



A PEOPLE CALLED TO LOVE

CHRISTIAN CHARITY IN NORTH AMERICAN SOCIETY

The Christian's Calling in the Political-Social Realm: Theological Reflection of the Lutheran Reformation

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Few people would probably link Lutherans (at least German Lutherans) with social and political activism. For the most part, Lutherans have been best known for their confession of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Their concern has focused on a person's relationship with God and the need to find a gracious God. While Lutheranism's identification with the doctrine of justification is well-deserved it should be pointed out that the recovery of justification had a profound impact upon how the Christian life came to be viewed. Indeed, the most important contribution of the Lutheran Confessions to Christian thinking about how we live revolves around two themes: the justification of the ungodly and life in daily vocation. This duality can be expressed in other ways as well, such as faith in God and love toward neighbor. In either case, they are different ways of expressing the two kinds of righteousness, what Luther called "our theology." And so when considering the Christian's calling in the political-social realm we start with the two kinds of righteousness. From there we will consider how and where the Christian lives out these two kinds of righteousness. Although this essay will focus on the Christian life as a life of active participation within the world, it cannot ignore the matter of our righteousness before God as a point of departure for such reflection.

The Reformation Insight: Two Kinds of Righteousness

What is righteousness? Simply put, to be righteous is to be the human person that God envisioned when he created us. It has to do with meeting God's "design specifications" for being a human creature and thereby fulfilling the purpose for which God created us. As a result, we as creatures have an innate need to know whether or not our lives are matching God's design. This human need expresses itself in the various life questions that we ask ourselves. "Why am I here?" "What is the purpose of my life?" "How and where do I fit in?" Such questions give voice to the fundamental human need to connect with God and his plan for our lives. Integral

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to his design, God created us as relational beings (*in relatione*) who live in his presence (*coram deo*) and at the same time in community with one another (*coram mundo*). These two spheres of human existence can be plotted on two axes: a vertical axis for life with God and a horizontal axis for life with our fellow human creatures and the goods of creation. Righteousness, or to be in a “right relationship,” is determined by the nature of the respective relationships on these axes in which we find ourselves.

The basic idea behind the two types of righteousness stresses that the Christian life is lived in two fundamentally different relationships at the same time. Human life with God (*coram deo*) depends entirely on the creative and re-creative activity of the Trinity centered in the person and work of Jesus Christ. In this relationship we render nothing to God; we only receive what God gives and works in us.¹ For this reason our righteousness before God is passive, not active.² This passive righteousness of faith alone establishes and determines our identity and righteousness before God. On the other hand, and at the same time, human life in the world (*coram mundo*) depends on the activities by which we fulfill our vocations or callings and serve our neighbor. The well-being of the human community and the world depends upon how human beings exercise the dominion over creation (in relationship with one another) with which God has entrusted them. Thus in the world our righteousness is active, not passive. This active righteousness shapes our earthly identity and establishes our standing/place within various human communities.

The crux of the Lutheran reformation rested on maintaining the distinction of the human righteousness that is good for the world from the divine righteousness that is salvific before God. In the Lutheran view, the medieval church failed to distinguish between these two kinds of righteousness. It had confused the two and gave human righteousness an ultimate significance before God that it does not and cannot possess.³ Indeed, the reformers saw this confusion to be a perennial human tendency that reached back to the fall into sin of Adam and Eve. Most importantly, by confusing the two kinds of righteousness the medieval church ultimately undermined salvation *and* failed the neighbor. In the case of the former, it obscured the blessings of Christ by supplanting or supplementing his work with our works. In the case of the latter, the assistance rendered to the neighbor was not so much intended to alleviate the need of our neighbor as it was to gain credit (brownie points) with God. In other words, in the medieval scheme we use our neighbor for our own purposes in order to gain salvation.

1 Martin Luther, “Lectures on Galatians,” in *Luther’s Works*, edited by Jaroslav Pelikan, vol. 26, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), 5. Henceforth, different volumes of *Luther’s Works* will be cited *LW* with the volume and page numbers.

2 “Heidelberg Disputation,” Thesis 25; *LW* 31, 41.

3 Mary Jane Haemig, “The Confessional Basis of Lutheran Thinking on Church-State Issues,” in *Church and State: Lutheran Perspectives*, eds. John Stumme and Robert Tuttle (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2003), 16.

