the president, some law or vote (“The U.S. decided today...,” i.e., the governing authorities decided). This essay very often uses the term State in the latter sense.
- ¹⁰ One of the reasons authorities are said to be divinely instituted is because they stand in the place of God as do no others. Thus Luther says about parents: “God has given this walk of life, fatherhood and

motherhood, a special position of honor, higher than that of any other walk of life under it...But he distinguishes father and mother above all other persons on earth and places them next to himself. For it is a much higher thing to honor than to live. Honor includes not only love, but also deference, humility, and modesty directed (so to speak) toward a majesty concealed within them. Honor requires us not only to address them affectionately and with high esteem, but above all to show by our actions, both of heart and body, that we respect them very highly, and that next to God we give them the very highest place... It must therefore be impressed on young people that they revere their parents as God's representatives, and to remember that, however lowly, poor, feeble, and eccentric they may be, they are still their mother and father, given by God. They are not to be deprived of their honor because of their ways or failings. Therefore, we are not to think of their persons, whatever they may be, but of the will of God, who has created and ordained it so." (The Large Catechism, The First Part: The Ten Commandments: 105-108, *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, edited by Robert Kolb & Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), pp. 400-401.)

¹¹ Regarding the Church, Jesus says in Matt. 16:18, "...on this rock I will build my church..." (cf., also Acts 20:28, Eph. 5:25-27). Regarding the State, Paul says "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves" (Rom. 13:1, 2; cf. also Acts 17:26, 1 Pet. 2:13, 14).

¹² In support of the State utilizing the moral law, Romans 13:3, 4: "For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer." The word "wrong" is the Greek *KAKOS* which is used by St. Paul 26 times in his epistles. In each case it carries with it the connotation of violation of God's moral law, i.e., immorality. The same is true of 1 Peter 2:13, 14.

¹³ The Church's focus on the *spiritual* does not deny the value of the *temporal* or physical, for if it did then the incarnation of Christ would be unnecessary at best, as would the *earthly* elements of the sacraments. The same could be said of the *bodily* resurrection of believers. Christian charity for the temporal needs of others would also be looked upon with indifference (as would most other good works done for one's neighbor).

¹⁴ Luke 17:12; also, Romans 14:17f.: "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men."

¹⁵ Temporal does not imply the mere physical or material nature of man and creation, for the State, as noted above, deals with the moral or natural law that is beyond the physical. By temporal are meant those things necessary for this life such as listed in Luther's explanation to the Fourth Commandment: "food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, fields, cattle, money, goods, *God-fearing* spouse and children, *faithful* servants and rulers, *good* government, good weather, peace, health, order, *honor*, *true* friends, *good* neighbors and the like" (The Small Catechism, *The Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (MorningStar Music, St. Louis, 1996), p. 31.), emphasis added to show that there are some things of the temporal realm that are more than mere physical.

¹⁶ The Augsburg Confession XXVIII:11, *The Book of Concord*, edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 82.

