

Naturlovens principper: Familie, køn, og kyskhed

Natural Law Principles: Family, Gender, and Chastity

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Del II: Nogle flere vidnesbyrd ... Appliceringer på staten og på kirken More Testimonies ... Applications to the State and to the Church

A. Review of Part I

1. **Definition:** Natural law is the distinction between good and evil, just and unjust, that all people in all places and all times can recognize by virtue of the conscience and right reason; natural law is the foundation for every human society, not a product of any particular human culture.
2. *Against Postmodernism:*
 - a. Lutherans agree with Aristotle, Cicero, and Aquinas that the natural law is **known** by everyone and **applies** to everyone for civil righteousness.
 - b. The natural law guides people in **civic righteousness** in their relationships with one another (*coram mundo*).
 - c. By legitimizing **political resistance** and **just war**, the natural law keeps tyranny in check.
3. *Against Rationalism:*
 - a. *Lex semper accusat*. The law always accuses.
4. As for our relationship to God (*coram Deo*), the natural law **terrorizes the conscience**, until the **Gospel** brings **peace**.

B. The Natural Law and the Limits of Civil Authority: United States

1. **Thomas Jefferson, Declaration of Independence (1776):** “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness [private property].”
2. **Thomas Jefferson, Virginia Law for Religious Liberty (1779):**
 - a. Section 1: “Almighty God hath created the mind free, and manifested his supreme will that free it shall remain by making it altogether insusceptible of restraint.”
 - b. Section 3: “The rights hereby asserted are of the natural rights of mankind, and that if any act shall be hereafter passed to repeal the present or to narrow its operation, such act will be an infringement of natural right.”
3. United States Congress, Northwest Land Ordinance (1785): “Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.” (Art. 3)

C. The Natural Law and the Limits of Civil Authority: Germany and Norway

Examples applying the theology of Luther and Melancthon:

1. The Magdeburg Confession of 1550
 - a. Romans 13 does not require that everyone obey their earthly rulers unconditionally, but rather to submit to *lawful* authority (cf. AC XVI).
 - b. Lawful authorities are recognized by (a) the protection of the innocent and (b) the punishment of the evildoer (Romans 13:3–4). (Marks of Civil Government)

- c. Pastors, civil magistrates, and the common people should respond to tyranny according to their distinctive vocations and in proportion to the level of tyranny.
 - Pastors should preach against tyrants in church or state.
 - Lesser magistrates should interpose to protect people against tyrants.
 - Common people should not revolt, but may defend themselves.
2. Eivind Berggrav, Bishop of Oslo
- a. “When the Driver Is Out of His Mind” (1941):
 - Just as a sacrament is valid only when carried out according to Christ’s command, so also civil government is valid only when protecting the innocent and punishing the evildoer (Romans 13:3–4).
 - Since Hitler’s regime punishes the innocent and protects the evildoer, Hitler’s regime has lost legitimacy. In such a case, “it is one’s duty to be disobedient.”
 - b. *Staten og mennesket (Man and the State, 1944)*: National Socialism proves itself to be the Antichrist by:
 - rejecting both the natural law and the revealed law;
 - asserting the authority to establish its own laws contrary to God’s law; and,
 - reducing the church to being a tool of the all-encompassing state.
 - c. *Kirkens Grunn: En bekjennelse og en erklæring / The Foundation of the Church: A Confession and a Declaration (Easter 1942)*
 - Norway’s Nazified civil government no longer is God’s establishment under Romans 13, but has become an establishment of Satan under Revelation 13.
 - The people of Norway have no duty to obey, but rather a duty to resist.

I. ... Vi erklærer derfor at det er vår høyeste plikt mot Gud og mot mennesker uavkortet og uforferdet å forkynne alt Guds ord ... uten hensyn til hvem det måtte mishage. Her står vi under Guds befaling. ...

... Ingen jordisk makt eller myndighet kan heller sette ukirkelige vilkår for adgangen til å få utføre kristelig arbeid eller få gjøre tjeneste som forkynner.

II. ... Det er derfor utålelig for kirken at noen makthaver ut fra politisk-verdslige hensyn berøver en ordinert mann ikke I plan for eachalene hans embete, men også hans oppdrag til tjeneste med ord og sakrament.

IV. ... irken vilde sviktet sin forpliktelse på det kristne opdrageransvar om den rolig så på at en verdslig øvrighet organiserer en moralsk barne- og folkeopdragelse, uavhengig av kristent syn. Foreldre og lærere må ikke søkes drevet til i strid med sin samvittighet å utlevere barna til opdragere som vil “revolusjonere deres sinn” og innføre dem i en “ny livsanskuelse” som kjennes fremmed i forhold til kristendommen.

I. ... We declare, therefore, that it is our highest duty before God and before man—fully and fearlessly—to proclaim all God’s Word ... without hesitation for whom it might displease. Here we stand under God’s command. ...

... No earthly power or authority can impose unchurchly conditions upon the permission to conduct Christian work or to serve as a preacher. ...

II. ... It is, therefore, intolerable for the church that someone in power—for political, worldly reasons—deprives an ordained man not only of his office, but also of his mission to minister with Word and Sacrament.

IV. ... The church would be remiss in her duty of Christian upbringing if she silently observed a worldly authority arrange the moral upbringing of children and people, independent of Christian views. Parents and teachers must not be sought out and driven, contrary to their conscience, to surrender their children to child educators who want to “revolutionize their minds” and induct them into a “new worldview” that feels foreign to Christianity.

