

The devil is always attacking the three estates. He attacks the church with false doctrine and unholy living. He attacks the home with strife and confusion. He attacks the state with all sorts of trouble and difficulties. Knowing this really helps us understand what is going on in the world, why there are Supreme Court Cases about what marriage is, and why the neighbors have so many fights. These are all the assaults on the estate of the family. It helps us know why the church is always fighting, why there are false doctrines, sects, and divisions. The devil attacks the estate of the church. This is why there are wars, unrest, and constant political battles. The devil works to undermine the state.

There is a spiritual battle, then, in every home, in every church, and in every state house. And there is a broader war on the general condition of these three estates. In other words, the devil attacks every family, but he also attacks the idea of family. He attacks every church where the Word of God is preached, but he also attacks the very idea of religion. The devil attacks every nation, but he also attacks the idea of nations and the various political doctrines.

But the destruction of the church, the family, and the state is not his ultimate goal. He is after people.


The Three Estates





Designed for Pr Bryan Wolfmueller by Chip Thompson chipthompson.ocks

	Institution	Purpose
Church	In the Garden	Eternal Life Instituted by God for the preaching of the Word, and after the Fall the church chiefly exists to forgive sins and give the Lord's gift of eternal life.
Family	In the Garden	Temporal Life Instituted by God when he united Adam and Eve in Holy Matrimony, gave them dominion over the earth, and blessed them with the instructions to "be fruitful and multiply." The family exists to bring forth and support earthly life.
State	After the Fall	Minimize Death The state was instituted after the fall into sin. God instituted the sword to punish and curb sin, and those who bear the sword are the state. The state exists to limit sin through punishment and coercion. We see that the sword can be pointed externally (waging just war) and internally (police, judges, jails, etc.). The state guards and protects, it brings forth little deaths to prevent greater deaths.

Before Reformation: Exclusive Estates

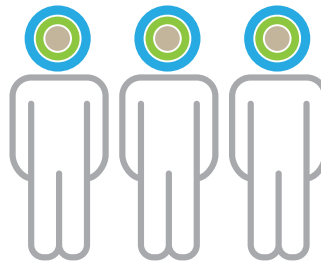
 **Those who pray** (the priests, monks, and nuns, holy orders)

 **Those who fight** (the royalty and soldiers)

 **Those who work** (the peasants, farmers, merchants, regular families, etc.)

After Reformation:

If Jesus' righteousness belongs to the Christian **by faith**, then there is no life or estate that is holier than any other.



"But God must be over all and nearest to all, to preserve this ring or circle against the devil, and to do everything in all of life's vocations, indeed, in all creatures. Thus Psalm 127 [:1] says that there are only two temporal governments on earth, that of the city and that of the home, 'Unless the Lord builds the house; unless the Lord watches over the city.' **The first government is that of the home**, from which the people come; **the second is that of the city**, meaning the country, the people, princes and lords, which we call the secular government. These embrace everything—children, property, money, animals, etc. The home must produce, whereas the city must guard, protect, and defend. Then follows **the third, God's own home and city, that is, the church**, which must obtain people from the home and protection and defense from the city. These are the three hierarchies ordained by God, and we need no more; indeed, we have enough and more than enough to do in living aright and resisting the devil in these three." (Martin Luther; *On the Councils and the Churches. Luther's Works 41:176*)