Luther's recovery of a right understanding of justification involved the insight that our own activity and works have no place in determining how we stand before God or how God regards us. Human righteousness or civil righteousness does not create, affect, complete, or define human salvation. Only the righteousness of God manifested in Jesus Christ and promised in the gospel determines our acceptance by God. This means that we must distinguish the righteousness acquired for us by Christ before God from the righteousness that we achieve in our human relationships in order to avoid basing our life with God (changing our identity) on the basis of the active righteousness of human activity.

In the process, the distinction between the two kinds of righteousness also allows CREATION to be what it is, CREATION! The passive righteousness of faith with God provides the basis for a human life of activity and purpose within the human community. "Thus freed from the burden of achieving earthly or heavenly salvation through their own efforts, Lutherans can seek relative goods and limited goals and value their achievement. They can see that civil righteousness is God-pleasing simply because God cares for all humans on this earth and desires that they live in conditions of peace and justice."⁴

The two types of righteousness are not alternatives between which we must choose, but rather two simultaneous dimensions of genuine human life that serve different purposes. Both must be affirmed and for this reason they must be kept distinct. Our righteousness with God defines the core of our identity as God's creatures and children. It is of ultimate significance. Our righteousness in the world gives shape and structure to our lives with one another. It possesses a penultimate significance. But both kinds of righteousness are God's will, and both kinds are necessary for us to live in the world as fully human creatures restored in Christ. To summarize, the Christian is passive and receptive before God but active in works of love toward neighbor.

The Two Realms of God's Activity and Christian Participation

So, how or where does the Christian live out her life? Or to express it another way, in what communities does the Christian find herself living and working? For answers to these questions, it is helpful to turn to another important theological framework from the Reformation. As a corollary of the two kinds of righteousness, Luther formulated what has come to be known as the doctrine of the two kingdoms or the two realms or the twofold rule of God. Although he

⁴ Haemig, 16.

used the language of two kingdoms in a variety of ways,⁵ the most common way in which he used it was to distinguish between the different activities of God whereby he brings about either the passive righteousness of faith (for salvation) or the active righteousness of humans (for the well-being of the world). In other words, the distinction between the two realms distinguishes between the different works of God within human life, namely, God's work through the law and God's work through the gospel. One emphasizes how God cares for the fallen world with his left hand through the rule of law while the other emphasizes how God preserves the church with his right hand through the proclamation of the gospel.

With his right hand God creates, gathers, and builds the church. The right hand kingdom refers to God's work in bringing about a new creation, a new community of people. In order to accomplish that goal, God uses the gospel of Jesus Christ. God sent his Son into the world to reestablish the kingdom of God. Similarly, God exalted Jesus to his right hand whereby Jesus sent the Holy Spirit into the world for the purpose of distributing the righteousness of Christ to all who believe. In doing so, the Spirit gathers the church. Within the right hand rule of God, the church does not refer to the empirical expression of the church as an organization, institution, or visible gathering of people. Instead, it refers to the assembly of believers who have been gathered by the Spirit through the word. These are all those who are scattered throughout the world but share the same Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit. As such, it is visible only to God; it remains hidden from the physical view of human beings.

With his left hand, God maintains, preserves, and protects the human communities that he had created and that are now constantly undermined as a result of sin. Matters that pertain to the wellbeing of these communities belong to the temporal concerns of this world. Another way of saying it is that we are dealing with the realm of creation, namely, the first article of the creed. In order to halt the destructive forces of sin God utilizes his law as it is managed by his human beings and tailored to the specific needs of their day. The left hand rule of God is not limited to government or political authorities. It includes a variety of human communities that provide the arenas within which human beings live out their lives of active righteousness. All who are engaged in the preservation of human life—government, family, churches (as institutions), voluntary organizations, charitable institutions, schools, hospitals, companies that contribute to the economy—participate in God's activity. God's left hand rule has a penultimate purpose

⁵ At times it may refer to the distinction between God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom. Here it stresses the spiritual conflict for control of God's creation. It also may be taken as referring to the distinction (even separation) between church and state particularly when considered in an American context. This is perhaps more narrow than Luther intended it. Here church refers not to the hidden church (the one holy Christian church on earth) but to the church as an empirical or sociological reality, the church as an institution. Similarly, state may be construed more narrowly as referring to government alone and not to a wider realm that includes the family, economy, voluntary organizations, charitable institutions and the like.

and not an ultimate purpose. That is to say, by means of his left-hand rule, God preserves the human community from utter destruction in order that he may accomplish his right-hand work of ushering in his new creation and a new community, namely, the body of Christ.

