



To the praise and glory of the Most Holy Trinity

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Reformation of Education in Wittenberg: A Model for Today

Christian Preus

The So-Called "Social Gospel"

Paul Kretzmann

Getting to Know the Fathers: Cyril of Jerusalem

David Kind





This is My body

This is My blood





Download the four-page Curriculum Preview at lutherclassical.org/curriculum/

Comparison of B.A. Tracks

	General Track	Pre-Seminary / Biblical Languages Track	Teacher Certification Track	Parish Music Track
Pre-Admission Requirements	Summer Latin Course or Placement Test (Wheelock's Latin)			
Core Requirements	B.A. Core (Theology, Latin, History, Law, Literature, Philosophy, Rhetoric, Mathematics, Natural Science, Art History, Music History)			
Program Requirements	N/A	Greek & Hebrew	Teaching Methods & Field Work	Music Theory & Music Skills
Program Electives	Misc. Credits	N/A	N/A	Voice/Instrument
Capstone	Senior Thesis		Senior Project	
Free Electives	Additional Courses at Each Student's Discretion			

Senior Thesis: Original research, based on primary sources, using classical and biblical languages when appropriate, and typically defended as a disputation in the tradition of the late medieval university.

Senior Project: Examples include curriculum development (Teacher Certification Track) and composition/performance (Parish Music Track), each with a shortened senior thesis.

Comparison of A.A. Tracks

	General Track	Trade Partnership Track	
Pre-Admission Requirements	Summer Latin Course or Placement Test (Wheelock's Latin)	N/A	
Core Requirements	A.A. Core (Theology, History, Law, Literature, Philosophy, Rhetoric, Mathematics, Natural Science, Art History, Music History)		
Program Requirements	Latin Courses	N/A	
Program Electives	N/A	Misc. Credits (Including Skilled Trade Courses)	
Capstone	Sophomore	Sophomore Exhibition	
Free Electives	Additional Courses at Each Student's Discretion		

Notes

The A.A. Core consists of the first two years of the B.A. Core, except for Latin, which is optional for the Trade Partnership Track, but a program requirement for the A.A. General Track.

Trade Partnership Track students earn an A.A. from LCC in two years and complete a trade certificate at a partnership school in year three.

The Sophomore Exhibition consists of a class discussion before a live public audience. A faculty member or Teacher Certification Track student will lead an interdisciplinary Socratic dialogue on the basis of texts studied within the A.A. Core.

The Enduring Value of a "General" Education

- Appreciating the unity of goodness, truth, and beauty, LCC students pursue breadth before depth.
- The "General Track" is so named because the Latin word genera (plural of genus) refers to broad categories. (Recall that in biology, several distinct "species" fit within a common "genus.")
- To be generally educated—that is, to have a firm grasp of all the genera of knowledge—is the only way to become well-educated. To attempt a specific education too early—whether out of personal fascination, for a profit motive, or for any other reason—leads to intellectual myopia, resulting in ignorance concerning other subject areas as well as a shallow understanding of one's focal subject.
- About 80% of each track consists of the consistent core found also in the "General Track," ensuring that all students at LCC master the genera first, and explore the species second.



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Reformation of Education in Wittenberg: A Model for Today

This paper was originally presented at the 35th annual MN Lutheran Free Conference, Oct. 29, 2022, at Redeemer Lutheran Church, St. Cloud, MN.



n this talk, I want to show that the issues that drove the first generation of Lutherans to reform their universities in their day are (mutandis mutatis) the same ones that we have in our day, and that their solution to these issues should

be ours. I'll be focusing on one particular theme of the Reformation that was central then, not only in word but also in deed, and has to become central now in our day again. That is the focus on the three estates: the church, the home,

and civil government. Preaching in the church, education in the schools, are meant to prepare for life in these estates. The state and the home no less than the church depend on this kind of preaching and education. The sad state of the family in our day, the shrinking of churches which is directly related to the sad state of the family, and the growing political anarchy and destabilization of our civil affairs—these are failures, in the end, of education. And the solution is right before us in a renewed commitment to the biblical preaching and classical teaching of Wittenberg.



Herman Sasse, in his great little work translated into English as Here We Stand goes through all the different candidates for the real meaning of the Reformation. Was Luther a great political revolutionary, a nationalist leader? Was he a great social reformer? Was he a hero, an inspiring personality who founded a movement based on the force of his character? Sasse of course dismisses all these interpretations and tells us that Luther is the great confessor. The Church of the Reformation is founded not on a man, but on his confession, the same confession St. Peter made-You are the Christ, the Son of the living God the confession on which Christ swore He would build His Church and the gates of hell would not prevail against her. But the confessor does not simply direct his confession to the church. He addresses his confession also to families and to the state. He may not be a political reformer or a social reformer, but he is confessor both to home and to government. And so Luther stood before kings. He gave

advice to rulers on how to rule and what laws to make. He told soldiers how to serve with a Christian conscience. He taught fathers how to lead their homes with God's Word and mothers to see their calling to keep the home as the highest calling imaginable. Melanchthon states in the Apology IV.264, "That is no strong faith which does not show itself by confessing"—confessing in the church, confessing in the home, confessing to the state. Sasse is right to point us to confession as the heart and soul of the Reformation, but we are wrong if we think that that confession can be confined within the church and not overflow into all aspects of life, into all three estates.

