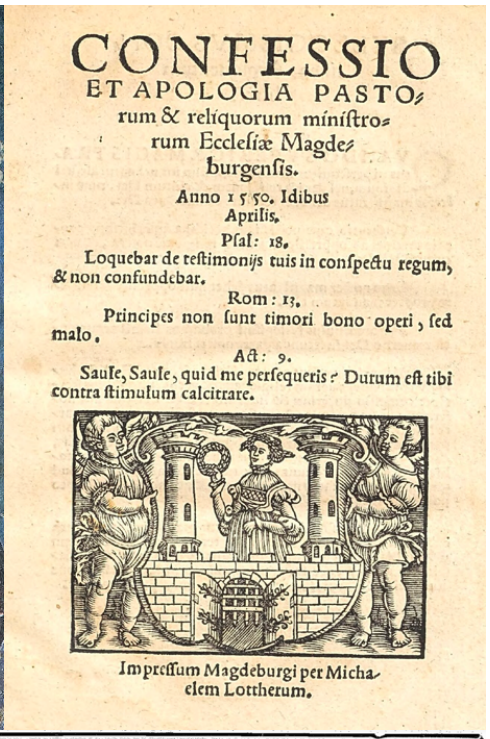
CHURCH AND STATE THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES: TALES OF CONFLICT AND CONFUSION



CONFESSIO
ET APOLOGIA PASTO-
rum & reliquorum miniſtro-
rum Eccleſiæ Magde-
burgenſis.

Anno 1550. Idibus
Aprilis.

Pſal: 18.
Loquebar de teſtimonijs tuis in conſpectu regum, & non confundebar.

Rom: 13.
Principes non ſunt timori bono operi, ſed malo.

Act: 9.
Saule, Saule, quid me perſequeris? Durum eſt tibi contra ſtimulum calcitrare.

Impreſſum Magdeburgi per Micha-
elem Lottherum.

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Halte was du hast, daß Niemand deine Krone nehme. (Offenb. 3. 11.)

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Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
Symposium on the Two Kingdoms

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I was once asked to write a conference paper on whether a Christian can be a Democrat. It was the easiest paper I ever wrote. I could have read it much more quickly than this one, too. I'll read it now, just for fun. "Yes." For some that "Yes" might sting. We live in an anxious, partisan age.

Welcome to church history and the story of the relationship between the two kingdoms. It is never as cut and dry as it seems and often stings. From Noah, prince and priest, getting drunk and passing out naked after getting off the ark to both the Sanhedrin and Pilate condemning our Lord, right up until our day, the two kingdoms have been messy because they deal with sinners, and they operate in a world that groans in eager expectation of its redemption. If our first presenter has not convinced you already that there are no easy answers or silver bullets, I will do my best to pull it off, because while a Christian need never be a pessimist, he or she ought not be a utopian either. As Thomas More made clear by naming his famous utopia *outopia* (nowhere), rather than *eutopia* (the good place), the Christian has to wait for heaven, even as heaven draws near to us in Christ.[1]

The church has always lived in times of confusion or conflict regarding the two kingdoms, whether many of its members recognized it or not. There has been no golden age where everyone figured it out and got it all right. Yet, through it all, God has been at work in his two spheres (kingdoms, regiments, you pick the term).[2] He has been at work for us. He has never been aloof. He has never been inactive. He has been busy for his creation and his elect.

Persecution

From its earliest days, the post-Pentecost Christian Church was persecuted. Persecution was not constant and everywhere, but sporadic, local, and intense when it broke out. The church quickly gained martyrs, and it remembered them. It feasted in their memory, seeing life in the face of death. The catacombs remind us of this. What the pagans considered a necropolis, a city of the dead, the Christians saw as a place of fellowship, of feasting, of hope.[3]

In my office I have an icon of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. The seven sleepers were soldiers living in the third century. They were lifelong friends. They were Christians, children of important Ephesian families. They found themselves in the crosshairs of Decius' persecution when the emperor visited the city and demanded that all citizens sacrifice to the gods. The seven sleepers stood fast in their faith and refused to recant. Mercifully, Decius permitted them to live, although they were stripped of their military titles and regalia. The young men took refuge in a cave. Word spread that Decius had changed his mind and the sleepers caught wind. They debated what to do. Before they could decide, Decius had the cave where they were hiding sealed. The men were certain to face a slow, agonizing death without food and water. Here things get more interesting.

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[1] Thomas More, *Utopia* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2003).

[2] I find myself gravitating toward "sphere" more and more in my teaching, but no one word captures the concept fully, whether in English or German.

[3] One of my favorite martyrs is St. Lawrence (225-258). St. Lawrence was a Roman deacon when Rome was not a good place to be a Christian. Even the pope, Sixtus II, was martyred. The legend says that he was in charge of the wealth of the church. Seeing the writing on the wall, that martyrdom was almost inevitable, he sold the church's treasures and gave the proceeds to the poor. When the Roman authorities demanded that he turn over the ecclesiastical riches, Lawrence gathered up the poor, presented them, and said that they, the least of these, were the true treasures of the church. He was burnt to death, cooked like a pig. The story goes that at one point he told his tormentors to turn him over, that he was done on that side. He is the patron saint of cooks. The Christian Church has a sense of humor because death is life. Our citizenship extends beyond Rome, whatever that Rome might be.

The legend goes that the Lord caused the sleepers to fall into a deep sleep. They slept for nearly two centuries, quite the slumber. They were asleep for the Diocletian persecutions. They were also asleep for the accession of Constantine and the Edict of Milan. One day, the owner of the land on which the cave was situated found it and had his workers unseal it, curious what was inside. They found the seven sleepers, as fresh as they had entered the cave, unaware that so much time had passed. Understandably, word spread. The sleepers sent one of the men to Ephesus to buy supplies. Drawing near, he could not believe it was the city, or the empire, that they had known and served. He heard people speaking openly about Jesus. Christian symbols could be seen. He was perplexed. When he paid for their supplies using a coin stamped with the image of Decius, suspicions arose. Times had changed so much that the bureaucrat who questioned him was also a bishop, thus doubly interested in his story. The bishop decided to investigate more and wanted to see the cave for himself. Convinced of the miracle, he informed his superiors in the government. Theodosius I himself came and spoke with the young men. When he finished, having made their good testimony before an emperor, now a Christian emperor, they fell asleep for good.

Civil Religion

Government has been rough from the beginning, whether one dates that beginning before the fall or after. Both church and state were thrown into turmoil by Adam's sin. Cain's children built cities for the glory of their name, operating based on power. In Lamech, we see the state proudly without the true church. Lugals built on Lamech's legacy, combining authoritarian rule with political religion to build an infrastructure of idolatry geared toward solidifying their rule, pursuing their self-justification at the expense of their subjects (only great men bore the image of God, after all, or so they thought).[4] Noah's flood did little to change the nature of fallen men. Ancient Near Eastern religion was brutal and most often indistinguishable from the regimes which established and oversaw it. The Greeks and Romans practiced civil religion as well. Whether one believed or not was inconsequential, so long as one practiced this piety of the polis. Even many of the Jews could not wrap their head around a Messiah who was not both ecclesiastical and political, spiritual and temporal. Jesus' apostles asked more than once when Christ would establish his kingdom. The theologian Joseph Ratzinger argues that the people gathered for Christ's trial made a very conscious two-kingdom choice when they chose Barabbas over Christ.[5]

The Scriptures begin with great skepticism about cities. God's people are a shepherd people. They are in the fields. Bad things happen when they interact with urban elites, with the

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[4] Warlords. "Lugal" is a Sumerian term for a ruler, a "big man."

[5] Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, trans. Adrian J. Walker (New York: Image, 2007), 40. Ratzinger writes:

> At the culmination of Christ's trial, Pilate presents the people with a choice between Jesus and Barabbas. One of the two will be released. But who was Barabbas? It is usually the words of John's Gospel that come to mind here: 'Barabbas was a robber' (Jn 18:40). But the Greek word for 'robber' had acquired a specific meaning in the political situation that obtained at the time in Palestine. It had become a synonym for 'resistance fighter.' Barabbas had taken part in an uprising (cf. Mk 15:7), and furthermore—in that context—had been accused of murder (cf. Lk 23:19, 25). When Matthew remarks that Barabbas was 'a notorious prisoner' (Mt 27:16), this is evidence that he was one of the prominent resistance fighters, in fact probably the actual leader of that particular uprising.
>
> In other words, Barabbas was a messianic figure. The choice of Jesus versus Barabbas is not accidental; two messiah figures, two forms of messianic belief stand in opposition.

great political authorities of their day. Jesus himself did much of his work in the countryside of Galilee, in villages and small towns. When he sent his disciples out, however, Christianity rapidly became an urban movement. Paul's missionary journeys took him to city after city, and prominent cities at that, prominent *Hellenized* cities, *poleis.*

The word "politics" comes from the word for Greek city-states, just as the word "civilization" comes from the Latin word for cities. Politics was the life of the polis. It was life together. These cities had a common footprint: a marketplace, an amphitheater, and temples, among other things. Religion was not nearly as personal or private as many see it today. The city served the gods and the gods in turn served the cities. Graeco-Roman religion was about manipulation. It was *quid pro quo.* Politics and religion went hand-in-hand.[6]

Nelson de Paiva Bondioli, discussing Roman religion, offers a helpful description of *religio* in the Roman world into which Christ was born: "*Religio*, in these terms, is a system of obligations which, although it is not between equals, aims to achieve equilibrium: to the gods, men celebrate the correct rituals correctly; to men, the gods maintain the community well-being through the *pax deorum*."[7] Piety built upon and went beyond religion, encompassing a broad range of social relations properly conducted. Elaborating on the relationship between religion and piety for the Romans, de Paiva Bondioli writes: "*Religio* and *pietas* together define the essentially formulaic characteristics of the public rituals and sacrifices in Rome, where action and ritual observation were more important than faith or belief when celebrating the gods and their power."[8] Notice again: religion was not private; it was public and it was civil. Leithart notes, by contrast, "Christianity was certainly a communal religion, but not a civic religion in the Roman sense. It was a religion without sacrifice." This is what especially bothered Diocletian about it. Leithart continues: "Were the church to gain ascendance, it would be the realization of Diocletian's worst fears. Christianity could not be assimilated into the Roman system without cracking the system wide open."[9]

Constantine

Glen Thompson notes, "The church was just as surprised as the pagan world at the sudden presence of a Christian emperor in their midst."[10] Thompson approvingly quotes Van

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[6] Both Plato and Aristotle were very concerned with the life of the polis, with politics. Good laws, proper customs, trustworthy institutions, and justice were important for a flourishing community, which was important for a flourishing individual, for the good life. The polis needed good citizens and good leaders. It needed individuals working together for the common good according to some constitution (order/arrangement/culture). For Aristotle, the polis was a *koinônia.* This collection of parts, of individuals cooperating in units, worked together for human flourishing. Indeed, flourishing was impossible without social interaction. Plato similarly saw politics as individuals working in community toward the flourishing of both, toward the good. When people worked in harmony, the whole prospered as well as the particular, without pitting people against each other. In short, life was life together, and while the individual was meant to flourish, he flourished in community. Religion fell into this. Your piety was not only your piety, that is, it did not only affect you. Your religion was part of the life of the polis, it was political. While our grandparents might have told us never to discuss religion or politics in polite company, that was precisely the focus of conversation in polite company in the ancient Graeco-Roman world.

[7] Nelson de Paiva Bondioli, "Roman Religion in the Time of Augustus," *Numen* 64, no. 1 (2017): 50.

[8] de Paiva Bondioli, "Roman Religion in the Time of Augustus," 50.

[9] Peter J. Leithart, *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 40.

[10] Glen L. Thompson, "From Sinner to Saint? Seeking a Consistent Constantine," in *Rethinking Constantine: History, Theology, and Legacy*, ed. Edward L. Smither (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2014), 20.