- ¹⁷ B.W. Teigen consistently uses the term “distinction” as opposed to “separation” in regards to the two kingdoms in his 1975 Reformation Lectures (“The Lutheran Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms and Its Significance for the American Bicentennial”, *The Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, volume XVI; Mankato, Minnesota: ELS, Fall, 1976; p. 1ff.). He apparently does so because Luther maintained that 1) a minister serves the State by instructing kings and princes how to reform their political affairs according to natural law (Lecture II) and 2) there are areas of common interest and concern to both Kingdoms (Lecture III).
- ¹⁸ One of the best examples of this is the fight against Judge Roy Moore regarding the display of the Ten Commandments at the Alabama Judicial Building. The ACLU, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, and many others who opposed him and the display (and were successful in having it removed) did so not because they agreed with a correct understanding of “separation” but because they wanted their anti-God and anti-Christian modernism imposed on society; they wanted their naturalistic religion approved by the courts and to be, *de facto*, the State religion.
- ¹⁹ Martin Luther, quoted in *What Luther Says* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), p. 293.
- ²⁰ For an intriguing synopsis of this history, see chapters 9-13 of Professor Daniel Deutschlander’s book, *Civil Government: God’s Other Kingdom* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1998). Pastor David Jay Webber’s article, “Church and State, Congregation and Synod: An Anthological Essay” (*Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, December 2003, pp. 360ff.) also contains some excellent information on the understanding of the Church-State relationship by Luther and others during the Reformation.
- ²¹ Deutschlander, pp. 112-128.
- ²² Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope: 34, Kolb/Wengert, p. 335.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 128.
- ²⁴ The Augsburg Confession XXVIII: 8-17, Kolb/Wengert p. 92.
- ²⁵ “Yet civil government has as its appointed end...to cherish and protect the outward worship of God, to defend sound doctrine of piety and the position of the church...” And even though he explains this to mean that the government is to provide for “a *public* manifestation of religion ... among Christians”, he goes on to state that temporal government ought to be “Christian” and claims that the Bible “entrusts the condition of the church” to the “protection and care” of kings. (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, volume II, edited by John T. McNeill; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, MCMLX; pp. 1487-1489.
- ²⁶ Deutschlander, p. 144f.
- ²⁷ It is important to note, especially in this culture that increasingly supports redefining marriage and family, this estate is based upon marriage *between one man and one woman*. It is often, therefore, called the Estate of Marriage.
- ²⁸ Matt. 19:4-6: “Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh' ? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”
- ²⁹ The Large Catechism, The First Part: The Ten Commandments: 172-174, Kolb/Wengert p. 410.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, 176-178, p. 410. Also: “In particular, at this point also urge ... parents to rule well and to send their children to school. Point out how they are obliged to do so and what a damnable sin they commit if they do not, for thereby, as the worst enemies of God and humanity, they overthrow and lay waste both the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world. Explain very clearly what kind of horrible damage they do when they do not help to train children as pastors, preachers, civil servants, etc., and tell them that God will punish them dreadfully for this. For in our day it is necessary to preach about

these things. The extent to which parents and governing authorities are now sinning in these matters defies description. The devil, too, intends to do something horrible in all this” (The Small Catechism, Preface: 19-20, Kolb/Wengert p. 350).

³¹ See “Church, State, and Home: A Look at the Scriptural Doctrine of the Three Estates,” by Joseph Abrahamson, delivered 4-27-03, Circuit 8 of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, (<http://clearwaterlutheran.org/clearwater/theology/3Estates.pdf>).

³² These are supported elsewhere in Scripture, including Colossians 3, Titus 2:4-5, Deuteronomy 6:7, many of the Proverbs, and numerous other passages in both the Old and New Testaments.

³³ Ibid., p. 8, emphasis added.

³⁴ The Large Catechism, The First Part: The Ten Commandments: 141, Kolb/Wengert p. 405; emphasis added.

³⁵ In the estimation of the essayist, a very disturbing *trend* within culture, including our own fellowship, is establishing daycare centers within congregations. The excuse is often used that “parents will put their children somewhere, so it’s better for them to go to a Christian day care than elsewhere.” But this only reveals that we have followed culture and not Scripture that clearly explains whose responsibility it is to raise children. Granted, it is much harder to encourage mothers and fathers to make the necessary sacrifices to do so and to stop worrying about acquiring mammon, but the alternative is to make culture a god.

³⁶ In the summer of 2000, the following letter to the editor (by this essayist) was printed in *Lutheran Leader* (NPH). It captures some of the concerns expressed in this essay regarding the role of the Church in education:

“To the editor:

In his article, ‘Give Children Back,’ Pastor Heiges proposes what I would call a radical approach to the spiritual development of children. Its radical-ness is found not so much in his words – reminiscent of Paul’s words: ‘Fathers...bring your children up in the training and instruction of the Lord’ – but in the clear implication for our practice. We have for too long lived under the assumption that the essential nurturing of our children is best done through Sunday School, VBS, Christian Day School, Confirmation, etc. The shocking thing, which should be indelibly ingrained in our hearts and minds, is that God has never commanded *any* of these. What he has commanded can be seen from the words of Paul above (and a horde of other passages and examples in Scripture).

