

The Lutheran Day School
and the Three Estates: Estates—Family, Church, and State
Part 1 of 3

Question: *Since the church is the assembly of all believers in Christ among whom the Gospel is preached and the sacraments are administered, and to obtain faith in Christ God instituted the ministry of the Gospel and Sacraments through which the Holy Spirit creates faith in Christ, by what rationale according to God's Word would a Lutheran congregation run a day school?*

Augsburg Confession Article VII: The Church

Our churches teach that one holy Church is to remain forever. The Church is the congregation of saints [Psalm 149:1] in which the Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments are correctly administered. For the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree about the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. It is not necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies instituted by men, should be the same everywhere. As Paul says, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all" (Ephesians 4:5-6).

- Christ builds His Church by the faithful preaching of the Gospel and administration of the Sacraments.
- The Church is the congregation of believers in Christ among whom the Gospel is purely preached and the sacraments are rightly administered.
- Faith in Christ is the hidden reality of the Church; preaching and the sacraments are the external reality of the church—the hidden reality of faith is dependent upon the external reality of the Word and sacraments.
- Human traditions are not the essential character of the Church.

Augsburg Confession Article XVI: Civil Government

Our churches teach that lawful civil regulations are good works of God. They teach that it is right for Christians to hold political office, to serve as judges, to judge matters by imperial laws and other existing laws, to impose just punishments, to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers, to make legal contracts, to hold property, to take oaths when required by the magistrates, for a man to marry a wife, or a woman to be given in marriage [Romans 13; 1 Corinthians 7:2].

- The institution of the civil government and its authority rests upon the Fourth Commandment and the foundational authority of father and mother.
- Civil authority is necessary to maintain order in society.
- It is right and proper for Christians to fully engage in civil government for the sake of the society and for the benefit of their neighbors.

Augsburg Confession Article XX: Good Works (paragraphs 27-34)

We teach that it is necessary to do good works. This does not mean that we merit grace by doing good works, but because it is God's will [Ephesians 2:10]. It is only by faith, and nothing else, that forgiveness of sins is apprehended. The Holy Spirit is received through faith, hearts are renewed and given new affections, and then they are able to bring forth good works. Ambrose says: "Faith is the mother of a good will and doing what is right." Without the Holy Spirit people are full of ungodly desires. They are too weak to do works that are good in God's sight [John 15:5]. Besides, they are in the power of the devil, who pushes human beings into various sins, ungodly opinions, and open crimes. Such is human weakness, without faith and without the Holy Spirit, when governed only by human strength.

- Good works cannot merit God's grace or the gift of salvation.
- Good works flow from faith in Christ and serve our neighbor.
- Good works cannot be done without faith and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Large Catechism: Fourth Commandment—Honor your father and your mother.

To the position of fatherhood and motherhood God has given special distinction above all positions that are beneath it: He does not simply command us to love our parents, but to honor them. Regarding our brothers, sisters, and neighbors in general, He commands nothing more than that we love them [Matthew 22:39; 1 John 3:14]. In this way He separates and distinguishes father and mother from all other persons upon earth and places them at His side. (paragraph 105)

- The offices of father and mother are the highest offices in the created order because they stand in the place of God for the miracle of procreation AND for the benevolent dominion over the creation. This is where the authority of government is derived.

Let our youths look first to this commandment if they wish to serve God with truly good works...For to parents God has appointed and commanded obedience next to His own majesty. For if God's Word and will are in force and being accomplished, nothing shall be valued higher than the will and word of parents, as long as that, too, is subordinated to obedience toward God and is not opposed to the preceding commandments. (paragraphs 115, 116)

- The Word of God is the ultimate source of life, authority and order in the home and society.

It would be well to preach to the parents also, and to those who bear their office. Tell them how they should behave toward those who are given to them for their governance. This is not stated in the Ten Commandments. But it is still abundantly commanded in many places in the Scriptures. God wants to have this included in this commandment when He speaks of father and mother. He does not wish to have rogues and tyrants in this office and government. He does not assign this honor to them, that is, power and authority to govern, so they can have themselves worshiped. But they should consider that they are obligated to obey God. First of all, they should seriously and faithfully fulfill their office, not only to support and provide for the bodily necessities of their children, servants, subjects, and so on, but most of all, they should train them to honor and praise God [Proverbs 22:6]. Therefore, do not think that this matter is left to your pleasure and arbitrary will. This is God's strict command and order, to whom also you must give account for it [1 Peter 4:5]. (paragraphs 167-168)

- The fourth commandment extends a public trust to parents to care for their children and to rear them in the nurture and love of the Lord for the salutary benefit of the society, the home, and the church.

...there is so much need to be seriously concerned about the young. For if we wish to have excellent and able persons both for civil and Church leadership, we must spare no diligence, time, or cost in teaching and educating our children, so that they may serve God and the world...He has given us children and issued this command: we should train and govern them according to His will. Otherwise, He would have no purpose for a father and a mother. (paragraphs 171-173)

- Children are to be trained, governed, and educated according to God's Word.
- The teaching of children serves the Church and society.

In God's sight faith is what really makes a person holy and serves Him alone [Romans 4:3-5], but the works are for the service of people. (paragraph 147)

PEACE LUTHERAN ACADEMY MISSION STATEMENT:
*Peace Lutheran Academy partners with parents in Christian education
for a life of faith in Christ and service to others.*