Dam, who observes that "a Christian emperor was a seeming contradiction in terms."[11] Constantine happened, however, and the empire did become increasingly Christian.[12]

Constantine was a Christian, but he was also a Roman. He understandably thought his religion important, and he thought the religion of the empire important, not just for individuals, but for the empire, just as his pagan predecessors had thought. Scholars have debated the extent to which Constantine's religion may have been more personal (if not entirely private) than many have held (for instance, whether the churches the emperor built were personal, rather than public, monuments). Constantine was certainly attuned to the significance of his public image for the legitimacy and success of his government, however, and he projected images connected to his religion. Heather outlines several phases of this: his first years, in which he presented himself in keeping with "the religious ideologies of Diocletian's imperial college, the Tetrarchy"; a second stage in which *sol invictus* (the unconquered sun) appeared on his coinage; a subsequent ambiguous phase beginning in 312 when some Christian imagery appeared while *sol invictus* imagery also persisted; and the final period which Heather dates from 324 (very late, we should note), in which "Constantine's regime declare[d] itself unambiguously Christian," although the *sol invictus* still appeared, now connected by many Christians with Christ.[13]

A Roman emperor like Constantine was not something new for Rome, but Rome was not supposed to have an emperor like Constantine again. Diocletian had worked tirelessly to avoid the sort of bloodshed that had resulted from disputes about succession in the past. He had established a system (the tetrarchy) intended to guarantee smooth transitions of power and help govern the expansive empire he ruled. He himself stepped down when he thought it appropriate, retiring, helping to set an example and precedent. The tetrarchy divided the empire between two emperors (*augusti*) and two successors (*caesares*). The goal was lasting stability, the end of civil wars.

Diocletian took the wealthier east and Maximian the west. Galerius was appointed *caesar* in the east, Constantius (Constantine's father) in the west. Constantius' death in 306 ushered in the end of the system, leaving it a failure, as his army proclaimed Constantine both *augustus and caesar.* The return to one emperor was underway as civil war ensued. Constantine scored a critical victory over Maxentius in the Battle of Milvian Bridge in 312. He ruled jointly with Licinius (who ruled in the east) until the latter resigned and was defeated in 324 at Chrysopolis. Diocletian's system fell short because ambitious men did not want to be *an* emperor. Ambitious men wanted to be *the* emperor, as so many crises of succession had demonstrated in the century before Constantine. While the language of the tetrarchy persisted, functionally it did not continue as envisioned.

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[11] Raymond Van Dam, *The Roman Revolution of Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 10.

[12] Judith Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 38. Herrin writes:

> During the period of Late Antiquity, as the new faith spread deeper roots and won respect in all regions of the empire, favoured by imperial support, a Christian role for the emperor commensurate with his past pagan status as a God had to be devised. Two hundred years before the time of Justinian, the basic accommodation was achieved by Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea (315-40), who developed the notion of a human viceroy dispensing Divine justice on earth in God's name with Constantine I in mind. As the first overtly Christian emperor, Constantine was well suited for this role, which also drew on Old Testament models.

[13] Peter Heather, *Christendom: The Triumph of a Religion, AD 300-1300* (New York: Knopf, 2023), 8-10.

Constantine's rise marked an important transition for a Christian Church that had just emerged from perhaps the worst persecution it had ever faced, established by Diocletian, urged on by Galerius. This persecution may have been aimed to some degree at Constantius and his son and presumptive heir, if Constantius was a Christian as some have argued. Christians did indeed have it better in his sphere of influence. The Great Persecution, however, left an indelible mark on Christianity. Few could have predicted such a drastic change in its fortunes so soon after the production of so many confessors and martyrs.

We do not know when Constantine became a Christian, although he almost certainly became one, at least in his estimation (a discussion of his decision to delay his baptism until he was near death is a subject for another paper). T.G. Elliott put forward four arguments about Constantine's conversion in 1987.[14] For our purposes, we will operate on the assumption (a well-informed assumption) that Constantine was a Christian according to his understanding of Christianity.

Eusebius recorded the account of the *labarum*, which changed more than Constantine's military standards at the Milvian Bridge, in great detail. He thought it critical for the emperor and the church.[15] Eusebius was no less forceful in his insistence that the hand of God was behind Constantine's success and effusive in his praise for the *Christian* emperor (and the regime he founded) in his *Ecclesiastical History*.[16] For Eusebius and for later Christendom something remarkable and foundational took place when Constantine was given the *labarum*. That many

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[14] T. G. Elliott, "Constantine's Conversion: Do We Really Need It?" *Phoenix* 41, no. 4 (Winter, 1987): 421-425. Elliott writes:

> (1) that the evidence that Constantius "Chlorus" was a Christian is strong enough to have a serious effect on the theory that Constantine was converted; (2) that Constantine himself dated the beginning of his christianizing mission to his time in (or near) Britain; (3) that Constantine's misrepresentations about his age during the years 303-305 indicate that he was a Christian at that time; (4) that the 'Kreuzerscheinung' described in Eusebius' Life resulted in the *labarum*, but not in a conversion of Constantine.

Regarding Constantine's "misrepresentations about his age during the years 303-305," Constantine claimed in 324 in his second letter to eastern provincials that he was just a child when the Great Persecution began, which was untrue. He would have been about thirty years old. Elliott argues that this was a deliberate misrepresentation of his age intended to avoid accusations that he had not responded to the Great Persecution as he ought to have as a Christian, if he had already been one, or that, Christian or not, he should have defended Christians at that time.

[15] Eusebius of Caesarea, *The Life of the Blessed Emperor Constantine*, in *Internet History Sourcebooks Project*, ed. Paul Halsall, accessed July 12, 2023, https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/vita-constantine.asp. Eusebius writes:

> **CHAPTER XXVIII:** How, while he was praying, God sent him a Vision of a Cross of Light in the Heavens at Mid-day, with an Inscription admonishing him to conquer by that.
> ACCORDINGLY [Constantine] called on [God] with earnest prayer and supplications that he would reveal to him who he was, and stretch forth his right hand to help him in his present difficulties. And while he was thus praying with fervent entreaty, a most marvelous sign appeared to him from heaven, the account of which it might have been hard to believe had it been related by any other person. But since the victorious emperor himself long afterwards declared it to the writer of this history, when he was honored with his acquaintance and society, and confirmed his statement by an oath, who could hesitate to accredit the relation, especially since the testimony of aftertime has established its truth? He said that about noon, when the day was already beginning to decline, he saw with his own eyes the trophy of a cross of light in the heavens, above the sun, and bearing the inscription, CONQUER BY THIS. At this sight he himself was struck with amazement, and his whole army also, which followed him on this expedition, and witnessed the miracle.

[16] See, for instance, Eusebius, *Eusebius Ecclesiastical History Complete and Unabridged: New Updated Edition*, trans. C. F. Cruse (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson, 1998), 381-382.

church fathers saw him as a Christian, and a gift from God, is beyond doubt.[17] As Heather explains, "it was standard practice for ancient rulers, who claimed to be appointed by Divine Power (as all Roman emperors, and Constantine in particular, did), to report suitable omens as confirmation of their special destiny to rule."[18] Constantine's omen stuck, however, for a millennium and more.

What was Constantine's relationship to the church during his rule? We will have to settle for a brief description here with a few pertinent examples. As with Constantine's life and Christianity, here too much is disputed, but a general picture can be drawn. Glen Thompson outlines the key developments more thoroughly and much more succinctly than I could:

> While there is still some disagreement about which emperor declared Christianity legal in which area and at what time, it was Constantine who became the first clear champion of Christianity. A number of acts issued in 313-314 grant favors to the church in North Africa, the bread basket of Rome, an area the new emperor viewed as critical in establishing his power base. The clergy there were exempted from public service, and the church was given 3,000 folles of gold (Eus. *HE* 10.6-7), while the Donatists there were given the opportunity to present their grievances in several hearings ordered by the emperor (*op. cit.* 10.5.18-24), and eventually in front of the emperor himself (Optatus, *adv. Don.* 210-211).
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> During the following six years Constantine enacted sweeping legislation favoring the church at large: clergy were exempted from public office or serving as tax collectors (*CT* 16.2.11-2), as well as being exempt from tradesmen's and other commercial taxes and from the provision of public transport (*CT* 16.22.10); citizens who remained celibate or had no children were no longer punished (clearly a concession to the growing ascetic tendency among Christians, *CT* 8.16.1); when involved in private legal disputes, Christians could choose to be judged by bishops rather than secular courts (*CT* 1.27.1); the church was allowed to inherit legacies (*CT* 16.2.4); Sunday, the "venerable day of the sun," was made an official day of rest (*CJ* 3.12.2); manumissions performed in churches were considered official (*CJ* 1.13.1); Christians were exempted from taking part in sacrifices, lustrations, and other traditional public rites (*CT* 16.2.5).
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> In 324, after the defeat of Licinius who had briefly renewed the persecution, Constantine directed his governors to assist in restoring confiscated estates and property and in restoring and enlarging church buildings (Eus. *VC* 2.24-46). He himself donated the Lateran palace in Rome to the church and payed for the best materials to build the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem (Eus. *VC* 3.30-32), as well as building the first basilica on the Vatican hill, and giving enormous amounts of his own wealth and land to build, outfit and maintain churches (*LP* Silvester).[19]

We should unpack at least one of the changes noted by Dr. Thompson above. The integration of the courts of bishops into the imperial judicial system played a crucial role in

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[17] For patristic testimonies, see, for instance, Paul Kerestzes, "Patristic and Historical Evidence for Constantine's Christianity," *Latomus* 42, no. 1 (January-March 1983): 84-94.

[18] Heather, *Christendom*, 8.

[19] Glen L. Thompson, "Trouble in the Kingdom: Church and State in the Fourth Century," (paper presented at the History-Social Science Division Symposium: The Christian, The Church and the Government, Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota, April 15, 1999), 5.

changing the status and functions of bishops in the church and society.[20] Leithart notes that later "Augustine's court, like most, was open to non-Christians, such as the Jew Licinius, who had been defrauded of his property by a bishop until Augustine intervened to put things right."[21] This was what Constantine hoped to accomplish by availing himself of these courts for civic administration. More people gained access to justice, many of them the poor who could not afford to do so otherwise, since the bishops did not charge for their services. This also helped reduce corruption and gave the lower classes a better chance at a fair hearing in cases against more powerful opponents. Ecclesiastical courts therefore frequently became popular and took up a significant amount of time for many bishops, particularly those noted for their impartiality and wisdom in making decisions. Peter Brown writes, "As a bishop, Augustine sat all morning arbitrating law-suits."[22]

We should make some mention here of Constantine and Nicaea. Throughout the centuries, many have blamed anything they do not like about orthodox catholic Christianity on Constantine and Nicaea. There are almost as many takes on the council as there are historians and theologians. Brown summarizes the emperor's hopes well, however. The goal was unity and uniformity.[23]

Constantine in good imperial fashion demonstrated humility as the conference began. He refused to sit before being invited to do so. He kissed the empty eye-sockets of an old confessor, maimed in the Great persecution. He was, as Leithart notes, "no bishop. He was not even baptized."[24] He was hardly a spectator, though. The bishops, dazzled by the surreal undertaking put in motion by this new friend, surely were struck by his carefully curated appearance and carriage. Constantine had a vested interest in the vitality of the church and peace within it and so, "though not an officially a member of the church, [he] played a large role in theological disputes and church politics from the time he converted around 312 through the Arian crisis of the 320s and the aftermath of Nicaea (325) to the end of his life (337).[25]

While many have thus concluded that Constantine defined orthodoxy, Leithart takes issue with that assumption. Constantine "was a very skilled politician, and he had definite preferences, strategies, goals."[26] He did not, however, dominate the council as some earlier historians have insisted. As Brown noted earlier, his biggest concern was unity. He wanted a "catholic," a universal church. "If he had a grand aim, it was to unify the church, and he employed myriad tactics to achieve that end. He had to experiment, because neither he nor any other emperor had ever encountered anything like the church." This he did in "fits and starts and not in a single

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[20] Gregory T. Armstrong, "Church and State Relations: The Changes Wrought by Constantine," *Journal of Bible and Religion* 32, no. 1 (January 1964): 4.

[21] Leithart, *Defending Constantine*, 217.

[22] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (University of California Press, 2000), 222.