During the course of Lutheran history in America the appropriation of Luther's distinction on the twofold rule of God has not always resulted in active participation by Lutherans in the left-hand rule of God. To be sure, they have raised families and contributed to the economy through their labor. But when it comes to larger social and political matters (especially serving within the government), Lutherans of German descent have often been invisible and their voice unheard by the larger community. Instead, they have established their own educational and charitable institutions in order to attend to the temporal needs of others as well as to maintain their own identity and communities.

In part, historical factors contributed to a relative lack of involvement in political affairs. In Germany, Lutherans came out of a non-democratic society in which as peasants they had little role to play within society. Their role over and against the state and institutional church could be described as "pray, pay, and obey." In accord with Romans 13 and the fourth commandment these Christians submitted to the various authorities (fathers, priests, princes) under which they found themselves and there they rendered the appropriate obedience due the authorities. It was only natural that such attitudes accompanied German Lutherans when they immigrated to America. Such an approach to authorities was reinforced during World War I when many German immigrants kept their heads down and carried out their civic duty to the United States by buying war bonds. What has been the impact of such a passive approach to involvement in society? In the current 109th congress, the House of Representatives and Senate have only 20 Lutheran members and of those only three belong to the Missouri Synod. Even though the Missouri Synod is considerably larger than the Episcopal Church, there are 44 Episcopalians in that rapidly shrinking branch of Anglicanism. Why the disparity? The idea of an active involvement in a participatory form of government such as a democracy required a fresh appropriation of Luther's thinking on the twofold rule of God—something that did not always take place among German Lutherans (although this was not the case among Norwegian Lutherans).

Theologically, Lutherans have also held a view that properly emphasizes the ultimate importance of salvation and our righteousness before God (and hence the right hand rule of God). But at times this emphasis may have had the unintended effect of disparaging the left hand rule of God or relegating the matters of that realm to a lower order of being. In other words, emphasis on righteousness before God could imply that focus on the spiritual realm or on the world to come means that we have little interest in the old world that is passing away.

As a consequence, why is it that Lutherans of German descent do not encourage more active involvement in political affairs? We focus on the realm that pertains to our salvation in Christ and are willing to make ourselves comfortable in our secular realities, but then let others mess around in the political drudge.

In contrast, a renewed appropriation of the two kinds of righteousness can revitalize our thinking on God's two-fold rule so as to encourage more active participation by Lutherans. This is so because, among other things, it emphasizes that we seek both kinds of righteousness for different purposes. It maintains that we do not simply relegate the left-hand rule of God to non-Christians or political forces. Christians do not seek *only* the passive righteousness of Christ before God. They *also* seek active righteousness for the good of the human community. Indeed, the passive righteousness of God provides the basis for a life of active righteousness by freeing the Christian from the need to create or maintain a relationship with God. Thus Christians find themselves within a variety of human communities in which they are called to cooperate and participate in God's left hand rule.

Communities Maintained by God's Left Hand

How has God organized human life? When God created human beings for community with each other, he bound them to one another within four basic orders⁶ or various walks of life.⁷ In line with the tradition that he had inherited from the Middle Ages, Luther thought of human life as organized into various estates or walks of life. At one time, they could be described in terms of those who fight (princes, dukes), those who farm (peasants), and those who pray (monks and nuns). In the Large Catechism, Luther refers to them as fathers of the household, fathers of the government, and fathers of the church.