This is not to say, as Heiges points out, that all those congregational programs designed to help our children grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ should be abandoned, for they can and should complement the instruction and training done by the father of the family. I would, however, like to go a step further than Pastor Heiges and point out the obvious: We have all too often and for too long allowed our church-sponsored and church-run educational programs to do the father’s job for them. These programs do not merely complement the father’s responsibility; they have become the essence of our children’s nurturing. Because of this I would guess that most Christian fathers do not even know or grasp the extent to which God’s word commands them to be involved. They do not know they have been replaced. And how would they know? After all, no one could argue those programs aren’t good. Many fathers probably think they are doing what they should be doing by making sure their children are enrolled in and attending Sunday School and/or the Christian Day School. But Scripture does not call upon parents to make sure children attend whatever beneficial educational program a church may offer; God calls upon them to teach. Pastor Heiges’ suggestions at the end of his article are excellent. But until we face the reality that our present system of educating our young – albeit with the noblest of intentions – is one in which fathers have taken a back seat, we may be hindering our children’s depth of Christian conviction and endangering the future of Christ’s Church on earth.”

³⁷ The Large Catechism, The First Part: The Ten Commandments: 106-107, Kolb/Wengert p. 401; emphasis added.

³⁸ “Through civil rulers, as through our own parents, God gives us food, house and home, protection and security, and he preserves us through them” (The Large Catechism, The First Part: The Ten Commandments: 150, Kolb/Wengert, p. 407).

³⁹ Ibid., 108, p. 401.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 150, p. 407.

⁴¹ *The Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (MorningStar Music, St. Louis, 1996), p. 48. See also p. 96.

⁴² A distinction needs to be made between the individual Christian and the Church regarding political or State involvement. The individual's involvement can be either purposeful or accidental. The Church's involvement generally will be accidental (an exception to this is found below under "Hinder Encroachment"). Accidental involvement means when either the Christian or the Church does a good deed for a neighbor (e.g., explaining that abortion is murder, feeding the poor, etc.) and the State reacts in either a negative (harassment or worse) or positive way (the creation of more just laws or removal of unjust laws). In this case the State is reacting to the deed done by the Church or the Christian even though their intention was not to create a new law. The Christian, on the other hand, may involve himself purposely, and out of love, in the affairs of the State. He may join a political party, petition for just laws, etc.; he is purposely trying to change the law for the good of his neighbor and society. It should also be pointed here that Christians "may without sin exercise political authority; be princes and judges; pass sentences and administer justice according to imperial and other existing laws; punish evildoers with the sword...etc." (Op. cit, The Augsburg Confession XVI: 2, Kolb/Wengert, p. 48). That is, because the Christian is also a citizen of the State, political involvement is not wrong and should be considered a responsibility and privilege especially by those gifted with leadership and wisdom (see the Conclusion of this essay).

⁴³ The Small Catechism, *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*, p. 31.

⁴⁴ The Sixth Petition, The Small Catechism, *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*, p. 34.

⁴⁵ Deutschlander, p. 173.

⁴⁶ Bjug Aanondson Harstad, "Presidential Address," Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Albert Lea, Minnesota, May 29-June 6, 1919 (translated by J. Herbert Larson, Bethany Lutheran Seminary Archives, Mankato, MN), p. 6. Harstad gives the following reasons for his position: "(1) Because the Lord demands that everything be sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.... (2) Because the Lord commands that children are to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.... (3) Because the Lord teaches that the Word of God gives the correct wisdom and is the proper means for affecting, bending and forming the man.... (4) Because the Lord punishes everything which is not of God and does not happen in faith and bids us to flee false teachers and bad company."