[23] Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200-1000* (Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 61. Brown explains:

> The Council of Nicaea was supposed to be an "ecumenical"—that is, a "worldwide"—council. It included even a token party of bishops from distant Persia. And what Constantine wished from it was uniformity. Even the date of Easter was agreed upon, so that all Christian churches in all regions should celebrate the principal festival of the Church at exactly the same time. The concern for universal uniformity, devoted to the worship of one God only, was the opposite of the colorful variety of *religiones*, of religious festivals each happening in its own place at its own time, which had characterized the empire when it had been a polytheist "commonwealth of cities."

[24] Leithart, *Defending Constantine*, 149.

[25] Leithart, *Defending Constantine*, 149-150.

[26] Leithart, *Defending Constantine*, 152.

grand strategy."[27] We must remember that "Constantine was not…the only one with an agenda. He was not capable of simply imposing his will on the bishops, even if he had wanted to, and there are clear signs that he did not want to. Bishops had wills too."[28] Nevertheless, as Armstrong notes, "The famous remark of Constantine to the effect that he was a bishop 'to oversee whatever is external to the Church' is also recorded by Eusebius in the *Vita*, and reflects substantially the role of the emperor."[29]

There never was and still is no cut-and-dry Constantine. He played a critical role in the formation of the first draft of the Nicene Creed, one of the most important developments in Christian history, and yet he was still unchurched in a number of ways.[30] Constantine's Christianity is hard to nail down, but of indisputable consequence.

A New West

This paper could go in many directions at this point. Much could be said about Eastern Christianity and the Byzantines, regarding the rise of the holy man,[31] the emergence of caesaropapism, and iconoclasm (and the state's role in stoking it or stamping it out), among other things. Certainly, eastern Christians did not experience the need to question the relationship between church and state nearly as early as their western counterparts, since the western part of the empire fell, or adapted to new "barbarian" challenges and opportunities, much sooner after Constantine's rule came to an end. It is hard to imagine any pope or bishop in the west writing as Patriarch Anthony of Constantinople did to the grand prince of Moscow, Basil I, imploring him to fix a liturgical abuse during the waning years of the Byzantine Empire. The liturgical oversight? "Anthony had learned that the Muscovite prince was not offering the liturgical commemoration of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos (1391–1425)."[32] Weakened though the Byzantines were, they still took their emperor seriously, and his importance for their Christianity and all Christianity. Anthony wrote:

> My son, it is not possible for Christians to have a Church and not have an empire. Church and empire have a great unity and community. It is not possible for them to be separated from one another. For the holy emperor is not as other rulers and the governors of other regions are; and this is because the emperors, from the

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[27] Leithart, *Defending Constantine*, 152.

[28] Leithart, *Defending Constantine*, 153.

[29] Armstrong, "Church and State Relations," 5.

[30] Peter Brown, "Don't Blame Him," *London Review of Books* 37, no. 8 (April 23, 2015), accessed July 10, 2023, https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v37/n08/peter-brown/don-t-blame-him. This is a review of David Potter's *Constantine the Emperor*. Brown notes:

> [Constantine] read the first draft of the Nicene Creed during one of his many attempts to reach consensus among the bishops. As Potter points out, this means that the Creed, a version of which Christians still recite every Sunday, could be seen as "the best-known utterance by a Roman emperor in the modern world." Yet Constantine remained strangely "unchurched." He wasn't baptised until he was on his deathbed and may never have attended a service in a Christian church. But he gave the Christians what they wanted: he ensured that Christianity would no longer be "shunted aside as 'un-Roman' or the practice of eccentrics."

[31] I often tell my students that if they want a shining example of an academic journal article, the gold standard is Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 80-101. I highly recommend it if you are interested in the Christian East and late Roman antiquity.

[32] James C. Skedros, "'You Cannot Have a Church without an Empire': Political Orthodoxy in Byzantium," in *Christianity, Democracy, and the Shadow of Constantine*, ed. George E. Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017): 219-220.

> beginning, established and confirmed true religion (*eusebia*) in all the inhabited world (*oikoumene*). They convoked ecumenical councils . . . and [they] struggled hard against heresies.[33]

While the churches of Rome had relative autonomy in comparison to the other patriarchates during the reigns of Constantine and his sons, the church empire-wide was subject to imperial control in numerous ways, especially with respect to ecumenical councils. This continued to be the case in the East for centuries. Heather notes, "It was always an imperial decision whether and when to call an ecumenical council."[34] Since the Lutheran Reformation emerged from the Christian West, however, we will focus our attention there.

During the time between the two great Christian emperors, Constantine and Charlemagne, the western empire had seen weakening and decentralization. Things were not nearly as dark as has been imagined, but the empire did not hold in the west as it did in the east. Augustine was prescient in his *City of God* by carefully distinguishing that city from the Roman empire, insisting upon its independence (in ways that would become very important in later debates in the West), and making the universal nature of the church (for Jew and Gentile, for Roman and barbarian) clear, even though in his own day Augustine's church was not nearly as independent of the empire as he might have liked.[35] As the empire diminished, local aristocrats, city councils, bishops, and popes increasingly took on responsibility for maintaining order and, often, managing decline. One such pope was Gregory I the Great, who negotiated with the Lombard kings, kept the public fed, and oversaw the army. His administration of both ecclesiastical and civil affairs and his reform of both set the stage for the later Papal States and shaped medieval Christianity in profound ways.

Despite Byzantine emperors making claims on Rome and territories in the west, they could no longer protect or manage these lands in any meaningful way. Justinian attempted to restore the empire of ages past, but plague, local hostilities, and other challenges undermined his impressive effort. It became increasingly obvious that the popes and the people of Italy needed a new patron and protector. Since the fifth century, the Western church had talked about there being two swords. Now it was left to wrestle with who should wield each and what their relationship should be. Often popes, kings, and emperors attempted to take hold of both. We will see the most famous instance of this in the Investiture Controversy.

In the Franks, and especially in Charlemagne, Europe found hope of a renewed Roman empire in the west. This was a long process. Clovis got the ball rolling. A Frank, he ascended to the Merovingian throne in 465 at sixteen years-old and is credited with establishing the Merovingian dynasty. He faced a choice: he could remain allied with Rome, which continued to lose hold of territories it had held, or he could make a move to grab what he could and solidify himself as king. He chose the latter, and he succeeded, but only with utter cruelty. Having succeeded, he needed to figure out how to hold what he had won and forge it into something lasting. Here he would operate on Roman capital, adapting what was most useful in Roman law and custom, making use of Roman infrastructure, and, eventually, adopting Roman religion, post-Constantinian Roman religion. He would achieve what many barbarians had failed to accomplish in the past, an enduring dynasty. In fact, the name "Louis," which so many French kings would bear, comes from the name "Clovis."

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[33] Skedros, "You Cannot Have a Church without an Empire," 219.
[34] Heather, *Christendom*, 124, 136.
[35] Augustine of Hippo, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin, 2004).

Clovis' wife was a Christian. He entertained her by giving time to Christian teachers. Once, when told the story of the crucifixion, Clovis was deeply moved and swore, "If I had been there with my Franks, I would have avenged His wrongs!"[36] Clovis had established and expanded his rule through ruthless cunning and violence and yet as Chamberlin notes "Clovis was no mere thick-necked killer."[37] He was a gifted administrator and a very capable politician. This acumen led him to give Christianity a hearing beyond what he had afforded it for his wife's benefit. Clovis became a Christian, and an orthodox catholic Christian at that, which was not a given at the time. In so doing, he forged an alliance between the Merovingians and the formidable bishops of Gaul. Although Gibbon famously blamed Christianity for the fall of Rome, Clovis certainly saw it as an important part of the Roman legacy. Far from diminishing the glory and heritage of Rome, Clovis saw it as integral to its achievement and continuity. Clovis would not have known any other Rome. Rome had by this time become thoroughly Christianized, and Christianity thoroughly Romanized, so that it was natural in seeking to make use of what was best from the Roman inheritance to make use of Christianity.[38] In this way, as in so many other ways in Clovis' plundering of Roman custom, infrastructure, and connectivity, "the dynamic of the empire continued, if in modified form and for a different end, and he who could link himself with that framework had created an immensely efficient tool of monarchy."[39]

In the Merovingians and the Carolingians, the popes saw an opportunity to have a strong yet somewhat distant protector and patron, who could keep the Lombards and others at bay while defending the lands and the authority of the papacy. The relationship between their new protectors and the popes was not without tension, however. They were willing to protect the church. They considered it a responsibility But they also considered it a responsibility to administer the churches in their realms. They expected a say in the appointment of bishops, and sometimes the entire say. Charlemagne's coronation did not resolve this confusion. If anything, it heightened it.

Charlemagne

Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, was born April 2, 747.[40] His father Pepin III, also known as Pepin the Short, was mayor of the palace, essentially ruling in the king's stead. Charles Martel, Charlemagne's grandfather, was also a mayor of the palace, famous for his victory at the Battle of Tours, which stopped Muslim advances in Europe. Just as importantly, Charles Martel supported Christian missionary work, supporting Benedictine missionaries from England for the conversion of the Low Countries and central Germany. His son, Pepin, eventually took the throne with the approval of the pope in 751. Boniface, the great apostle to the Germans, served as papal emissary. Boniface anointed Pepin. This was a new ritual and one that sent a message to all who knew the Old Testament. This both enhanced and limited the role of the king. He was anointed by God, but through the papacy, and for a specific task: to govern justly. What the pope gave he could take away. Pepin accepted responsibility for the protection of the papacy and made use of his military to carry out that obligation several times. The Donation of Pepin in 756 established the land which the pope ruled as the Papal States.

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[36] Samuel Dill, *Roman Society in Gaul in the Merovingian Age* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), 90.
[37] E. R. Chamberlin, *The Emperor Charlemagne* (Leeds, England: Sapere Books, 2020), 19.
[38] Chamberlin, *The Emperor Charlemagne*, 22.
[39] Chamberlin, *The Emperor Charlemagne*, 23.
[40] There is disagreement about the year.

At Pepin's death in 768, his kingdom was divided between Charlemagne and Carloman, his brother, in keeping with Frankish custom. At Carloman's death in 771, Charlemagne established rule of all Frankish territories, becoming sole King of the Franks. As with Constantine, his Christianity would play a significant role in his public image, and deservedly so, because he took seriously his responsibility to protect and foster the Christian Church in his realm and Europe, whether one agrees with his methods or not. His friend and biographer Einhard wrote of him: "With great piety and devotion he practised the Christian religion in which he had been reared from infancy."[41]

As we consider Charlemagne's famous coronation on Christmas of 800 by the Roman pope, Leo III, we do well to let another early biographer, Notker the Stammerer, writing for Charles the Fat in the last quarter of the ninth century, describe the event:

> As Charles stayed in Rome for a few days for the sake of the army, the bishop of the apostolic see called together all who were able to come from the neighbouring districts and then, in their presence and in the presence of all the counts of the unconquered Charles, he declared him to be Emperor and Defender of the Roman Church. Now Charles had no guess of what was coming; and, though he could not refuse what seemed to have been divinely preordained for him, nevertheless he received his new title with no show of thankfulness. For first he thought that the Greeks would be fired by greater envy than ever and would plan some harm against the kingdom of the Franks; or at least would take greater precautions against a possible sudden attack of Charles to subdue their kingdom and add it to his own empire.[42]

Whether or not Charlemagne was truly unaware that this was going to happen has been debated. That it happened is beyond doubt. Its consequences have been substantial. It must have been quite the scene. Charlemagne certainly did not enjoy such settings and he was not a fan of Roman frills. Nelson writes, "Charles was a practical, down-to-earth man with a down-to-earth sense of humour (his jokes show that): someone of whom a French-speaker, had there been such a person in the eighth century, might have said '*se sentait bien dans sa peau*', 'felt good in his own skin."[43] This was not Charlemagne as Charlemagne normally liked to be, but this was no normal event. Something unheard of for centuries was about to happen. The crowning of this Frankish king, known for his preference for traditional Frankish dress over Roman robes, moderate in appearance and carriage throughout his life, who now stood, dressed as a Roman, crowned as a Roman emperor by a Roman pope, ushered in Christendom and raised questions that would plague it throughout its existence about the relationship between church and state, between those who bore one of the two swords, or bore both to some degree, sometimes in cooperation, sometimes in competition.

