

Religion and Politics Do Mix! Luther' Theology of the Two Kingdoms

Our current situation: Divisiveness, avoidance of political conversation

What's difference between talking about Christian values and talking politics?

Need to have a way to talk without the emotion re: Christian role in world

Lutheran notion: Ongoing revelation of God's truth - new for each circumstance

So, we keep asking What does this mean? Here, in this context?

Some presuppositions:

All of life is created and ordered by God, therefore good

God creates order in creation, overcomes chaos with structure

All of life is to be lived in the context of God's sovereignty

All Christians live their lives primarily out of justification by grace through faith

We are all sinner - saints at the same time completely imperfect and completely loved

Challenge of sorting out what God's will is in certain situations - often ambiguous

People of faith are called to live "in but not of this world"

Which leads to this tenet of Luther's theology: The Kingdoms of the World, The Kingdom of Heaven (both ordered and ruled by God)

I. Kingdoms of this world - Governing structures of society...

Luther: All created by God - Includes all "government", governing authorities, secular authorities - family, service organizations, Boy and Girl Scouts, corporations, civil government, and yes, the organized church, all gifts of God

Scriptural references: Romans 13:1-10, I Peter 2:13-14

Kingdoms, governments of this world, are all temporal, fitting the times and the needs

What do you see as the roles, purposes of the governments of this world?

Family?

PTO?

Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts?

Rotary, Lions Service League,

Township?

County Government?

Federal Government?

Organized Church - Lord of Life, for instance?

Ultimately, in Luther's view, these organizations:

Keep order in society, protect human rights, assure justice is done, see to the needs of all.

II. Kingdom of Heaven

Kingdom of heaven is eternal, spiritual, invisible, unchanging, perfectly present in this world and the next, unbounded by time or context.

Scripture:

Psalm 145:9-14

Matthew 5:3

John 18:33-38

Luke 17:20-21

Matthew 13: Kingdom of the heavens parables

Romans 14:7

Colossians 1:13

What are the principles, values, of the Kingdom of heaven?

All Christians live out of justification by grace through faith, and in obedience to the God of the Scriptures. When the governments of this world are at odds with Kingdom of Heaven values, the Christian is called to obey Kingdom of Heaven values, not governments.

Reflection: "For Everyone Born" - Kingdom of this world or Kingdom of heaven?

Tension in the "in but not of this world" life of the Christian:

Luther: the enthusiasts on the right: Ignore the world, avoid it, stay pure

Enthusiast on the left: Create a Christian nation that completely adheres to Christian values

Confusion for Christians. Is there such a thing as a Christian Nation? (Calvin's experiment in Geneva, Switzerland, NAZI Germany, Kingdom of God in America)

The governments of this world are imperfect, yet God has created them, and we are called to be "in but not of the world"

Evil can infiltrate.

So - next week - What is the role of the Christian in the governments of this world?"

And the week after: "What is the role of the Church in the governments of this world? "