⁴⁷ The essayist believes that the position by Harstad may be overstated. It appears that any sort of education of children is ruled out if the educational institution does not recognize the authority of Scripture. This is contradicted by the case of Daniel and his friends who attended the "University of Babylon" (Daniel 1) which not only did not recognize God's Word, but taught from the perspective of false gods. Nevertheless, Daniel and the others benefited from this liberal arts education (of sorts) and even surpassed their classmates in praiseworthy knowledge and wisdom. To be fair, Daniel and friends were not "children" and neither did they have a choice of schools. But still, Harstad's reasons for his position (see footnote 48) really do not allow for any sort of education other than a "Christian" one. If Harstad is correct, Daniel should have done more than just requested an exemption from the dietary requirements imposed on them by the authorities (1:8-14). Nevertheless, I believe that Harstad's general principle he was trying to convey is true and correct: no education of children should be allowed to undermine the rule of God's Word. There is no doubt that government education very easily and usually undermines Scripture's authority. For this reason his advocacy of Christian day schools is extremely important and righteous.

⁴⁸ Concepts in this section come from Deutschlander, pp. 63ff.

- ⁴⁹ For consideration of possible exceptions to this, see B.W. Teigen, “The Lutheran Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms and Its Significance for the American Bicentennial”, *The Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, volume XVI (Mankato, Minnesota: ELS, Fall, 1976), Lecture III.
- ⁵⁰ The Augsburg Confession XVI: 6-7, Kolb/Wengert, p. 50
- ⁵¹ This is a practice that is both commanded and demonstrated in the Bible: “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1); “make a right judgment” (John 7:24); “Watch out for false prophets” (Matt. 7:15).
- ⁵² XXVIII: 21, Kolb/Wengert, p. 94, emphasis added. The Latin reads: “to reject teaching that opposes the gospel”, p. 95.
- ⁵³ Mark F. Bartels, “The Truth Shall Set You Free: A Critique of Postmodernism,” *Synod Report* (Mankato, Minnesota: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 2001), p. 35ff.
- ⁵⁴ George O. Lillegard, “The Principle of the Separation of Church and State Applied to Our Times” (Mankato, Minnesota: *Report of the 23rd Regular Convention of the Norwegian Synod*; June 13-19, 1940), p. 46f. One of the reasons Christian theologians have so strongly opposed socialism is that the Ten Commandments clarify the right to personal property in order, among other things, to support the family. Therefore socialism is both contrary to God’s moral law and an intrusion into the Home.
- ⁵⁵ *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, edited by Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), vol. I, p. 142. Luther agrees with this understanding: “But if this does not please you [that Babylon refers specifically to Rome], and you prefer to take it as applying to all the nations, do so in the Lord’s name. That does not, of course, conflict with understanding it in a particular sense. Just as the whole world is called Babylon, and the whole church Jerusalem, so any part of the world is called Babylon, and any part of the church is called Jerusalem.” (*Vol. 11: Luther’s works, vol. 11: First Lectures on the Psalms II: Psalms 76-126* [J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.]. Luther’s Works [Ps 87:4]. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House).
- ⁵⁶ *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, edited by Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), vol. I, p. 140.
- ⁵⁷ There is a close association between the political concepts of limited government and individual liberty on the one hand, and respect for the realms and responsibilities given to the Church and Home on the other. Where a State *limits* itself to its realm and responsibility, it follows that the individual, Church, and Home have the *liberty* to fulfill their God-given responsibilities within their realms. This political concept should be seen as a great blessing to the Church and one worth defending. For as government grows, and clearly when it becomes socialistic, it infringes upon the other estates.
- ⁵⁸ Three examples from popular organizations. (1) From a 1949 UNESCO textbook: “As long as the child breathes the poisoned air of nationalism, education in world-mindedness can produce only rather precarious results. As we have pointed out, it is frequently the family that infects the child with extreme nationalism.” (*Toward World Understanding*, quoted in “UN Poisons US Education with Our Tax Dollars” by Tom DeWeese, March 22, 2004; <http://www.newswithviews.com/DeWeese/tom4.htm>). (2) From the Humanist Manifesto II: “We deplore the division of humankind on nationalistic grounds. We have reached a turning point in human history where the best option is to transcend the limits of national sovereignty and to move toward the building of a world community... based upon a transnational federal government.” (3) From XXII Congress of the Socialist International (October, 2003): “The Socialist International... calls on all socially and politically progressive people and organisations [sic] to come together in a global coalition to promote a new world order based on a new multilateralism for peace, security, sustainable development, social justice, democracy, respect for human rights and gender equality...”

