



Christian Citizenship

“You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world” (Mt. 5:13-16). One way to be salty and let our light shine is by being good citizens on earth. Our vocation as citizens of both the secular kingdom and God’s kingdom gives us the responsibility to proclaim God’s Word and care for our neighbors. We are called to engage the “public square” with our message of Christ’s mercy for all. Please pray for God’s will to be done... in Jesus’ name.

The Lesser Magistrates, Magdeburg Confession, and Christians Today

“The Magdeburg Confession,” writes Rev. Karl R. Hess, “cries out from the closets of the Lutheran Church against our present submission to the American Interim.”

In 1548, Charles V imposed his infamous Augsburg Interim which was an attempt to smash the Protestant Reformation. He granted an “interim” during which Lutheran pastors could remain married and distribute both the body and blood at the Lord’s Supper but forced the Lutheran Churches to submit to almost all other ceremonies and teachings that Martin Luther and his fellow reformers had rejected as contrary to the Gospel. While most all of Protestant Germany conformed to the decree of Charles V, the city council (lesser magistrates) of Magdeburg took a stand and resisted his authority. Although the Doctrine of Lesser Magistrates has roots in early Christianity, the pastors of Magdeburg codified it on April 13, 1550, by way of their Magdeburg Confession. The forces of Charles V marched on Magdeburg and the town was besieged for over a year. Four thousand of Charles’ forces and 468 Magdeburgers died. When the siege ended on November 4, 1551, the people of Magdeburg were free to practice their Christian faith.

Rev. Hess writes, “Covid served notice on the Church that we should have already been clear in our minds what obedience to the government is demanded of the Church by Christ and what is not. But if we are caught flat-footed again, we are without excuse.” Covid “made it apparent that we are living under a different interim today, but nevertheless a real one.” Hess calls this “The American Interim.” Charles V “demanded a variety of ecclesiastical concessions that Lutherans could not make in good conscience . . . It was an

‘interim’ because it would require the submission of the Lutheran Church until such a time as the Pope dropped the axe and destroyed the Lutheran Church utterly. The American Interim is only a little different. Its unwritten stipulations require subservience on the part of the Lutheran Church (and any church that wants to adhere to the Scripture as the Word of God) to the ceremonies and doctrines of the American state religions until such a time as the Church is swallowed up by apostasy and its children have all been converted. Until that time, the Lutheran Church is allowed to preach whatever doctrine it sees fit within the increasingly narrow confines of its churches, but publicly it is required to be neutered and signal its submission to the tenets of American civic religion.”

The writers of the Magdeburg Confession, together with Melanchthon and other orthodox Lutheran theologians, correctly believe[d] that the civil government is an ordinance of God put in place to uphold God’s Law.” (Quotes by Karl R. Hess, pastor of Emmaus Lutheran Church in Redmond, OR., are from his Substack, “The American Interim,” 9-20-2024.)

What can we do? First, read *The Doctrine of Lesser Magistrates* by Rev. Matthew J. Trehwella. Familiarize yourself and members of your family and congregation with *The Magdeburg Confession* and why it matters to Lutherans and all Christian citizens today. Consider abortion as an example of misrule by a higher magistrate. Hess says, “The churches should have been teaching their members in government that it was their duty to refuse to allow abortion clinics to operate under their jurisdiction. What else were they doing but giving to Caesar what is God’s when they said, ‘God forbids murder, but the United States allows it’? Instead, government officials should have refused to follow the wicked laws and endured whatever suffering came as a result of their obedience to God.” If the Church had given faithful witness, and if lesser magistrates would have stood up to higher magistrates, would millions of preborn babies have been saved? Hess reminds us that 85% of the Missouri Synod complied when told by the government to close our churches during Covid. Did we submit to the American Interim by tacitly agreeing that God’s Word is a private matter? That we should not question the

American Interim's commitment to utterly divorce the Law of God from the Kingdom of God's left hand? Hess suggests that we can write resolutions calling for repentance for the Church's conduct during Covid and about the proper teaching about the two Kingdoms and resistance to tyrannical government. We can think about how we and our congregations will give faithful witness the next time the government demands our formal subservience to the American Interim.

Please pray that we, the Church, fear and love God before all else... in Jesus' name.

Resources for the Christian Citizen

The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrates by Matthew J. Trewhella. This book appeals to history and the Word of God while showing how Americans can successfully resist the federal government's attempts to trample our Constitution, assault our liberty, and impugn the law of God. Lutherans (and all Christians) should be familiar with *The Magdeburg Confession*. When a superior authority makes unjust laws or decrees, the lesser authority has a God-given right and duty to resist those unjust laws or decrees.

Agenda 21: The Wrenching Transformation of America. Tom DeWeese and contributors provide a careful examination of the United Nations' document guiding "Sustainable Development," Common Core Education, National Heritage Areas, Green Energy, and Global Warming. You will meet the planners and NGOs who implement "sustainable development, learn how schools are to enforce Agenda 21, be encouraged to fight back, and defend property rights.

The U.N. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: A Critique by the American Coalition for Sustainable Communities (ACSC) which exists to sustain representative government and protect elected representative's authority.

The Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt, PhD. As a social psychologist, Haidt focuses on social and political psychology. He takes a close look at how the rewiring of childhood is causing an epidemic of mental illness. He explains why social media damages girls more than boys and why boys have been withdrawing from the real world into the virtual world with disastrous consequences for themselves, their families, and society. Haidt issues a call to action that can restore a more humane childhood. You can subscribe to his Substack, *After Babel*.

Bad Therapy: Why the Kids Aren't Growing Up by Abigail Shrier. Shrier's book, *Irreversible Damage*, examined the transgender craze seducing our daughters. In *Bad Therapy*, she details an investigation into a mental health industry that is harming, not healing, American children. Shrier explores the ways the mental health industry has transformed the way we teach, treat, discipline, and even talk to our kids. She reveals that social-emotional learning handicaps our most vulnerable children, in both public schools and private. "Gentle parenting" can encourage emotional turbulence—even violence—in children as they lash out, desperate for an adult in charge.

Indoctrinating Our Children to Death by Alex Newman. Newman, an international journalist, educator, consultant, and author of several books, builds on over a decade of research and investigative reporting into the indoctrination, sexualization, and dumbing down of children. He documents the untold history behind government education and its founders. He explains that the system is not "broken," but is actually accomplishing the goals of its architects. These goals include turning away from God and fundamentally transforming the nation away from its constitutional foundations.

The Marxification of Education by James Lindsay, PhD. The mastery of core academic curriculum by students (reading, writing, history, math, science, and civics) has declined to crisis levels. In the meantime, says Lindsay, students are learning to be activists and encouraged to turn their backs on their nation, society, parents, and religion. Instead of correcting course, schools keep veering into "social and emotional learning" (SEL), Critical Race Theory, Radical Gender Theory, Comprehensive Sexuality Education, and even drag queens. Why? Lindsay explains that during the last forty to fifty years, education has been purposefully transformed from education to the neo-Marxist thought reform of Paulo Freire. Lindsay's website and podcast is *New Discourses* which provides a wealth of information on such topics as SEL, wokeism, Marxism in the U.S., and the pagan theology of the United Nations.

Treason, a newly released documentary by JJ Carrell and Ryan Matta. This two-part film is divided into *Trafficked* and *Invaded*. Learn more by visiting www.jjcarrell.com, checking out his Substack "On the Border," or visiting www.thisistreason.com.