The foundational order of marriage and family life (*domus*) deals with our relationships as grandparents, parents, children, spouses, siblings and the like. The family is given the task of rearing and nurturing children, cultivating and exemplifying love within the home and the larger community. The family was traditionally seen as the root or fountain of the other estates. In his explanation to the fourth commandment in the Large Catechism, Luther highlights the family

⁶ Drawing upon medieval social theory the Reformers described these created structures in terms of three "estates" or "orders": family, state, and church. See Oswald Bayer, *Living by Faith: Justification and Sanctification*, Lutheran Quarterly Books (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 61. See also Werner Elert, *Structure of Lutheranism*, trans. Walter A. Hansen, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), and Schwarz, "Luthers Lehre von den drei Ständen und die drei Dimensionen der Ethik," *Luther-Jahrbuch* 45 (1978), 15–34. Since we no longer live in an agrarian economy, theologians today tend to separate family life from economic life.

⁷ "Orders of Creation" in Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, trans. N. H. Smith, (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 73ff; "Natural orders" in George Forell, *Faith Active in Love*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1954), 112ff; "Places of responsibility" in Robert Benne, *Ordinary Saints: An Introduction to the Christian Life* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1988), 69ff.

(parents) as the source of authority. The authorities of government officials and pastors are there as assistants or helpers of parents. Furthermore, Luther notes that where we are told to love our neighbor, we are to honor our parents even as we honor God. In other words, God has invested them with a special dignity as his representatives. It is for this reason, that Luther was willing to consider the fourth commandment under the first table of the law. For in dealing with parents and authorities, we are dealing with God himself.

The second arena in which life is lived involves economic life (*oeconomia*). In Luther's day, economic matters, namely employment, would be included under the family. The reason for this was that society was largely based on an agrarian economy. Thus farms would include extended families, farm hands, and maids, etc. Since we find ourselves in an industrial, service oriented, and information economy, we would need to treat this arena as a separate walk of life in as much as most people leave the house in order to seek employment in the larger community within various businesses and companies. Beyond that, this walk of life includes not only our place as workers but our role as consumers, creditors, debtors, investors and the like.

The third order addresses the public life of citizenship (*civitas/politia*). Government (politicians and citizenship) protects the peace, punishes crime, promotes the common good, and supports the church, family, and other institutions derived from them. For much of Christian history, Christian involvement in this sphere consisted of little more than being subject to the authorities and being obedient to them. There was no place for active participation on the part of individual Christians. The rise of democratic forms of governments changed all that and called for more active engagement in government. At times the Lutheran two-kingdom teaching was not used in order to encourage active engagement; instead it was used to maintain a strict dualism between the secular and spiritual. Is government little more than a necessary evil? Lutherans sometimes treat it that way. Is there a specific form of government that was ordained by God? Anabaptists sought to establish a theocracy. In the late Middle Ages, government was often viewed as an auxiliary arm of the church (at least by church authorities). In our day the life of citizenship must be expanded to include voluntary associations. This order also includes those voluntary roles such as coaches and athletes, volunteers, and entertainers.

The church is the final sphere in which the Christian pursues active righteousness within the world. That may surprise some in as much as church was discussed in the right-hand realm. But here we are not considering the church defined as the assembly of believers gathered around the Word and Sacraments. Instead, when speaking of the church in the left-hand realm, we are thinking about the institutional expression of the church. Here the church is governed by constitutions, charters, by-laws, resolutions of voters' assemblies, etc. That is to say, the one holy Christian church finds expression in buildings, organizations, and institutions. In this realm it is

concerned with temporal matters such as when to meet for worship, where to meet for worship, what kind of education do we need for our pastors and teachers? In a democratic society like the United States, congregations depend heavily upon the voluntaristic support and involvement of its membership. Thus this walk of life pertains to people's involvement with the institutional church such as volunteering to serve on various committees or boards or to serve in various programs within the church.

Each of these four structured communities is charged by God directly to discharge complementary tasks for the good of creation. A person often lives in several walks of life at the same time. For example, a person may simultaneously be a father, husband, employee, taxpayer, citizen, and church member. Moreover, Christians move from one to another throughout life, as for example, a child who grows up, marries, and becomes a parent. Taken together, these walks of life provide the basic arenas within which human beings carry out their creaturely responsibilities and tasks.

Guidelines for Working with God's Left Hand

God is actively involved in both the preservation of the world as well as the creation and extension of the church. So, what are the principles flowing out of the two kinds of righteousness and the two realms that guide how Christians pursue righteousness in their various walks of life?