Neoconservatives are attempting to exploit the situation to dismantle all forms of global governance, to minimise [sic] the role of the United Nations...”

(<http://www.socialistinternational.org/5Congress/XXIICongress/xxiideclaration-e.html>).

⁵⁹ This is nothing new under the sun. Pastor George O. Lillegard wrote back in 1954: “We are told, through almost every medium of education, from grade-school to radio and television, that it is only a matter of time until the whole world will be united as it should be, under one International Socialist government and one Universal Religion” (“Christian Cross-bearing in Today’s Twilight Hour”, *Report of the 37th Regular Convention of the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church*; June 21-17, 1954).

⁶⁰ According to the Declaration of Independence national sovereignty is one of the three foundational principles of this country (the other two being natural rights and natural law). See the first and last paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence.

⁶¹ *Global Governance and the United Nations* (New York: 2001, United Nations University Press), pp. x, 200. Also these statements: “The concept of citizenship is being transformed ...” (p. 8); “Nation states have lost their position as the paramount loci of governance ...” (p. 17); “The world state ... would be a federalist world republic” (p. 199); “Last but not least, the UN Charter amounts to nothing less than a world Constitution” (p. 200).

⁶² In the 1980’s the U.S. had actually left UNESCO because of its top down, socialistic, globalistic approach to education. However, America’s current Secretary of Education attended a meeting Paris in the fall of 2003 to mark the return of the U.S. to UNESCO.

⁶³ “United States Rejoins UNESCO”, Lynn Stuter, November 28, 2003 (www.newswithviews.com/Stuter/stuter57.htm).

⁶⁴ See *Fed Ed: The New Federal Curriculum and How It’s Enforced* by Allen Quist, pp. 47-52 (St. Paul, MN: Maple River Education Coalition, 2002).

⁶⁵ For example, back in 1992 President Bush, Sr., signed the U.N.’s Agenda 21 at the Earth Summit, which lays out plans regarding what is euphemistically known as “Sustainable Development.” This is not just about protection or good stewardship of natural resources. Air conditioning, convenience stores, single-family homes, cars are considered “unsustainable.”

⁶⁶ See *Saviors of the Earth?* by Michael Coffman (Chicago: Northfield Publishing, 1994).

⁶⁷ “Nature has an integral set of different values (cultural, spiritual and, material) where humans are one strand in nature’s web and all living creatures are considered equal. Therefore, the natural way is the right way and human activities should be molded along nature’s rythms [sic].” (Quoted in “The Dark Side of Globalism” by Tom DeWeese, Feb. 2, 2004: <http://www.newswithviews.com/DeWeese/tom1.htm>). This pantheistic, anti-Christian emphasis also comes through clearly in the “Global Diversity Assessment” which was written to fulfill Article 25 of the treaty: “Societies dominated by Islam, and especially Christianity have gone farthest in setting humans apart from nature... In the process, ... nature lost its sacred qualities.” “The world view of traditional [pantheistic] societies tends to be strikingly different from the modern world view... They tend to view themselves as members of a community that not only includes other humans, but also plants and animals as well as rocks, springs and pools. People are then members of a community of beings – living and non-living... Thus rivers may be viewed as mothers. Animals may be treated as kin.... Compliance...is typically assured through two devices: fear of the wrath of offended nature spirits and social sanctions against offenders.” (edited by V.H. Heywood; published for the United Nations Environment Programme by Cambridge University Press).