Charlemagne certainly did not see any clear distinction between his Christianity and his throne, or between church and state, religion and rule. He was anointed to govern his subjects, and it would have been impossible for him to bifurcate them in a modern way. He was concerned not only with their bodies but with their souls. He was not a bishop, and certainly not the bishop

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[41] Einhard, "The Life of Charlemagne," in *Two Lives of Charlemagne*, trans. David Ganz (New York: Penguin, 2008), 36.

[42] Notker the Stammerer, "The Deeds of Charlemagne," in *Two Lives of Charlemagne*, trans. David Ganz (New York: Penguin, 2008), 77.

[43] Janet L. Nelson, *King and Emperor: A New Life of Charlemagne* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2019), 491.

of Rome, but he was a Christian emperor. The pope and emperor maintained a good relationship for the most part. The emperor recognized the importance of the papacy and revered the great churches and relics of Rome. But he also played a role in papal elections and rescued the papacy from military threats. He knew the pope needed him, and he knew he needed the pope.

Charlemagne was a capable ruler, thorough administrator, gifted strategist, and charismatic leader. His sons were not, at least not to the same degree. While much of Europe hailed the ascendancy of Charlemagne and the return of Christian empire with hope (or at least less pronounced pessimism), such hopes were short-lived. There was only one Charlemagne, as there had only been one Clovis and only one Constantine. Questions about the two swords remained, eventually coming to a head in the Investiture Controversy.

Like Constantine, Charlemagne was declared a saint after his death, although it did not universally hold. Kevin P. Considine writes in *U.S. Catholic*, "There is good reason why our Eastern Orthodox brothers and sisters elevated Constantine to sainthood and refer to him as the 13th apostle. There is also good reason why Roman Catholics have been more cautious about canonizing Constantine."[44] While Constantine brought blessings for the church, he also waged war in the name of Christ and created for the church a "more money, more problems" dilemma. His life did not exhibit exemplary piety. The pagans found more than a little fodder for criticizing the church in his deeds. Like Constantine, Charlemagne was canonized by the antipope Paschal III in the twelfth century, but today the Roman Catholic Church does not recognize him as a saint. His sainthood is perhaps less problematic than Constantine's, but Charlemagne too had his rough edges, his vicious campaign against the Saxons among them. Ultimately, while neither Constantine or Charlemagne have been able to hold onto the title "saint" in the Roman Church, it is hard to imagine the Roman Church as Luther encountered it without them.

The Investiture Controversy

Having looked at the three towering "C's" for the development of Christendom (Constantine, Clovis, and Charlemagne), we will now consider the great and inevitable conflict that came to a head in the last quarter of the twelfth century, spilling over into the thirteenth. This crisis has come to be known as the Investiture Controversy, because it grew out of a debate about who should be able to appoint bishops, investing them with the paraphernalia of their office. By this time, the papacy had grown mightily in its spiritual and temporal power, modeling itself after a monarchy in its hierarchical structure. It was not yet at its pinnacle, but it was getting there. While the papacy sought to ground its power and status in the medieval world in the ancient past, it was clear that something new had developed. In fact, Heather is willing to call the authority of Innocent IV in the early 1250s, 175 years after the outbreak of this conflict, "brand new."[45] At the same time, European princes and kings were becoming more confident with their own growing power.

The recently introduced College of Cardinals, created to combat outside interference in the election of new popes, elected Hildebrand, who became Gregory VII, in 1073. Gregory VII was a monastic eager for ecclesiastical reform. At first, his relationship with Henry IV (King of Germany and then Holy Roman Emperor in 1084) was friendly, or at least respectful. That did not last long, though. Both men saw it clearly within their sphere to appoint bishops. Henry had reason to think this. As noted earlier, this had been a Carolingian privilege. A king appointing a

[44] Kevin P. Considine, "Why isn't Constantine a saint?" *U.S. Catholic* 86, no. 8 (August 27, 2021): 49.
[45] Heather, *Christendom*, xv.

bishop was nothing new. Gregory knew this, but he was also convinced that the practice had helped fuel corruption in the church, as rulers chose pawns as bishops based on their political utility rather than their religious rigor or zeal. He opposed it for the same reason he opposed clerical marriage, which in his view led to nepotism, placing the clerical office in the hands of men whose DNA meant more than their learning or piety. Gregory wanted a powerful church so that the church could be church. He wanted an independent church so that the church would be free to be salt and light, as he understood salt and light. Henry, by contrast, was a Christian king with Christian subjects in Christendom. Ecclesiastical leaders wielded both spiritual and temporal influence in his lands. The administration of the churches in his realm, and their vitality, was of significant interest to him, therefore, and played a critical role in the success of his rule and well-being of his subjects.

The two seemed destined to clash. Gregory boldly elevated his new reforms to the level of dogma, meaning they had to be accepted for salvation. Henry demonstrated his rejection of Gregory's claims by investing the new archbishop of Milan. Gregory excommunicated the German king, who largely controlled Italy, in 1076. Henry demanded that Gregory resign. Gregory held the upper hand since Henry's salvation was at stake. Even more, the king's rivals used the occasion to scheme against him. How could Henry be a legitimate king if he stood outside the church of Christ, after all? Gregory had effectively deposed Henry, in addition to excommunicating bishops in northern Italy who supported him. As noted in connection with Pepin's anointing, what the papacy gave, the papacy could take away. The same thing that elevated kings could undo them.

Cornered, Henry had one viable path forward. He decided to repent. To what degree was this move spiritually motivated or politically motivated? I do not know that either Henry or his subjects would have really thought to separate the two. In January of 1077, when Gregory heard that Henry was on his way to meet him, he decided to settle in at a fortress in Canossa. Negotiations took place before the big event, but no one could be sure how smoothly things would go. Henry dutifully appeared in penitential clothes and after three days Gregory decided to proceed with reconciliation despite some hesitation.[46]

What did this mean for Henry IV's legitimacy as king? Blumenthal continues, "It is a moot question whether this act reinstated Henry as sovereign. After the penance of Canossa, Gregory treated Henry as king although he was to declare in 1080 [when he excommunicated and deposed Henry again, unsuccessfully] that he had not restored him to his royal office." She concludes, "More than anything else, Canossa was a pastoral event."[47] Henry IV may have officially repented, but he was still not convinced he was wrong. Gregory's absolution did not end things, therefore. In fact, it may have sealed his demise. The event did score a lasting victory for the papacy in one way, though. Henry, by submitting to the pope's excommunication and deposition, lent credence to the papal claim to stand as a judge over princes and kings.

Restored, Henry IV put down Saxon resistance. He successfully, although at great expense, overthrew Rudolf of Rheinfelden, elected in March of 1077 by his enemies. He then turned to Rome. Excommunicated and deposed again in 1080, he pressed on. Few in Germany

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[46] Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy: Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century*, trans. Uta-Renate Blumenthal (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 123. Blumenthal writes: "The king promised in a written oath that he would abide by the papal judgment to be rendered in the near future, and that he would not attempt to hinder the papal journey across the Alps. Gregory then raised up the king who had prostrated himself in the form of a cross in front of the pope and celebrated the Eucharist with Henry and his followers, thus reconciling them to the church."

[47] Blumenthal. *The Investiture Controversy*, 123.

seemed to care about this excommunication.[48] He had Gregory deposed at a synod at Brixen in June of 1080. Gregory of course rejected the synod, but support began to grow for Henry, even among some cardinals. When Henry moved on Rome, the Romans opened the city's gates. Gregory fled and Wilbert was elected pope in Gregory's place in 1084. Gregory died in exile May 25, 1085. Henry received the imperial coronation on Easter of 1084.

Henry had triumphed for the moment, but Gregory VII had changed the papacy with lasting impact. He had asserted papal sovereignty and supremacy and, although he personally paid the price, he provided the institution with vital precedent, which led to later concessions from secular rulers. The debate was not over with his demise. In September of 1122 Pope Callixtus II and Emperor Henry V reached a compromise. The Concordat of Worms dictated that the emperor would give new bishops the symbols of their temporal rule while the popes would invest them with the religious symbols of ecclesiastical office. Both sides could claim victory. Emperors kept a great deal of say in who became a bishop in their lands. The papacy acknowledged that they had an interest in who served in the episcopal office, since this office had temporal (secular, political) importance. The papacy, however, got an important acknowledgment from the emperor that bishops owed primary allegiance to the Roman church and operated first and foremost as part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the papacy, that is, under popes. Territorial churches were far from autonomous.

Luther

We now make our way to the sixteenth century, where we again find conflict between a German and pope. This time, though, the German is no emperor. He is a monk from a young university in a backwards German town. Trusting that the previous paper dealt sufficiently with the two kingdoms in the life and teaching of Martin Luther, however, we will avoid treating the great reformer himself in too much detail and look instead at the great two kingdom crisis that developed almost immediately after his death.

The Shirer myth has long haunted studies of Luther's teaching on the two kingdoms and resistance theory. In his *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* Shirer presents with great confidence a very simplistic view of what the great reformer taught: "The great founder of Protestantism was both a passionate anti-Semite and a ferocious believer in absolute obedience to political authority."[49] Luther did have a doctrine of resistance, though. He was no quietist. The Gnesio-Lutherans seized and built upon it when the emperor attacked and then sought to recatholicize Lutheran lands.[50]

Luther liked to do things in two and threes—two kingdoms, three estates; two kinds of righteousness, three types of law. His teaching on the two kinds of righteousness became

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[48] For a more detailed retelling of events, see Blumenthal. *The Investiture Controversy*, 123-127.

[49] William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (New York: Fawcett Crest, 1962), 326.

[50] What follows draws heavily on an article I wrote earlier in my ministry. See Wade Johnston, "We Must Obey God Rather than Men: The Lutheran Legacy of Resistance," *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* XXV, no. 3 (Holy Trinity 2016): 19-24. For more on Luther's teaching on the two kingdoms and its appropriation by Gnesio-Lutherans, the Adiaphoristic Controversy, the siege of Magdeburg, the *Magdeburg Confession*, and Lutheran teaching on resistance in the sixteenth century, see Wade Johnston, *The Devil behind the Surplice: Matthias Flacius and John Hooper on Adiaphora* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2018); Wade Johnston, *An Uncompromising Gospel: Lutheranism's First Identity Crisis and Lessons for Today* (Irvine, California: New Reformation Publications, 2016); Wade Johnston, "Adiaphora and Confession. Flacius' Magdeburg Writings Produced in Exile," in *Matthias Flacius Illyricus*, ed. Irene Dingel, Johannes Hund, and Luka Ilić (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019): 21-34.

Lutheranism's teaching in Article XVIII of the *Apology*.[51] Luther highlighted Christ's statement to Pilate in *Temporal Authority: To What Extent Should It Be Obeyed*: "My kingdom is not of this world." That did not mean, however, that this world did not matter. John the Baptist gave the soldiers who came to him clear counsel: "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay."[52] The gospel did not overthrow the two kingdoms. Rather, Christ put each kingdom in its proper context. Luther explained elsewhere that the Gospels left no doubt that Christ "commended [temporal authority] to us and affirmed it as instituted, or rather he clearly asserted that it is divinely ordained."[53] Christians thus live in two kingdoms with two kinds of righteousness (civil and divine). They are citizens and saints. The first righteousness is active, the second passive. The first is earned, the second gifted. Both are important, and both have a place in the Christian life, but they are not the same. Paul Althaus, whose work deserves study but ought to be read with caution, accurately sums up Luther's notion of the dual citizenship of the Christian: "[The Christian] has two lords: one in the earthly kingdom and one in the spiritual kingdom. He is obligated to the emperor and to Christ at the same time; to the emperor for his outward life, to Christ inwardly with his conscience and in faith."[54]

Luther was no utopian. He knew we live in a fallen world. He also knew, though, that, while fallen, this world was not forsaken. God was at work still: "Indeed, one could very well say that the course of the world, and especially the doing of his saints, are God's mask, under which he conceals himself and so marvelously exercises dominion and introduces disorder in the world."[55] The same God who redeemed us in Christ and declares us justified in the church works for our good and the good of our neighbor through the state as well. While he does not rule there in Christ, that is, for salvation, he does rule. God is no deist. He does not know any disinterested relationship with his creation. The prince mattered, therefore. Secular government, if we can speak of such a thing at Luther's time, mattered.