Creation is Good

Lutherans do not affirm that something which is secular (or non-Christian) is therefore godless and without value. To the contrary, God created the world and continues to govern it. Along with this, Lutherans affirm that all human beings have an intrinsic value as creatures of God, creatures who were made in his image and given the responsibility of governing the world. For these reasons, the reformers of the sixteenth century reclaimed the sphere of secular government as a legitimate and proper scope for Christian living and vocation. Augsburg Confession article XVI deals with precisely this issue, arguing against the medieval ideal of the so-called "religious" life. There it is asserted plainly:

That all political authority, orderly government, laws, and good order in the world are created and instituted by God and 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; wage just wars; serve as soldiers; buy and sell; take required oaths; possess property; be married; etc.... The gospel does not overthrow secular government, public order, and marriage but instead intends that a person keep all this as a true

order of God and demonstrate in these walks of life Christian love and true good works according to each person's calling.⁸

Furthermore, in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Melancthon turns the tables on his opponents. They had charged that the Lutheran teaching on justification through faith alone undermined the fabric of society and the order of the empire because it was seen as rejecting any need for good works on the part of Christians. How could that not lead to chaos? Melancthon contends, however, that to the contrary, the monastic life undermined society (monks did not pay taxes and refused to make use of the civil courts etc). The Lutheran teaching about justification and the two kinds of righteousness made Lutheran Christians good and active contributors to the larger society. Secular life—including civic and political and economic life—is thus staked out as the arena in which Christians are expected to exercise or live out the new reality which God has given them in Christ and which they have received by faith.

Masks of God

In order to preserve his good creation, God works through creatures as though they were his masks. In one sense, both human creatures and non-human creatures function as masks of God (*larvae Dei*) behind which he remains the creative agent of life. Luther describes creatures as “the hands, channels, and means through which God bestows all blessings. For example, he gives to the mother breasts and milk for her infant or gives grain and all sorts of fruits from the earth for sustenance—things that no creature could produce by itself.”⁹ God is continually at work in the birth of new life, in the growing of trees and grain, in the rain and rivers, the sun and warmth, in human work with the soil and animals, creating and governing of social and economic life. “Even after the fall into sin, people continue to function as God's instruments for the good of creation, even if they do so unwittingly and unwillingly. Farmers, carpenters, all who handle creation's wares, carry God's gifts to their neighbors, even if their purpose is not always to serve.”

God carries out his creating work within these walks of life by summoning us, through the needs of our neighbor, to a life of constant activity and work. After the fall into sin, that summons remained, but became what Gustaf Wingren referred to as an “unrecognized demand” that “pressures” human beings to act in a way that benefits their neighbor. Thus expectations or demands are placed upon us as husbands and wives, as parents, as citizens, as employers.

⁸ AC XVI, 1–2, 4–6; Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert, eds. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 49.

⁹ LC I, 26; Kolb/Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord*, 389.

The needs of others are difficult to ignore (e.g., a crying baby that needs its diaper changed) as they appeal to our conscience and compel us to act. In some cases, their needs even compel us to act contrary to our own desires. The needs of my neighbor require that I use my goods and possessions for the benefit of someone else, perhaps even to the detriment of myself. Of course, my activity in behalf of my neighbor requires faith that the creator will take care of me as I give away that which I have. God's call to serve comes through the needs of our neighbor.

Natural Law/Law of Creation

The tasks required to meet the need of my neighbor and the responsibilities entailed in formal roles such as being a parent or an employee are given substance and form by the law that God wove into the very fabric of creation itself—most commonly known as natural law or the law of creation. As law, its authority is derived from its congruence with God's design of creation. It describes the grain of the universe and serves the universal good. Because it is grounded in creation, it is not secret. It is in some sense, universally accessible and applicable. The mind can grasp it as right. God uses the law as a curb or channel for human activity. What has often been referred to as natural law or the law of creation is expressed in but not limited to the Ten Commandments. Still, at the very least, natural law deals with the “ineradicable minimums of creatureliness”¹⁰ in such a way that human communities cannot survive the violation of these norms. In other words, although the law of creation may be difficult to define, the effects of its transgression are ever apparent. For example, coveting leads to discontentment. Similarly, marriages fall apart when spouses despise, demean, and abuse one another.