⁶⁸ Quoted in *The Washington Times*, January 18, 2004 (“Learning Globally,” by George Archibald; <http://www.washtimes.com/specialreport/20040117-112841-6750r.htm>).

⁶⁹ “The Impact of Minnesota’s “Profile of Learning” on Teaching and Learning in English and Social Studies Classrooms,” Prof. Patricia G. Avery, et al. College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota, April 30, 2002 (<http://www.ecs.org/html/offsite.asp?document=http%3A%2F%2Feducation%2Eumn%2Eedu%2Fmedia%2FResponseToProfile%2Epdf>), pp. 3, 11, 36.

⁷⁰ *CMP Mathematics for 6th-8th Grade, Teacher’s Guide*, p. 17

⁷¹ Synonyms for tolerance include “diversity” and “multiculturalism” when they are similarly defined.

⁷² Pastor Mark Bartels, “The Truth Shall Set You Free: A Critique of Postmodernism,” delivered June 10-14, Mankato, Minnesota (Evangelical Lutheran Synod, *Synod Report*, 2001), p. 46.

⁷³ *Noah Webster’s 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language* (reproduced by Chesapeake, VA: Foundation of American Christian Education).

⁷⁴ *The American Heritage Desk Dictionary* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981) emphasis added.

⁷⁵ Tolerance is often portrayed as the supreme virtue in culture today. In actuality it can be the worst of evils. E.g., many in Nazi Germany, including many who belonged to Christian churches, “tolerated” the activity of Hitler, his fascism, and his atrocities. What ended up saving the lives of many Jews and others was noble Christian intolerance for Hitler’s ideology and practices. For this reason tolerance and intolerance can be considered means rather than ends; either one can be used in the service of virtue or vice. Also, a clear distinction should be made between tolerating human beings on the one hand and their beliefs/behaviors on the other. Human life should be valued because of its inherent sanctity; beliefs, behaviors, etc. are not *necessarily* valuable or good, and *may* be just the opposite. In political terms, the former (respect for people as people) has been called equality (“all people are created equal”) and the latter has been referred to as “diversity” (and is not listed as a virtue in any of the founding documents of America).

⁷⁶ It is also found in UN IBO schools: According to Ian Hill, deputy director-general of the IBO, “[t]he purpose of world literature is to develop an appreciation of how different cultures influence and mold the experiences of life.... Students will develop values, attitudes and respect for behavior and points of view different than their own without necessarily being in agreement.” (quoted in *The Washington Times*, January 18, 2004, “Learning Globally,” by George Archibald; <http://www.washtimes.com/specialreport/20040117-112841-6750r.htm>).

⁷⁷ *The National Standards for Civics and Government* (Center for Civic Education), pp. V, VI (quoted in *Fed Ed*, op cit., p. 22), emphasis added.

⁷⁸ <http://www.copes.org/interactive.htm> (COPEs, Inc.).

⁷⁹ While serving as Dean of Students at Bethany, I had a brief phone conversation with a former student who was attending Minnesota State University at the time. She told me she had struggled with her major at MSU, but that things were going better now. When I asked her why, she told me she was being taught things about the family in conflict with what she had been taught at home and in her church. What helped, she said, was an assessment she and all students in her major had to take, an assessment that indicated she was “too narrow” in her views and needed to learn to be more “tolerant.” This made sense to her, at which point she started struggling less. My deep regret is I did not have time in that brief conversation to explain that her Christian faith was under attack by a hollow and deceptive philosophy.

⁸⁰ The differences between civil unions and marriage from a legal point of view are not that significant. In fact, civil unions (for heterosexuals and homosexuals) can do as much harm to marriage as gay marriage: “Civil unions would become a sort of ‘marriage lite.’ You could enter into them and take advantage of the legal benefits, but then leave them whenever you wanted. No messy divorces. No marital property laws. No alimony payments. No child support. All the benefits of marriage without

any of the hassle. Which raises the question, if you can get a civil union, why get married?" (Gene Edward Veith, "Marriage Lite," *WORLD Magazine*, February 28, 2004, p. 31).