If those in authority are ordained by God and their rule matters because God works through them, then when, if ever, could the Christian resist? This became an increasingly less abstract and more concrete question as time went on and the prospect of imperial invasion grew. One fruit of Luther's grappling was his 1531 *Dr. Martin Luther's Warning to His Dear German People*.[56] There was a place for resistance for those with proper vocations when obedience to God demanded it and when it was in self-defense, not rebellion.

What Luther upheld was the natural right to self-defense. He was not calling for war. That was not his vocation: "it is not fitting for me, a preacher, vested with the spiritual office, to wage war and to direct to peace, as I have done until now with all diligence."[57] His did not mince words, however: those who warred against God's faithful would meet their Maccabees, a theme the Magdeburgers ran with.[58] Luther understood that while he was not called to take up arms, others were charged with making important decisions about resistance, and implementing them:

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[51] See, for instance, KW, *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, 234.

[52] LW 45:88, 98.

[53] LW 48:260-261.

[54] Paul Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 61-62.

[55] LW 45:331.

[56] For an excellent discussion of the importance of this work and the evolution of Luther's doctrine of resistance in general, see David Mark Whitford, *Tyranny and Resistance: The Magdeburg Confession and the Lutheran Tradition* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001).

[57] LW 47:18.

[58] LW 47:17.

"I will not reprove those who defend themselves against the murderous and bloodthirsty papists, nor let anyone else rebuke them as being seditious, but I will direct them in this matter to the law and to the jurists."[59] Luther was a theologian, not a lawyer, and he recognized his limitations: "I do not want to leave the conscience of the people burdened by the concern and worry that their self-defense might be rebellious. For such a term would be too evil and too harsh in such a case. It should be given a different name, which I am sure the jurists can find for it."[60]

Should governing authorities resist the emperor (lesser magistrates the greater magistrate), they needed to do so for proper reasons. Luther outlined some of them. First, "You, as well as the emperor, vowed in baptism to preserve the gospel of Christ and not to persecute it or oppose it."[61] Second, "Even if our doctrine were false—although everyone knows it is not—you should still be deterred from fighting solely by the knowledge that by such fighting you are taking upon yourself a part of the guilt before God of all the abominations which have been committed and will be committed by the whole papacy." Finally, "If you did otherwise you would not only burden yourself with all these abominations and help strengthen them, but you would also lend a hand in overthrowing and exterminating all the good which the dear gospel has again restored and established," which he then summarized.[62] There was no doubt what was at stake: "If this doctrine vanishes, the church vanishes"[63]

Magdeburg

Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, eventually did invade. Lutheranism was already in a precarious situation with Luther's recent death. It was without its leading voice and biggest personality. The emperor defeated the Schmalkaldic League at Mühlberg on April 24, 1547. John Frederick's cousin, Maurice, Duke of Saxony, aligned with the emperor against his fellow Lutherans. Emboldened, the emperor pushed on with an aggressive religious agenda intended to bring the Protestants of Germany back under Roman jurisdiction. With John Frederick captive and Wittenberg now in the hands of Maurice, who had received assurances that his Lutheranism would be respected yet was fearful of upsetting the emperor, Lutheranism's leading theologians were unsure what to do.

The *Augsburg Interim* of 1548 was the emperor's first step in his recatholicizing efforts. It mandated many practices rejected by the Lutheran reformers or which had fallen into disuse because they were no longer seen as useful. It also included doctrinal formulas which were ambiguous when not offensive. This interim succeeded only so far as there were soldiers behind it, meaning it fared better the more south one went, where Spanish troops were in greater supply.

Maurice realized that enforcement of the *Augsburg Interim* was impossible without completely undermining his already tenuous rule in his new territories, where he was affectionately known as the Judas of Meissen. He set his Wittenberg theologians to work on a compromise proposal, which they undertook with varying amounts of hesitancy among them. From the start, the Gnesio-Lutherans charged the Wittenbergers with treachery for this work. The Wittenbergers, however, claimed that they had the best interests of Luther's reformation in mind and argued that they were only dealing with adiaphora.

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[59] LW 47:19.
[60] LW 47:19.
[61] LW 47:35.
[62] LW 47:52.
[63] LW 47:54.

Matthias Flacius Illyricus led the charge in opposition to the Leipzig Proposal produced by the Wittenbergers, his former colleagues and friends. Having fled the city when it became clear that they planned to serve their new elector (an illegitimate elector in the eyes of many) and were willing to play ball to preserve their institution, Flacius found eager allies in Magdeburg and worked tirelessly there to preserve what they considered to be true Lutheranism in the face of state-mandated changes in doctrine and practice. Kaufmann notes, "No other figure in the sixteenth century, not even Martin Luther, wrote and published so many pages in so short a time as did Flacius."[64]

Countering Wittenberg's claims that only adiaphora were involved in their proposal, Flacius set forth a "General Rule about Ceremonies":

> All ceremonies and church practices are in and of themselves free and they will always be. When, however, coercion, the false illusion that they were worship of God and must be observed, renunciation [of the faith], offense, [or] an opening for godless develops, and when, in whatever way it might happen, they do not build up but rather tear down the church of God and mock God, then they are no longer adiaphora.[65]

Flacius was abundantly clear in the pamphlets that spilled forth from his pen and flew off the presses. There was no longer any room for negotiations or concessions. The state had overstepped its bounds. Formerly faithful teachers had undermined the gospel. These were dire times. The only route was opposition to the interims, even when that meant persecution and crosses. The *Magdeburg Confession* took up Flacius' call.

Nicholas Gallus and Nicholas Amsdorf are the likely authors of the *Magdeburg Confession*. Flacius was not ordained, so he did not write or sign the confession. It was the confession of the city's pastors. Regardless, Flacius' imagery, themes, and arguments ran throughout the document. There would have been no *Magdeburg Confession* without him and there was a clear consistency between his writings and those of the city's pastors. They stood together on Luther's teaching and the Word of God.

Three Scripture passages graced the cover of the *Confession*: Psalm 119:46, Romans 13:3, and Acts 9:4,5.[66] Romans 13:3 stands out since it did not follow Luther's translation. Luther translated, *"Denn die Gewaltigen sind nicht den guten Werken, sondern den bösen zu fürchten."*[67] The German edition of the *Confession* translated it as follows: *"Die Gewaltigen sind*

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[64] Thomas Kaufmann, "'Our Lord God's Chancery' in Magdeburg and Its Fight against the Interim," *Church History* 73, no. 3 (September 2004): 576.

[65] Matthias Flacius Illyricus, *Ein buch, von waren und falschen Mitteldingen, Darin fast der gantze handel von Mitteldingen erkleret wird, widder die schedliche Rotte der Adiaphoristen. Item ein brieff des ehrwirdigen Herrn D. Joannis Epini superintendenten zu Hamburg, auch von diesem handel an Illyricum geschrieben* (Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, 1550), Ai v.

[66] *Bekenntnis Unterricht und vermanung der Pfarrhern und Prediger der Christlichen Kirchen zu Magdeburgk* (Magdeburg: Michel Lotther, 1550). *Confessio et Apologia Pastorum & reliquorum ministrorum Ecclesiae Magdeburgensis.* (Magdeburg: Michaelem Lottherum, 1550). All translation from the Latin, the more technical, with noteworthy text in the German bracketed. The *Confession*'s translation of Psalm 119:46 reads: "I will speak about your testimonies before kings and not be put to shame." Romans 13:3 is rendered, "Rulers are not for terror for good conduct, but for bad." Acts 9:4,5 is translated, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard to kick against the goads."

[67] Luther Bibel, 1545. The King James Version, like Luther, translates *"For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil."*

von Gott nicht den guten wercken, sondern den bösen zufürchten verordnet."[68] The confessors here added three words, *verorden* and *von Gott*. This translation avoided undermining their argument. Not only did subjects have a responsibility to obey, but authorities had an obligation to rule justly and within their bounds. This translation helped ground the lesser magistrate doctrine they proposed: when the superior magistrate abandoned or overstepped their proper mandate from God, the lesser magistrate could intervene for justice and in defense of those subject to it. This explication of Romans 13 shaped resistance theory for centuries, especially through Beza's adoption of it, from Germany to England to the American colonies.

The *Confession*, like Flacius' *A Book on True and False Adiaphora*, and like Luther's *Warning*, is divided into three parts with a similar progression of thought. Whitford summarizes this shared progression: "a survey of the present situation and the theological issues at stake, an apology for just resistance, and a warning."[69] The confessors pulled no punches from the start:

> When the higher magistrate persecutes his subjects' rights by force, whether natural or divine rights, or the true religion and worship of God, then the inferior magistrate ought to resist according to the command of God.
>
> The current persecution which we now suffer from our superior authorities in particular pertains to the oppression of the truth of our religion, the true worship of God, etc. [and to establish again the lies of the pope and his abominable idolatry].
>
> Therefore, our magistrate [and every Christian authority] ought to resist this oppression according to the command of God.[70]

The first part reiterated their subscription to the *Augsburg Confession*. The second part detailed their rationale for resistance. They were not rebels, and they were not looking for a fight: "We have in this war sought nothing more than peace and the true religion, and not to attain any dignity or riches of any sort." They were, on the contrary, forced into this conflict: "Our enemies have stood out as the primary drivers of this tragedy."[71] Their opponents had refused to listen or reason.[72] Their fellow Lutherans had confused righteousness *coram mundo* and *coram Deo*, while the papists never understood it to begin with.[73] Magdeburg sought no new rights or privileges—only the preservation of what was already granted to its leaders by natural and divine right. Because the conflict involved an attack on the gospel, they were duty-bound to speak up, "even if we are by all means few and most pathetic." The Magdeburgers must "rightly demand our right, even if those ruling and the Epicureans laugh at us without concern."[74] They did not only act for their own good, either. They hoped their actions would embolden others who had so far neglected their offices, including in foreign lands[75] They called Charles V to account:

> These dual obediences [to God and to the emperor] serve and animate each other [in a Christian manner]…. When, however, one is deficient, horrible sins and grievous tumult [and outrage] necessarily result. You now, Emperor Charles, have

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[68] *"Rulers are not ordained by God to be a terror to good works, but the evil."*
[69] Whitford, *Tyranny and Resistance*, 78.
[70] *Confessio*, A1v; *Bekenntnis* Aiv.
[71] *Confessio*, E3v; *Bekenntnis*, Hiiir-Hiiiv.
[72] *Confessio*, E2v; *Bekenntnis*, Hiiv.
[73] *Confessio*, E3v. Whitford, *Tyranny and Resistance*, 74.
[74] *Confessio*, E3r. *Bekenntnis*, Hiiv.
[75] *Confessio*, A3 (5).

> exceeded the limits of your rule [and office] and extended it into the realm [and office] of Christ. You are the cause of this turmoil, as Elijah told Ahab [and we must just as freely inform you], and not those who do not want to give you the honor that belongs to God nor are able to do so for fear of the wrath of God and eternal punishments.[76]

The third part of the *Magdeburg Confession* issued a warning. Evangelical co-religionists had to choose between Christ and Belial, between Magdeburg or the emperor.[77] They were either for Christ or against him. [78] This was a time of confession, so there were no adiaphora. Actions spoke louder than words, although both actions and words mattered.

The imperial siege ultimately failed. Maurice did not have the time the emperor did. The longer it drew out, the more it undermined his rule in his own land and his status in the eyes of his peers. Eventually, therefore, as tides began to turn with talk of a new Lutheran alliance, he moved "to solidify his rule," recasting himself as the potential deliverer of Lutheran faith.[79] He maneuvered himself into the leadership of a new Protestant coalition determined to push the emperor out of Germany and agreed, among other things, that it was time for the siege of Magdeburg to end. Magdeburg and Maurice both declared victory, although Maurice, when pressed, acknowledged Magdeburg had not been defeated but had come to terms. The Peace of Augsburg came four years later and "recognized the central claim of the Magdeburg pastors and the *Torgau Declaration*—religious diversity does not equal imperial disloyalty."[80] Article X of the *Formula of Concord* later sided with Magdeburg, undermining Maurice's triumphalist propaganda in the wake of siege and vindicating Magdeburg's resistance.