3. Kirkensgrunn today?
 - a. Pastor Børre Arnold Knudsen challenged Norway’s abortion-freedom law and the Church of Norway’s liberal view concerning abortion in the 1970s. He tried to rely on Kirkensgrunn, but ultimately lost his case before the Supreme Court (Høyesterett) of Norway and was removed from the Church’s clergy roster in the years that followed. (Høyesterett – Rt-1983-1004)
 - b. In the United States and Canada, Lutherans have been studying Kirkensgrunn as a model for peaceful protest of government policies that shut down churches during COVID while the government still allowed abortion clinics to be open.

D. Natural Law and the Terrified Conscience

1. The law always accuses. (*Lex semper accusat.*)
 - a. “The Law works wrath and only accuses. The Law terrifies consciences, because consciences never are at rest unless they hear God’s voice clearly promising the forgiveness of sins.” (Apol. V [III], 136 [257])
 - b. “Paul says in Romans 4:15: ‘The Law brings wrath.’ He does not say that by the Law people merit forgiveness of sins. For the Law always accuses and terrifies consciences. Therefore it does not justify, because a conscience terrified by the Law runs from God’s judgment. They err who assume that by the Law—by their own works—they merit forgiveness of sins.” (Apol. IV (II), 38)
 - c. “The law will always accuse us, because we never satisfy God’s law.” (Apol. XII (V), 88)
2. The conscience judges a person legitimately according to:
 - a. the moral law as written in the heart and revealed in Scripture; or,
 - b. the civil law as legislated by God’s ordinance of civil government.
3. The conscience judges a person *illegitimately* according to:
 - a. impostor “laws” imposed by tyrants in the church (e.g. Pharisees); or,
 - b. impostor “laws” imposed by tyrants in the state (e.g., “unjust laws”).
4. The Augsburg Confession mentions “conscience” nearly 50 times, often to emphasize the terror that results from illegitimate guilt.
 - a. “Consciences are not to be burdened, as though such observances [church ceremonies] were necessary for salvation.” (AC XV, 2)
 - b. “Consciences were plagued with the doctrine of works” (AC XX, 19)
 - c. “Consciences [should] not be burdened with anxiety to enumerate all sins, for it is impossible to recount all sins.” (AC XXV, 7)
 - d. “This error [vows of celibacy as superior to marriage] greatly tormented devout consciences, which grieved that they were ... married.” (AC XXVI, 11)
 - e. “New ceremonies, new orders, new holy-days, and new fastings were daily instituted ... and did greatly terrify men’s consciences.” (AC XXVI, 2)
5. Dietrich Bonhoeffer emphasized that the conscience presents us with the shame for sin that separates us from God, from our neighbor, and even from our own selves: “In shame man is reminded of his disunion with God and with other men: conscience is the sign of man’s disunion with himself. ... The knowledge of good and evil is separation from God. ... Shame is man’s ineffaceable recollection of his estrangement from the origin [God]; it is grief for this estrangement, and the powerless longing to return to unity with the origin [God].” (*Ethics*, chap. 1)

E. The Conscience and the Limits of the Natural Law

1. We must distinguish carefully between our relationship to God (*coram Deo*) and our relationships to each other (*coram mundo*).
 - a. *Coram mundo*:
 - The Natural Law guides people in civic righteousness.
 - The Natural Law keeps tyranny in check.
 - b. *Coram Deo*:
 - The Natural law reveals the tyranny of the devil, the world, and the self—but can do nothing to liberate the self from the devil or the spiritually fallen world.
 - The Natural Law terrifies the conscience. (*Lex semper accusat.* / The law always accuses.)
 - The Natural Law is at best a schoolmaster leading us to Christ
 - “Therefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” (Galatians 3:24)
 - The law shows our need for salvation, our need for a Savior.
2. Only the Gospel—through the Word and the Sacraments—can bring peace to the conscience that has been troubled by the law.
 - a. “The people are also advised concerning the dignity and use of the Sacrament, how great consolation it brings anxious consciences.” (AC XXIV, 7)
 - b. “The power of the keys is set forth in its beauty and they are reminded what great consolation it brings to anxious consciences.” (AC XXV, 4)
 - c. “Because it otherwise is useful to the conscience, Confession [of sins] is retained among us.” (AC XXV, 13)
 - d. “Now, strictly speaking, repentance consists of two parts. One part is contrition, that is, terrors striking the conscience through the knowledge of sin. The other part is faith, which is born of the Gospel or the Absolution and believes that for Christ’s sake, sins are forgiven. It comforts the conscience and delivers it from terror.” (AC XII,3–6)

F. Recommended Resources

1. Ryan MacPherson, “Natural Law in the Lutheran Reformation,” *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* 29, no. 1 (Epiphany 2020), 13–19.
2. *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal*, ed. Robert C. Baker
3. Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*
4. Ryan MacPherson, “Political Resistance in Lutheran Theology,” in *My Savior’s Guest*, ed. Thomas Rank
5. Additional Articles by Ryan MacPherson:
 - a. www.intoyourhandsllc.com
 - b. www.hausvater.org
 - c. www.ryanmacpherson.com

G. Discussion

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| | <u>Book of Concord (1580)</u> | <u>Konkordiebogen</u> |
| SC | Small Catechism (1529) | Luthers lille Katekismus |
| LC | Large Catechism (1529) | Luthers store Katekismus |
| AC | Augsburg Confession (1530) | den augsburgske Bekendelse |
| Apol. | Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1531) | apologi for denne |
| SA | Smalcald Articles (1537) | schmalkaldiske Artikler |
| FC Epit. | Formula of Concord, Epitome (1577) | Konkordieformlen, Kort Forklaring |
| FC SD | Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration (1577) | Konkordieformlen, Stort Forklaring |