⁸¹ Stanley Kurtz, "The End of Marriage in Scandinavia," (*The Weekly Standard*, 2/2/04, Volume 009, Issue 20), p. 2.

⁸² Stanley Kurtz, "Death of Marriage in Scandinavia" (*The Boston Globe*, 3/10/04).

⁸³ One recent example is a book for 1st graders, *King & King*, where a homosexual prince falls in love with another prince. The book ends with the two "marrying" and sharing a kiss. As of March, 2004, it ranked 38th on Amazon.com's best seller list. When parents of a 6-year old in North Carolina objected to this book being read for class, the principal's response was, "What might be inappropriate for one family, in another family is a totally acceptable thing" ("Homosexual Book for 1st-graders," posted: March 18, 2004, 5:00 p.m. Eastern, © 2004 WorldNetDaily.com).

⁸⁴ See <http://www.edwatch.org/updates/102003.htm> that describes how pro-homosexual curriculum is imposed on early childhood centers through state certification.

⁸⁵ According to polls taken by the Los Angeles Times, the level of sympathy toward the homosexual movement has doubled since the mid-1980's. "Six in 10 [now] say they are sympathetic to the gay community" (Newsmax.com, April 12, 2004; www.newsmax.com/archives/ic/2004/4/12/224245.shtml). There may be numerous explanations for this change in attitude, but one of the main factors clearly is education.

⁸⁶ *Children's Literature in Social Studies: Teaching to the Standards* (Washington, D.C.: NCSS, 1998).

⁸⁷ In the state of Minnesota, State Senator Michele Bachmann (member of a WELS church), author of the Defense of Marriage amendment to the Minnesota Constitution, was the victim of a cruel and orchestrated attack by homosexual activists. Homosexuals called for a boycott of businesses in her community of Stillwater until she left office. These activists also carried 4 X 8 foot signs around the capitol with her picture on it with the words, "Michele Bachmann sponsors hate legislation." They did the same with T-shirts. Flyers also were handed out with her home phone number and instructions to call and harass her. She received numerous threats. The sheriff and capitol police were called in. For safety's sake, her children had to leave the home and the state for one week. State marshals instructed her not to walk outside at the capitol for two weeks; plus they made sure someone else always accompanied her when she walked the tunnels at the capitol.

⁸⁸ Much of the material from this section is based upon or taken directly from, with permission, the soon-to-be published book *The Battle For America Taking Place in Our Schools* by Allen Quist.

⁸⁹ See *Pollution and the Death of Man: The Christian View of Ecology* by Francis A. Schaeffer (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale, 1970).

⁹⁰ For a correct interpretation of this verse, see *Pollution and the Death of Man*, chapters 4-6.

⁹¹ *Children's Literature in Social Studies: Teaching to the Standards* (Washington, D.C.: NCSS, 1998).

⁹² There is one book, *Cutters, Carvers and the Cathedral*, that implies some respect for a Christian view of life; it focuses on the beauty of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. Ironically though, this majestic cathedral, besides being listed as an Episcopal church, is one of the main pantheism/New Age religion centers in the U.S. See these website articles:

www.episcopalian.org/cclec/leepenn-newage.htm, www.fatima.freehosting.net/Articles/Art7.htm,

www.torontofreepress.com/archives/2002/main90902.htm,

www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=&contentId=A39186-2003Feb21¬Found=true, www.anglican.tk/cann/cann0010.htm,

www.ankerberg.org/Articles/new-age/NA0402W2.htm.