Adopted by the *Formula*, Flacius' principle held the day: *nihil est adiaphoron in statu confessionis et scandali*. While avoiding names, the formulators *de facto* conceded that the Magdeburgers had been correct in their resistance. It confessed, "We reject and condemn as false the opinion of those who hold that in a time of persecution people may comply and compromise with the enemies of the holy gospel in indifferent things, since this imperils the truth."[81] It added, "Likewise, we regard it as a sin worthy of punishment when, in a time of persecution, actions contrary and opposed to the confession of the Christian faith are undertaken because of the enemies of the gospel, either in indifferent things or in public teaching or in anything else which pertains to religion."[82] The *Formula* not only sided with the Magdeburgers, it upheld their position as Luther's position, as the Lutheran position, as the biblical position.

Bonhoeffer

Permit some self-indulgence here (some may think this whole paper is self-indulgence). If I had my way, all our time could be spent on Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Confessing Church, and the German Christians. I do not have my way, though, so we will give Dietrich a shorter hearing that he deserves. Bonhoeffer drew on the concept of *status confessionis* in his opposition to

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[76] *Confessio*, F1v-F2r; *Bekenntnis*, Jiiv-Jiiir.
[77] Whitford, *Tyranny and Resistance*, 88.
[78] *Confessio*, H3v; *Bekenntnis*, Niiv-Niiir.
[79] Whitford, *Tyranny and Resistance*, 89.
[80] Whitford, *Tyranny and Resistance*, 90.
[81] Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 640. Hereafter abbreviated "KW."
[82] KW, 640.

Hitlerism. His first cousin, Hans Christoph von Hase, wrote his master's thesis on the topic.[83] Bonhoeffer himself wrote about adiaphora in the church struggle in Germany under fascism.[84] Although we cannot tell the degree to which Magdeburg's resistance influenced Bonhoeffer, it certainly played some role in emboldening him to attempt to put his proverbial spoke in the wheel of Hitlerism.

In the years immediately preceding his imprisonment for conspiring to assassinate Hitler (there are worse reasons to go to prison), Bonhoeffer worked on his brilliant *Ethics*, which he had begun in 1940.[85] He intended this to be his *magnus opus* but never finished it. It was assembled from his various manuscripts, edited, and published by others after his death. In this work, he makes some important observations about our symposium topic. Reacting to the twisted conception of the two kingdoms that emerged from German idealism and nineteenth and early twentieth-century German theology (in which confessional orthodoxy was largely an afterthought), so that even Hitler could have a convenient two-kingdom doctrine of sorts, Bonhoeffer emphasized the unity of the two kingdoms in Christ and the Christian.[86] He could speak of two spheres, but he cautioned against attempts to divorce them in our concrete Christian life. Bonhoeffer warned, "The division of the total reality into a sacred and a profane sphere, a Christian and a secular sphere, creates the possibility of existence in a single of these spheres, a spiritual existence which has no part in secular existence, and a secular existence which can claim autonomy for itself and can exercise the right of autonomy in its dealings with the spiritual sphere."[87] This was dangerous because "so long as Christ and the world are conceived as two opposing and mutually repellent spheres, man will be left in the following dilemma: he abandons reality as a whole, and places himself in one or the other of the two spheres. He seeks Christ without the world, or he seeks the world without Christ."[88] Bonhoeffer was clear, "There are not two realities, but only one reality, and that is the reality of God, which has become manifest in Christ in the reality of the world."[89] He lamented, "Thus the theme of the two spheres, which has repeatedly become the dominant factor in the history of the Church, is foreign to the New Testament."[90] One cannot consider the world apart from Christ and truly consider the world. The incarnation has made that an impossibility. We do well to keep that in mind given the modern American proclivity toward compartmentalizing life and divorcing the material and metaphysical, privatizing the latter and leaving the former to drive public life. There simply are not so separate spheres as some might imagine, though they are distinct. There is no world into which Christ has not come and for which he has not taken on flesh. "To speak of the world without speaking of Christ is empty and abstract. The world is relative to Christ, no matter

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[83] Luka Ilić, *Theologian of Sin and Grace: The Process of Radicalization in the Theology of Matthias Flacius Illyricus* (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014), 131. The thesis was entitled *The status confessionis in the Polemical Literature Surrounding the Augsburg Interim of 1548.*

[84] See Ilić, *Theologian of Sin and Grace*, 133. Ilić cites Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Irrlehre in der Bekennenden Kirche? Gutachten, Stettin, Juni 1936 in Eberhard Bethge (ed.), Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Gesammelte Schriften II: Kirchenkampf und Finkenwalde. Resolutionen, Aufsätze, Rundbriefe 1933 bis 1943 (München: Christian Kaiser, 1959): 246–275, here 270–271.

[85] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (New York: Touchstone, 1995).

[86] Paul R. Hinklicky, *Before Auschwitz: What Christian Theology Must Learn from the Rise of Nazism* (Eugene, Oregon, Wipf and Stock, 2013), 60.

[87] Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 194.

[88] Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 194.

[89] Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 195.

[90] Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 195.

whether it knows it or not."[91] As we strive to live as good citizens of this world and as faithful heirs of the world to come, we do well to listen to Bonhoeffer: "Action which is in accordance with Christ is in accordance with reality because it allows the world to be the world; it reckons the world with the world as the world; and yet it never forgets that in Jesus Christ the world is loved, condemned and reconciled by God."[92] As American Christians are tempted to conflate or divorce politics and religion in our polarized and partisan milieu, maintaining this proper perspective is critical. We need not dive in headlong or withdraw. "No man has the mission to overlap the world and to make it into the kingdom of God. Nor, on the other hand, does this give support to that pious indolence which abandons the wicked world to its fate and seeks only to rescue its own virtue."[93]

America

Since colonization began, America has been a rare bird, so it makes sense that its experience of the two kingdoms would put it in unchartered waters. Since its earliest days, since Jamestown and the Pilgrims, Americans have been having a debate about church and state and it has never been the same debate as in Europe. It was and is something new. America never experienced Christendom as Europe did. America never had saints like Europe had, and still has not. American colonies flirted with established churches (all thirteen colonies had state-supported religion but not all had official religions), but in the end America had no experience of a state church like European Protestantism had known.[94] That being said, we must be careful when speaking about the Puritans and other religious separatists coming from England for religious freedom. Most were not looking for a new and diverse religious setting. They wanted to create a home for their religion. Some Puritan communities in America surpassed the Anglican Church back in England with intolerance and persecution. Nevertheless, the general trend in America was toward disestablishment. The First Amendment, while not doing away with established churches in the states, enshrined the free exercise of religion and ruled out any nationally established church. In addition, while many colonies had established churches, outside of Puritan-dominated Massachusetts, New Haven, and Plymouth, most colonies afforded greater religious toleration than found in England. Jefferson's tombstone famously hails what he considered his three greatest accomplishments:

> Here was buried
> Thomas Jefferson
> Author of the Declaration of American Independence
> of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom
> & Father of the University of Virginia[95]

From relatively early on, the anti-hierarchical (at least opposed to traditional hierarchies) and prophetic trumped an emphasis on tradition, order, or episcopacy. America never had an Anglican bishop before the Revolution. The Roman Catholics had no bishop until John Carroll in 1789. Even where there were established churches, church government was usually

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[91] Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 204.
[92] Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 227.
[93] Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 229.
[94] For more on this, see the sixth chapter of Martin E. Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America* (New York, Penguin, 1985).
[95] "Jefferson' Gravestone," in *Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia*, accessed July 19, 2023, https://www.monticello.org/research-education/thomas-jefferson-encyclopedia/jeffersons-gravestone/.

congregational or local (parish vestries). There was no strong top-down organization or administration. Moreover, America was born after the advent of the printing press, which lent itself to a hyper-personal, individualized experience with the Scriptures and the divine. Almost all the founding fathers were Bible readers, even if they were deists or agnostics when it came to orthodox Christianity. While church attendance was not always great, functional biblical literacy was not uncommon. Biblical allusions abound in the writings of our founding fathers and the great speeches of our history. You do not make allusions most people will not get if you are a gifted writer or speaker. Whether or not America was in any way a Christian nation, whatever that means, America is a nation whose history has been shaped by biblical narratives and images.

Here I would like to offer a disclaimer. I know my reviewer, the Rev. Prof. Aaron Christie, expected me to treat Calvin and Calvinism more in this paper. I understand his disappointment, therefore, as he reads this. He had good reasons to think that might be good, and he is probably right. Unfortunately, word count, professional foci, and, admittedly, personal interest have conspired against Calvin playing a leading role here. At this point, therefore, I would invite you all to join me in a cathartic cry, reminiscent of "More cowbell!" Let us join to shout "More Calvinism!" Ready? "More Calvinism!" If that sounded out of place in our august Lutheran seminary gymnasium, perhaps he will go light on me. More seriously, I certainly could have spent more time on Calvin, Calvinism, and America. What are you going to do with an hour for two thousand years of history, though? Such is the nature of human flesh and symposium time limits.

We often hear that America is built on a strict separation of church and state. That, of course, is not true. A strict separation of church and state is nowhere expressed in our founding documents. One can find talk about it, though, in the works of some of the founding fathers. The most famous is perhaps Jefferson's "Letter to the Danbury Baptists," where he replied to concerns expressed by their association in a letter to him.[96] Jefferson's brief reply still

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[96] Their letter read:

Sir,

Among the many millions in America and Europe who rejoice in your Election to office, we embrace the first opportunity which we have enjoy'd in our collective capacity, since your Inauguration, to express our great satisfaction, in your appointment to the chief Magistracy in the United States: And though our mode of expression may be less courtly and pompious than what many others clothe their addresses with, we beg you, Sir to believe, that none are more sincere.

Our Sentiments are uniformly on the side of Religious Liberty – That Religion is at all times and places a Matter between God and Individuals – That no man ought to suffer in Name, person or effects on account of his religious Opinions – That the legitimate Power of civil Government extends no further than to punish the man who works ill to his neighbour: But Sir our constitution of government is not specific. Our antient charter, together with the Laws made coincident therewith, were adopted as the Basis of our government at the time of our revolution; and such had been our laws & usages, & such still are; that Religion is considered as the first object of Legislation; & therefore what religious privileges we enjoy (as a minor part of the State) we enjoy as favors granted, and not as inalienable rights: and these favors we receive at the expense of such degrading acknowledgements, as are inconsistent with the rights of freemen. It is not to be wondered at therefore; if those who seek after power & gain under the pretence of government & Religion should reproach their fellowmen – should reproach their chief Magistrate, as an enemy of religion Law & good order because he will not, dares not assume the prerogative of Jehovah and make Laws to govern the Kingdom of Christ.

Sir, we are sensible that the President of the united States is not the national Legislator & also sensible that the national government cannot destroy the Laws of each State; but our hopes are strong that the sentiments of our beloved President, which have had such genial Effect already, like the radiant beams of the Sun, will shine & prevail through all these States and all the world till

reverberates in American political and legal thought because of this phrase: “a wall of separation between Church & State.” [97] Books upon books have been written about this, and many more will be written still. We live in an age where the courts are hearing a cornucopia of cases wrestling with this notion. We are not lawyers, and I am an historian, but not an Americanist, so we will not pretend to be experts. However, I am guessing all of us in our own experience have come to realize that things are not so cut and dry.

Moses has been an important figure in American history. David or Solomon might resonate with the old powers of Europe, but European immigrants to America and the oppressed were drawn to Moses, and understandably so. Flacius was drawn to Moses and the Israelites’ fights against tyranny in his Magdeburg experience. In many ways, as Bruce Feiler has argued and illustrated, Moses has been America's prophet.[98] The Liberty Bell bears his words from Leviticus 25:10, taken from the King James Version (a very American combination, Moses and the KJV): “Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land Unto All the Inhabitants thereof.”[99] When

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> Hierarchy and Tyranny be destroyed from the Earth. Sir, when we reflect on your past services and see a glow of philanthropy and good will shining forth in a course of more than thirty years we have reason to believe that America’s God has raised you up to fill the chair of State out of that good will which he bears to the Millions which you preside over. May God strengthen you for the arduous task which providence & the voice of the people have cal’d you to sustain and support you in your Administration against all the predetermin’d opposition of those who wish to rise to wealth & importance on the poverty and subjection of the people.
>
> And may the Lord preserve you safe from every evil and bring you at last to his Heavenly Kingdom through Jesus Christ our Glorious Mediator. (“The address of the Danbury Baptist Association, in the State of Connecticut; assembled October 7th 1801,” in *Americans United for Separation of Church and State Faith and Freedom* Series, accessed July 18, 2023, https://www.au.org/wp-content/uploads/migration/pdf_documents/JeffersonDanburyBaptists.pdf).