For non-Christians, the law can have only the negative sense of laying boundaries. The violation of these norms results in the undoing of creation. “A society must regulate sexuality by laws and customs, and whatever these laws are, the society cannot survive their widespread violation.”¹¹ We may hope that marriages mirror the biblical portrait but cannot expect it. At most, we can “tell a society like America, which is dismantling its laws of marriage and does not enforce those that remain, that it is undoing its own viability as a community.”¹² So here the law has a boundary-setting sense, in which the “world-community can be restrained from undoing itself.”¹³ At times, it must be made obvious and must be pointed out as such. It is obvious that we cannot equate the self-chosen and culturally-accepted social arrangement of single parenthood

10 James Arne Nestingen, “Preaching the Catechism,” *Word and World* 10:1 (Winter, 1990): 36.

11 Robert W. Jenson, “The Church's Responsibility for the World,” in *The Two Cities of God: The Church's Responsibility for the Earthly City*, eds. Carl A. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, 1–10 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 7.

12 Jenson, 7.

13 Jenson, 7.

with a family structure. According to the law it is obvious that homosexuals cannot marry because by allowing it a society is undermining its viability. Thus, homosexuality cannot be a social equivalent of heterosexuality. On the other hand, Christians are enabled to go above and beyond the negative boundary setting nature of the law. Thus “don’t commit adultery” becomes, “live chastely and soberly in word and deed, and each one love and honor his spouse.” Don’t “hurt your neighbor in his body” becomes “help and befriend your neighbor in every time of need.” Christians can live the law in a positive way in service to the neighbor.

Contribution and Limits of Reason

Reason (imagination and intelligence) is the way by which the law is mediated into our lives. Reason figures out how to tailor the law to various situations and seasons. Although Luther rejected any role for reason in our justification before God,¹⁴ he regarded reason as a most excellent gift of God in the first article. God even honors reason with material rewards. Three points are to be made here. First, Luther values the reasoning abilities of non-Christians and non-Christian rulers. Lutherans do not claim that Christians have a special knowledge or special insight into these problems based on the gospel. To the contrary, they recognize that all human beings as creatures of God are valuable and have been given dominion over creation. We must thus listen to the insights of others. Second, reason may well provide a wide array of various options and possibilities for dealing with the problems facing society. There may well be different solutions presented by different parties to the problem of poverty or other social questions. In dealing with reason there is not necessarily a “right” way or “wrong” way of doing things. Instead, reason has its proper role in ascertaining and applying this law, that is, in “determining better and worse ways of running a human society, better and worse ways to serve one’s neighbor. Human reason must also recognize that today’s “better” way may look worse tomorrow.”¹⁵ Third, due to sin, the abilities of reason are limited. We must recognize that human reasoning is flawed and darkened. At best, political proposals are only proximate achievements. That is to say, on this side of eternity, reason will never find the “perfect solution” or utopia. This means that one cannot always allow the excellent to be the enemy of the good. The solutions that reason finds for the problems of today may well have to be changed tomorrow.

Relative and Limited Goals: Achievement of Civic Righteousness

The fact that human creatures are hampered by their sinful nature places certain limitations upon what one should expect of human accomplishments in the left-hand rule of God. “Lutherans can seek relative goods and limited goals and value their achievement. They can see that civil righteousness is God-pleasing simply because God cares for all humans on this earth and desires

¹⁴ SC, 3rd Article; Kolb/Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord*, 49.

¹⁵ Haemig, 14.

that they live in conditions of peace and justice.”¹⁶ Thus “every day in faith we can go out into life within our families, communities, and governments and serve our neighbors by seeking civil righteousness, valuing the achievement of relative goods, setting limited but reachable goals, recognizing the sin that blights our individual and communal existences, and starting anew when our best plans and policies go awry.”¹⁷ The work of Christians in creation serves a holding function against sin, but cannot and does not eliminate sin. That belongs to the work of Christ. And so Lutherans go to work in the world recognizing that sin does not have the final word. They are working with God in holding things together until Christ returns and ushers in the new age, the new creation.¹⁸

16 Haemig, 16.

17 Haemig, 16.

18 For further reading see Karl H. Hertz, ed., *Two Kingdoms and One World: A Sourcebook in Christian Ethic* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976); *Render unto Caesar and unto God: A Lutheran View of Church and State, A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, September 1995.