⁹³ Even tests include pantheism. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the federal government's own achievement test, includes the following in its eighth grade language arts section:

“... there once was a Lakota holy man called Drinks Water who dreamed what was to be, and this was before the coming of the [whites]. He dreamed that the four-leggeds were going back into the earth and that a strange race had woven a spider's web around the Lakotas. And he said: ‘When this happens, you shall live in square gray houses, in a barren land, and beside those gray houses you shall starve.’ They say he went back to Mother Earth soon after he saw this vision, and it was sorrow that killed him.”

⁹⁴ *Pollution and the Death of Man*, p. 23.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33

⁹⁶ “At the 1999 Convention, the Board for Education and Youth of the ELS was directed by the Synod to study the federal education programs *Goals 2000* and *School to Work* and provide a critique and evaluation of them. ... [STW’s] purpose is to restructure education around career majors; all education becomes vocational education. Thus, STW changes the purpose and orientation of education. Historically, the function of education was to teach basic knowledge and skills (reading, writing, math, science, history, etc.) and to foster the liberal arts, so named because they “liberate” the mind and foster the ideals of liberty. School-to-Work de-emphasizes or eliminates academic work and substitutes mandated vocational training. No longer is the goal to graduate highly literate individuals but to turn out productive workers.” (ELS Board for Education and Youth publication, 2000, forwarded to the essayist by Pastor Alex Ring).

⁹⁷ Winifred I. Warnat, “Building A School-to-work System In The United States”

(<http://vocserve.berkeley.edu/abstracts/MDS-1073/MDS-1073-Chapter-4.html#Heading22>, 1997).

⁹⁸ STW has been defunded and is technically no longer federal law. However, STW can be compared to scaffolding – once the building is built, the scaffolding can come down. Once the STW system has been established in the 50 states (which it has), the federal law is no longer necessary – education has been redefined.

⁹⁹ *Making Connections: School-to-Work Resource Guide* (MN Dept. of Children, Families and Learning, 1997).

¹⁰⁰ Examples from all other states show that it has been taken very seriously. “STC [School-to-Career] in Mississippi is: ... opportunity for life-long learning; partnerships with business, industry, and education; a bold new approach to assist Mississippi students with global issues; ... building an awareness that work skills are as important as academic skills; and economic development.” (State School-To-Work Profile website: <http://www.stw.ed.gov/states/profiles/ms.htm>). South Carolina: “[W]e have to look at education in a new way—as preparing students not only for further education, but also for the work world...It is our job to prepare every South Carolinian for a career and for life” (South Carolina Gov. Jim Hodges). Gov. Hodges’ STW recommendations (South Carolina): “Organize students’ course work and career counseling around career clusters... Align high school and postsecondary curricula with the knowledge and skill requirements of the workplace... Require professional development in applied learning techniques and career development for certification and re-certification of all educators... Develop a comprehensive statewide communications program to ensure that all South Carolinians understand the changes and opportunities occurring in education.” (*Pathways to Prosperity: Success For Every Student in the 21st-Century Workplace*). Colorado: “I believe if you were to get all employers in this country saying that we would not hire anybody unless we see a [STW] high school graduate certificate that has on it the results of this potential employee record...then I think this nation will come to the realization that there is no job for them, there is no life for them...there is the motivation.” (Roy Romer, Governor of Colorado, Board Member of the Goals 2000 panel, quoted in *No Retreats, No Reserves, No Regrets*, edited by Brannon Howse; St. Paul: Stewart House Press, 2000; p. 114).

¹⁰¹ Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, quoted in *The Deliberate Dumbing Down of America* by Charlotte Thomson Iserbyt (OH: Conscience Press. 1999), p. 26, emphasis added.

¹⁰² Leo Alexander, "Medical Science Under Dictatorship," *New England Journal of Medicine* 241:39-47, July 14, 1949.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ "The Lutheran Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms and Its Significance for the American Bicentennial", p. 26.

¹⁰⁵ "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" (*Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*, 351).

¹⁰⁶ These are Law and do not save. Faith in the substitutionary work of Christ alone saves. They are, however, good works that Christians are necessarily to display in their lives as a fruit of faith in Christ. Ephesians 2:8-10.