[97] Thomas Jefferson, “Jefferson’s Letter to the Danbury Baptists,” Jan. 1. 1802, from *Library of Congress*, accessed July 18, 2023, https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.html. The letter reads:

> Gentlemen
>
> The affectionate sentiments of esteem and approbation which you are so good as to express towards me, on behalf of the Danbury Baptist association, give me the highest satisfaction. my duties dictate a faithful and zealous pursuit of the interests of my constituents, & in proportion as they are persuaded of my fidelity to those duties, the discharge of them becomes more and more pleasing.
>
> Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," thus building a wall of separation between Church & State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.
>
> I reciprocate your kind prayers for the protection & blessing of the common father and creator of man, and tender you for yourselves & your religious association, assurances of my high respect & esteem.
>
> Th Jefferson
>
> Jan. 1. 1802.

[98] Bruce Feiler, *America’s Prophet: Moses and the American Story* (New York: William Morrow, 2009).

[99] “The Liberty Bell,” Independence National Historic Park Pennsylvania, accessed July 19 2023, https://www.nps.gov/inde/learn/historyculture/stories-libertybell.htm#:~:text=No%20one%20living%20today%20has,sound%20of%20the%20Liberty%20Bell.&text=The%20Liberty%20Bell's%20inscription%20is,Unto%20All%20the%20Inhabitants%20thereof.%22.

Adams, Jefferson, and Franklin were tasked with coming up with the Great Seal of the United States, both Jefferson and Franklin, not known for their orthodox Christian convictions, nevertheless chose biblical scenes, both involving Moses. Franklin added a motto: "Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God."[100] That sounds like something that could proudly fly on a flag in the bed of a pickup sailing down a backroad on the way to a barbecue. What drew these men to Moses? What made him seem fit for an American seal, and a Great Seal at that? Feiler quotes a conversation partner, "They weren't looking for the freedom of Christ in the next world, they were looking for the freedom of Moses in this world."[101] What Moses did, in their view, was more than follow God's revelation. He acted in accord with reason and natural law. He did what was truly human. He opposed a tyrant and strove for liberty. He was a great American, like Superman, whom Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister, later denounced as a Jew, which was not totally off since his creators patterned the hero after Moses.[102]

Superman was not the only appearance of Moses in twentieth-century America. One of the most successful movies of the century, and perhaps the most culturally significant, featured the Old Testament's great enemy of tyrants: *The Ten Commandments* (1956). For many Americans, Charlton Heston is the face of Moses. Some of you are old enough to remember the movie better than others, but it still plays regularly around Easter if you check the right channels. The story of the movie is thoroughly American and its director, Cecil B. DeMille, whose religion was not as devout as his anti-communism, sought to do a thoroughly American thing in thoroughly American ways. "In the midst of the Cold War, the message was clear: Moses represented the United States; the pharaoh represented the Soviet Union. To drive his point, DeMille cast mostly Americans as the Israelites and mostly Europeans as the Egyptians," which included a Russian as Rameses II.[103] You know those debates we like to have about the Ten Commandments in public places like courthouses? Thousands of those appeared as part of the promotion for Heston's film.[104] It is a fascinating story. Feiler notes:

> The idea that Moses might help promote American ideals abroad did not begin with Hollywood. In the country's formative centuries, Moses was most often used as a role model for outsiders' claims that they were escaping oppression and trying to create a new Promised Land. The Pilgrims, patriots, and slaves all used Moses in this way. But by the twentieth century, America began to change, and so did Moses' role in the country's imagination. As the country secured its strength at home, it increasingly began to project its influence abroad. Once again, Moses provided the narrative.[105]

The American religious scene was new from early on in other ways as well. One stands out: choice. There was, as Nathan O. Hatch has argued, a "democratization of American

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[100] Feiler, *America's Prophet*, 63-69. Franklin's motto as well as the three men's proposed seal is found on page 64.

[101] Feiler, *America's Prophet*, 62.

[102] Feiler, *America's Prophet*, 225, 219-225.

[103] Feiler, *America's Prophet*, 228.

[104] Feiler, *America's Prophet*, 235.

[105] Feiler, *America's Prophet*, 219-220.

Christianity."[106] Your territory did not determine your choice. Your faith was not nearly so much a product of the place of your birth as in the old country.[107]

The Great Awakening only heightened this:

> At its heart was the notion of choice: you must choose Jesus Christ, must decide to let the Spirit of God work in your heart and—note well!—you may and must choose *this* version of Christianity against *that* version. Where once a single steeple towered above the town, there soon would be a steeple and a chapel, Old First Church and competitive Separatist Second Church or Third Baptist Chapel—all vying for souls.[108]

In other words, your faith was *your* faith, and as with anything *you* want, where there is a consumer there is often a producer. Americans quickly filled the marketplace with options. James Madison welcomed such theological diversity and the decentralization of Christian religion. He wrote in his "General Defense of the Constitution" (June 12, 1788) about the importance of having "a variety of sects."[109]

As with so much produced by America, many of these options exhibited an optimism not found in Europe. American utopianism was contagious, even for Christians. As Krieger notes of the early American spirit: "The transcendent possibility that the paradise of the Judeo-Christian bible might be recaptured in that new place occupied the minds of theologians, philosophers, and the faithful."[110] Locke could famously write "in the beginning all the World was America," a new world full of property as a natural right apart from governmental authority and the hindrances of the Old World.[111] Even when things failed, there was still more room. You could still head west.

Schools have often been a flashpoint in America. While we come from a tradition that emphasizes the establishment and maintenance of parochial schools, there has been a great leeriness of such schools in American history. Debates raged about "common schooling" versus

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[106] Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

[107] Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land*, 107. Marty writes:

> For centuries godliness was supposed to be passed down with the genes: Christians were simply children of Christian parents. But that process didn't work long in America, for many chose to fall away. Also, since the fourth century, churchliness had come with the territory. Initially, everyone on Christian soil, except ghetto Jews, was thought of as Christian. No more. The journey of so many religious groups and so many seekers to American shores meant that few could permanently claim any turf as their own alone. Believers and nonbelievers had to share space, while believers tried to win others to belief.

[108] Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land*, 109.

[109] James Madison, "General Defense of the Constitution," June 12, 1788, in *Founders Online,* National Archives, accessed July 19, 2023, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-11-02-0077#:~:text=This%20freedom%20arises%20from%20that,oppress%20and%20persecute%20the%20rest. Madison wrote:

> Happily for the states, they enjoy the utmost freedom of religion. This freedom arises from that multiplicity of sects, which pervades America, and which is the best and only security for religious liberty in any society. For where there is such a variety of sects, there cannot be a majority of any one sect to oppress and persecute the rest. Fortunately for this commonwealth, a majority of the people are decidedly against any exclusive establishment—I believe it to be so in the other states. There is not a shadow of right in the general government to intermeddle with religion. Its least interference with it would be a most flagrant usurpation.

[110] Alex Krieger, *City on a Hill: Urban Idealism in America from the Puritans to the Present* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2019), 1-2.

[111] Krieger, *City on a Hill*, 35.

parochial education. In upstate New York in 1842, a priest burned King James Bibles distributed in Catholic neighborhoods by tract societies.[112] Many Protestants saw public schools as an essential component of Americanization, cultivating shared (generically Protestant) values and ideals. Roman Catholics recognized this. For them, the public schools "looked too much like a junior department of the Protestant religious establishment," which only stoked nativist Protestant fury[113] Parochial schools thus became central to maintaining their faithfulness and identity. Marty notes, "Nothing that leaders planned since did so much to build American Catholicism or enrage non-Catholics."[114] The Philadelphia Bible Riots of 1844 demonstrate how heated things could become in case a priest burning Bibles did not do that already. When rumors spread that Roman Catholics were trying to remove Bibles from schools, unrest grew among craftspeople, already worried about Roman Catholic immigrants taking their jobs, and multiple Roman Catholic churches were burned and thirty people killed. Nativists wondered if one could be a good American while supporting denominational schools instead of the public (generically Protestant sectarian) schools. Understandably, German Lutherans eventually felt under attack as well. They feared the same thing the Roman Catholics did about the public schools: their Protestantism.

The Bennett Law

My colleague Mark Braun once asked me why I have not done much with American Lutheranism. I explained that I would when I found it. I clearly enjoy hyperbole, but there is something to it. America is a different place, and Lutheranism is a different confession, which makes for some fun. Applying biblical principles in a fallen world is no easy thing. Life here is more often printed in grayscale than black and white. Having dispelled the myth that there has never been a Lutheran doctrine of resistance or that Lutherans are necessarily or universally quietistic, we can now turn our attention to further proof of the same in our own synodical history.[115]

Reporting on compulsory school laws in Illinois, Wisconsin, and other states, the *Evangelisch-Lutherisches Gemeinde-Blatt* May 1, 1890 sounded an alarm: "O Lutheran Christian people, wake up and recognize the danger in which you stand!"[116] Language legislation and measures aimed at parochial schools seemed to be part of a broader nativist trend. The Synodical Conference was concerned. Most of its members were not only Lutherans, but Germans. They thought in German, wrote in German, and associated with Germans. Their periodicals kept them abreast of events in Germany.

Large numbers of Germans began arriving in Wisconsin in the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1890, the U.S. Bureau of the Census reported 259,819 foreign-born residents from Germany in Wisconsin.[117] Charter groups in the New World, especially those of German

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[112] Stephen K. Green, *Separating Church and State: A History* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2022), 128.

[113] Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land*, 273.

[114] Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land*, 273.

[115] In this section I draw heavily on a previous work of mine: Wade Johnston, "American Ideals in German Print: The Opposition of the Evangelical Synodical Conference to the 1889 Bennett Law in Wisconsin," *Journal of the Lutheran Historical Conference* (2014): 211-220.

[116] "Folgen des Schulzwangsgetzes im Staate Illinois," *Evangelisch-Lutherisches Gemeinde-Blatt,* May 1, 1890, 133.

[117] Department of the Interior, Census Office. *Report on the Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1890*: *Part I* (Washington D.C., 1895), 607.

Lutherans and Catholics in Wisconsin, welcomed new immigrants from their homeland. Their institutions helped introduce them to the cultural, social, and religious life of the community as they sought to start anew so far from home. One such institution was the parochial school.

An 1889 headline in *The Lutheran Witness*, the English-language publication of the General English Lutheran Conference of Missouri and other States, dubbed Wisconsin "A Lutheran State in the Northwest." Two-thirds of the population were foreign-born or of foreign parentage, it reported. Germans outnumbered Americans by over 100,000. It declared Wisconsin "less American than European."[118] Many children of immigrants in Wisconsin could neither read nor write in English. More than a few Madison lawmakers were concerned. Facility in English, they were convinced, was critical for these children's future success and for their assimilation into American life.[119] William Dempster Hoard, a Republican governor, advocated strongly for educational reform, part of a larger progressive impulse among Wisconsin Republicans. Hoard was alarmed by a report that of the 567,702 young people in Wisconsin between the age of 4 and 20, only 265,477 were attending public schools.[120] Where were the others? They attended private schools, whose quality the state had no means to measure, or no school at all. Even more, many private school students were purportedly receiving inadequate training in English if any at all. Educational reform, Hoard insisted, would reduce illiteracy and child labor. He considered it a basic right for the state's children. He told the state assembly on January 10, 1889, "The child that is, the citizen that is to be, has a right to demand of the State that it be provided, as against all contingencies, with a reasonable amount of instruction in common English branches. Especially has it the right to demand that it be provided with the ability to read and write the language of this country."[121] He called for legislation that "would make it the duty of county and city superintendents to inspect all schools for the purpose, and with the authority to require that reading and writing in English be daily taught therein."[122]

The *Gemeinde-Blatt* reported on Hoard's words in its February 1, 1889 issue with the assessment "we do not detect in the message of the governor a proper proposition of a law in this regard." [123] It warned that such legislation would impose a huge burden upon private schools which saved the state a lot of money. If the state wanted to have any say at all over private schools, the author objected, it should pony up a fair share of the cost for running them.

