

## *Law, Gospel and Lawlessness in the Public Square*

“...whoever knows well this art of distinguishing between Law and Gospel, him place at the head and call him a doctor of the Holy Scripture”<sup>1</sup>

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1. ‘Good News For The Public Square’**

The book.

#### **1.2. As a legal consumer**

Simultaneously enjoying freedoms and a world where rules breed like rabbits – Kafka-esque

#### **1.3. Prof Julian Rivers**

##### *1.3.1. Juridification*

##### *1.3.2. The blurring of civil law and morality*

#### **1.4. What we’re covering tonight - ‘Law, Gospel and Lawlessness in the Public Square’**

##### *1.4.1. The Law-Gospel debate*

##### *1.4.2. The civil law – Gospel debate*

#### **1.5. Our Text – Galatians 2:14**

### **2. Visions of the Christian life**

#### **2.1. Churches as mirrors**

#### **2.2. Churches as total, exclusive immersion**

#### **2.3. Differences**

Defining themselves against each other?

#### **2.4. Commonalities**

Both produce very ‘safe’ citizens for the modern state

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther

### 3. Luther's principle and Galatians 2:14

#### 3.1. Luther's guiding principle

If you have not defended the Gospel precisely where it is under attack, you have not defended it.

#### 3.2. Luther's gospel principle and the public square

##### 3.2.1. A distraction?

##### 3.2.2. The Gospel attacked from the public square

###### 3.2.2.1. An attack from law

###### 3.2.2.2. A paradox

The gospel is denied because in the public square, people are lawless by being under their own law

### 4. The law-gospel question

#### 4.1. Law vs Gospel

##### 4.1.1. Under grace not law

##### 4.1.2. Promising the same thing

The promise of life

##### 4.1.3. Repentance and law

Repentance consists of:

- contrition and
- faith.

'We say that contrition is the genuine terror of a conscience that feels God's wrath against sin and is sorry that it has sinned. This contrition takes place when the Word of God denounces sin.'<sup>2</sup>

The law is 'to lead men to a knowledge of their sin'<sup>3</sup>

##### 4.1.4. Repentance, law and love

No law means a different Gospel means a different love

----- > Bonhoeffer's 'cheap grace'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Apology of the Augsburg Confession art 12 on Penitence.

<sup>3</sup> Formula of Concord, Epitome art 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Cost of Discipleship*

*4.1.5. The counter-intuitive loss of law in a law-based society*

**4.2. Two features of our public square – and their lawlessness**

*4.2.1. Democracy*

*4.2.1.1. Democratic tyranny*

Sour grapes? No, a precise analytical term in Christian theology

*4.2.1.2. Democratic tyranny as lawless*

Salutati: the tyrant as one who refuses the law of the one who makes him lord.

De Tocqueville – the untrammelled nature of the majority, ultimately<sup>5</sup>

*4.2.2. Individual rights*

*4.2.2.1. Rights or entitlement?*

J.M. Twenge – the measurable growth in narcissism – ‘I’m royalty’/‘don’t you know who I am?’

*4.2.2.2. Entitlement rights as **unearned***

*4.2.2.3. Rights rather than duties*

G. Mazzini: *the Duties of Man*

**4.3. the theme of lawlessness**

- I am the final reference point, or I and my friends, are.
- ----- > not under law
- ----- > abolishes the gospel.

**5. The civil law question**

**5.1. Human law as a good**

‘to maintain external obedience against unruly and disobedient men’<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Democracy in America.*

<sup>6</sup> Formula of Concord, Epitome. Article 6

**5.2. Juridification – the lawless bringing more and more under law**

The irony that the lawless are using law more and more

**5.3. Law-morality distinction – secular laws as having moral authority**

e.g. Race Relations Act 1967 – but how much more?!

**6. A Luther-style synthesis**

**6.1. Religiosity the enemy of true religion**

- Religiosity as law-bloated
- Religiosity as lawless
- Lawlessness as the closet sister of legalism

**6.2. Our Law as the enemy of God's law**

- Our law as law-bloated
- Our law as lawless
- Our law resents Christian faith:-
  - Its law-bloatedness sees us as lawless
  - Its lawlessness sees us as legalist

----- > intervene by its law to curtail our 'legalism' and our 'lawlessness'

**7. Our law as the enemy of the Gospel**