Hoard persisted despite growing opposition. He told a largely immigrant crowd at the Medford County Fair in 1889, "The little German boy, the little Polish boy, the little Scandinavian boy, and the little Bohemian boy all have the right to be allowed to learn the English language, the language of the country of which they are natives. They are young Americans and must have as good a show as the other little natives who happen to be born of English-speaking parents."[124] He insisted that he was not a nativist or anti-German. He reminded opponents that he was the grandson of a German and that he had added German language study

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[118] "A Lutheran State in the Northwest," *The Lutheran Witness,* May 21, 1889, 189.

[119] Janet Carole Wegner, "The Bennett Law Controversy in Wisconsin, 1889-1891: A Study of the Problem of 'Americanization' in the Immigrant Church and Its Relation to the History of Church and State in the United States," (master's thesis, Brown University, 1966), 4.

[120] Loren H. Osman, *W.D. Hoard: A Man for His Time* (Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin: W.D. Hoard & Sons Company, 1985), 106.

[121] Wegner, 5-6; Osman, 106.

[122] Wegner, 6.

[123] *Evangelisch-Lutherisches Gemeinde-Blatt,* February 1, 1890, 185-186.

[124] *Milwaukee Journal*, October 21, 1889, 1.

to the Fort Atkinson public schools' curriculum, funding it himself for a while.[125] Nothing, he made clear, prohibited Germans or Roman Catholics from being as good Americans as anyone else.[126] His only agenda was battling illiteracy and child labor, freeing the state's youngest citizens from a cycle of poverty. With sincere intent, then, he requested the legislation which made him a one-term governor.

The first bill introduced to answer Hoard's call came from Senator Levi E. Pond of Westfield on February 13, 1889. It would have required parochial schools to report on a form, to be returned to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the number of students between the age of four and twenty who attended during the school year, what subjects were being offered and how many had studied them, as well as whether instruction was being offered in English.[127] The Wisconsin Synod's *Schul-Zeitung* lamented that there were already enough laws on the books and accused the state of trying to stick its nose further and further into private and ecclesiastical matters in a manner reminiscent of the Old World.[128] The article drew a dramatic comparison to Sparta, where children were state property, and complained, "One sneers at the monarchial despotism in European lands, yet here a despotism is afoot which is much more dangerous, a despotism of the masses."[129] Lutheran opponents identified the bill as part of a larger culture war [*Kulturkampf*] in Wisconsin.[130]

The outcry over the Pond Bill continued to grow quickly. A petition garnered more than 40,000 signatures. Ultimately, the Pond Bill never made it into the lower house. Its opponents had won, or so it seemed, because soon Michael J. Bennett, a Roman Catholic Republican farmer and schoolteacher, introduced into the assembly the law that would bear his name.[131] Few seemed to notice. There was no outcry. It was signed into law by Governor Hoard on April 28, 1889. The most controversial part of the bill, which also aimed to outlaw child labor under the age of thirteen, proved to be Section 5. Here the bill stated that "no school shall be regarded as a school, under this act, unless there shall be taught therein, as part of the elementary education of children, reading, writing, arithmetic, and United States history, in the English language."[132] The law also mandated that children attend schools within their districts, which did not always strictly correspond with the area that a parish covered. Some students, therefore, could be prohibited from attending their own parishes' schools. The Scandinavian Lutherans, otherwise more open to the language legislation, objected to this.

Janet Carole Wegner argues that everything was handled openly and above the board. That may have been the case, but not everyone at the time saw it that way. John Philipp Koehler, a professor at the Wisconsin Synod's Northwestern College in Watertown at the time and later the author of *The History of the Wisconsin Synod*, wrote that "the assembly bill of Representative Bennett was rushed thru both houses while the opposition was sleeping on its laurels."[133]

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[125] Wegner, 45.

[126] Wegner, 45

[127] Ibid., 6.

[128] "Alte und neue Schulgestze in Wisconsin," *Schul-Zeitung*, May 1889, 33-34.

[129] Ibid., 34.

[130] "Ein Stück Culturkampf in Wisconsin," *Schul-Zeitung*, May 1889, 35-36.

[131] Fredrich, 85.

[132] Christian Koerner, "The Bennett Law and the German Protestant Parochial Schools of Wisconsin," Milwaukee: Germania Publishing Company, 1890, 3. The text of the Bennett Law was printed in Koerner's pamphlet. It was published in a number of the other works cited in this paper as well and the text is consistent.

[133] John Philipp Koehler, *The History of the Wisconsin Synod*, ed. Leigh D. Jordahl (Sauk Rapids, Minnesota: Sentinel Publishing Company, 1981), 184.

Compared with the Pond Bill, the response might have come slowly regarding the Bennett Law, but when it came it was ferocious.

William Dempster Hoard joked in an interview years later that "the Bennett law had done what the devil had tried to do for three hundred years but had failed to accomplish, namely to unite the Lutherans and the Catholics."[134] The *Lutheran Witness* included an observation from another publication about Hoard's defeat: "From the accounts of the election in Milwaukee last week the strange spectacle presented itself that the German Lutherans and Roman Catholics were united in their opposition to the Bennett School Law, and thus Mayor Brown, who is in favor of that law, was defeated, and George W. Peck, the humorist, was elected."[135]

As crazy as it may have sounded to anyone before the election campaign and may sound to many Lutherans of the former Synodical Conference today, on December 27, 1889, Pastor John Bading of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, who had also served as the president of the Wisconsin Synod until June of 1889, hosted a group of Lutheran and Roman Catholic opponents of the law. This group then issued a joint statement calling the law "unrepublican, unconstitutional, and destructive to parental authority."[136] This was not the only anti-Bennett Law ecumenicism. On February 27, 1890, representatives from the various German Protestant churches in Milwaukee met to outline their position on the law. They also issued a joint statement. They urged the repeal of the law and pledged to vote only for candidates who promised to do so.[137]

Bading was implacable in his opposition to the law. His presidential address to the Milwaukee convention of the Wisconsin Synod in 1889 focused on religious freedom and the separation of church and state. He cautioned against two pressing dangers facing the church: "the growing power of the Pope's church" and that "making itself felt in the legislative bodies of this land."[138] That convention took a step that also may seem surprising. It formed a committee to coordinate English curricula and statistics in case of the Bennett Law's enforcement and study school legislation in the state, as well as similar legislation in other states.[139] This is not the surprising part. The convention also tasked the committee with utilizing the public press to oppose the Bennett Law, which it did especially through the *Milwaukee Journal* and *Germania.*[140]

The Bennett Law and similar legislation in other states appeared repeatedly in the periodicals of the Synodical Conference. German Lutherans clearly felt threatened. In their campaign for the right to maintain instruction in German, however, they made very American arguments. They contended that the Bennett Law posed a threat to their freedoms. Consider the May 1, 1890 issue of the *Gemeinde-Blatt*, which outlined constitutional objections to the Edwards Law of Illinois and similar laws. These laws restricted the freedom of conscience because they could force Lutheran children into religionless state schools or replace their Lutheran schoolbooks with faithless or unorthodox religious materials. Such legislation restricted the free exercise of religion because it undermined religious instruction in the school, weakened catechization for confirmation, made it difficult or impossible to celebrate the religious festivals

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[134] *Milwaukee Sentinel*, January 6, 1890, 8; Wegner, 48.

[135] "The School Question in Wisconsin," *Lutheran Witness*, April 21, 1890, 175.

[136] Wegner, 48.

[137] Wegner, 49-50.

[138] Edward C. Frederich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans: A History of the Single Synod, Federation, and Merger* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1992), 87.

[139] Frederich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans*, 88.

[140] Frederich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans*, 88.

of the school year, and deemed many faithful pastors and teachers unfit for the educational task. Ultimately, such laws were an attack upon civic freedoms. They demeaned, undermined, and unjustly did away with legitimate methods for educating young people and the natural right of parents to oversee the adequate and appropriate education of their children.[141] The July 15, 1889 issue of the *Gemeinde-Blatt* pronounced the Bennett Law "tyrannical and unjust," an unlawful interference with the authority of parents, which unconstitutionally bound the consciences of citizens.[142] The April 1890 issue included an article entitled "Confession-Making against the Bennett Law" on the talking points of the newly-elected Anti-Bennett Press Committee. Parents must guard against being "robbed of their parental rights in the manner of a socialist police state" through the machinations of those aligned with "the Know Nothings or fanatical, puritanical English Americans."[143] The German Lutherans did not deny the place and importance of public schools. They were not enemies of English. Rather, they insisted that their issue was with this specific law which diminished religious and personal freedom in unjust and unnecessary ways.[144] They called for solidarity among "all freedom-loving citizens, irrespective of party and descent."[145] German Lutherans thus objected to laws intended to Americanize the pupils in their parochial schools, but they did so in very American ways—in their publications, in general media, and in the ballot box.

The Bennett Law was repealed in February of 1891. Democrats made huge gains in the state, including the governorship. The defeat of the Bennett Law brought an extended respite from such measures. By World War I, prominent Lutheran leaders in Wisconsin were already predicting and arguing for the necessity of a transition to English. The Wisconsin Synod established the *Northwestern Lutheran* in 1914, its first English-only church periodical. The first article explained that "the publication of an English Lutheran church-paper has been a long-felt want within the confines of our Synodical body."[146] Pastor August Pieper, who would later serve at the Wisconsin Synod's seminary, had been a member of the committee formed to oppose the Bennett Law. He now wrote an article for the 1918-1919 issue of the synod's *Theologische Quartalschrift* encouraging "our transition into English."[147] These German Lutherans had become American Lutherans through a two-kingdom struggle.

Conclusion

We have made our way to the tail end of the nineteenth century—quite the journey across time and geography. I wish I could say that I made sense of everything and that there was a clear narrative throughout, but history is never that convenient, and especially church history. Ultimately, I pray we have been reminded that we are not alone. The church has always lived in times of confusion or conflict, even when many of its members have felt at ease or at home. There has been no golden age. There has been no time when princes and pastors got it all right. Yet, through it all God has been at work in his two spheres (kingdoms, regiments, you pick the term). He has been at work for us. He has never been aloof. He has never been inactive. He has

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[141] "Folgen des Schulzwangsgesetzes im Staate Illinois," *Evangelisch-Lutherisches Gemeinde-Blatt*, May 1, 1890, 133.

[142] *Evangelisch-Lutherisches Gemeinde-Blatt,* July 15, 1889, 173.

[143] *Evangelisch-Lutherisches Gemeinde-Blatt,* May 15, 1890, 142.

[144] *Evangelisch-Lutherisches Gemeinde-Blatt,* May 15, 1890, 142.

[145] *Evangelisch-Lutherisches Gemeinde-Blatt,* May 15, 1890, 142.

[146] John Jenny, "Introductory," *Northwestern Lutheran*, January 7, 1914, 1.

[147] For a translation of this article, see August Pieper, "Our Transition into English," tr. John Jeske, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 100, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 85-106.

been busy for his creation and for his elect. Since he works through sinners and in a fallen world, he has had to use lame horses, and so both kingdoms have limped. There never has been and never will be a utopian model. Not on this side of the resurrection at least. Utopia is *outopia* and is nowhere to be found, but God is, present in his Means of Grace in the kingdom of the right and active in his creation through his creatures in their stations and vocations in the kingdom of the left.

I will leave it to our next presenter to bring us to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I am all too often pessimistic as I consider them. More than once I have told my students that the future of our country seems fraught with difficulty now that we have largely rejected the three things that combined to create our founding documents: Christianity, the Enlightenment, and the pragmatism of English constitutionalism and common law. Without these, we end up left with a buffet of enthusiasm (emotion), assertion (power), and anxious presentism (rootlessness). I am only a pessimist outside of faith, however, and I need not invite you into my all-too-easy unbelief. I am only a pessimist when I forget who is at work behind the masks, in the spheres, for me and you, and I should not forget, because he has done unforgettable things. Our God is God and He is God in Christ, and that God in Christ cherishes what he has made and will never forsake what he has redeemed. Thank God for that and thank God for his two kingdoms.

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