In the year 1520 Luther published three great works setting forth the reformation needed in the Church. We call it the Reformation of the Church, but there is no separating church from the state or the home. And Luther's three great works of 1520 make this clear. The first is his "Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," which addressed the state, the rulers in Germany, and called on them to rule in accord with God's Word and to protect the teaching of the Gospel. The second is the "Babylonian Captivity of the Church," which addressed the corruption and abuse in the church itself—the sacrifice of the mass, in particular. The third is "On Christian Freedom," which addressed the Christian's life and conscience, how the Gospel frees him to live for his neighbor in home and in the society of other people. In other words, his three great works, which became blockbuster hits and traveled rapidly throughout Europe, these three works address the three estates—the church, the home, and the government. This was no accident. The Reformation was not simply a movement to address particular church doctrines and to fix the corruption within the church—stop sacrificing the mass, stop using only Latin in the liturgy, end the sale of indulgences, start preaching Christ crucified. No, Luther could not, and we should not, separate the reform of the church from the reform of family life and society and the government itself. And at the center of this is the reform of education.

Luther says as much in his preface to the Small Catechism. We make our confirmands memorize the Small Catechism. It would be great for them to memorize the preface too, or at least just the following paragraph. Here he is speaking to pastors:

In this matter you should especially urge magistrates and parents to rule well and to send their children to school. Show them why it is their duty to do this and what a damnable sin they are committing if they do not do it. For by such neglect they overthrow and destroy both God's kingdom and that of the world. They act as the worst enemies both of God and of people. Make it very plain to them what an awful harm they are doing if they will not help to train children to be pastors, preachers, clerks, and to fill other offices that we cannot do without in this life. God will punish them terribly for this failure. There is great need to preach this. In this matter parents and rulers are now sinning in unspeakable ways. The devil, too, hopes to accomplish something cruel because of these things.¹



You see the weight Luther puts on a good education. Neglect of giving it to the youth is a damnable sin. It overthrows both God's Kingdom and that of the world. All the estates church, family, the government-all are overthrown by lack of good education. And the education Luther has in mind is what we today call a classical, Christian education, an education that prepares someone not just for some specialized job, but for life as a Christian in church, home, and state, as a husband or wife, as a father or mother, as a citizen and asset to the economy and society of his city and nation. It is both an education of the mind—teaching knowledge and skill—and an education of the soul, teaching Christ and virtue. So Luther stresses the harm parents and magistrates are doing in not training children to be pastors, preachers, clerks, and to fill other offices that we cannot do without in this life—this encompasses all three estates.

Luther saw the same problem in his time as we have in ours. Education was not directed to training people for life in the home, church, and state. He had the courage and vision and God-given opportunity to do something about it. It is my constant prayer that God give us the same today.

The over-specialization of education is typical in the advanced stages of a society. Greece saw it, Rome saw it, Luther saw it, we see it today. Consider the teenager in the United States, who cannot look you in the eye and have an intelligent conversation, and then compare that with his dexterous ability to use his iPhone, and you'll get the point. Consider the surgeon, who is very good at cutting into your body, but in the office looks at his shoes as he sputters out technical medical jargon his patients can't understand. That's overspecialization.

In Luther's time the vast majority of Germans were illiterate and unschooled. They were peasants or they specialized in a trade. The small minority studied in school geared toward a specific white-collar position—professor, doctor, lawyer, and especially, to become part of the priestly class, a monk or friar or priest. None of this education was meant to prepare you to live out life in the three estates. In fact, it had the opposite effect in most cases.

If you are a peasant not expected to learn to read at all, or if you are learning a trade and never learn poetry or proverbs or moral stories or Bible histories or hymns, you won't be passing moral and biblical instruction on to your children. You won't understand what is going on at church. You will be helpless to respond to problems in the government and in the state. Luther bemoans the fact that people can't even recite the Lord's Prayer or repeat the Ten Commandments or confess the Creed, much less tell you who Moses is. Some of the pastors are as uneducated as the laymen, so that Luther tells some of them just to read his sermons on Sundays if they can't figure out how to do it themselves. The rate of illiteracy was close to 95% of the populace. If you think of the three estates biblically and listen to what God says about them, you'll see what a horrible corruption had invaded the church, the state, and the home. "Fathers, bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). How does an

illiterate father, and not just illiterate, but ignorant even of the basics of the Christian faith—the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Our Father, the Bible stories—how does he bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? "Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19)—how can these songs ring out in the home or the church when no music is taught, no hymns sung in the vernacular and memorized? "Learn with all submission" (1 Tim. 2:11). How can you learn in church when you can't understand the language of the liturgy or the concepts in the sermon? An educational system that robs people of this basic education destroys, as Luther says, both Kingdoms, encompassing all three estates—the home, the church, and the state.

Turning to the university, the teaching of theology was over-specialized and focused not on Greek and Hebrew, not on biblical study, not on the actual sources of the faith and the greatest works of antiquity, not on communicating faith and morality clearly to the people, but on theoretical philosophizing based on secondary and tertiary sources. This education was positively anti-family and anti-church. Luther's own life shows this. He never stopped repenting of disobeying his father, dropping out of law school, and going instead to the monastery to study. He had defied the



The sad state of the family in our day, the shrinking of churches which is directly related to the sad state of the family, and the growing political anarchy and destabilization of our civil affairs—these are failures, in the end, of education.

Fourth Commandment and dismissed the family estate in favor of a manmade religious tradition. This is exactly what Jesus blames the Pharisees for doing: "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!" (Mk. 7:9). In fact, in becoming a monk, Luther not only disobeyed his father; he swore off marriage, swore off the family estate and the civil. The holy order was monkery, not marriage, the priest not the prince.

And the churchly estate was falling to ruin because of this education also. The work of the monks and the work of the priests, their prayers and their sacrifices of the mass these were supposed to be far more important than the people actually attending church, being taught God's Word clearly, and receiving the Lord's Supper. Thomas Aquinas insisted already in the 13th century that receiving the Lord's Supper only benefits you the one time you take it, which is at most once a day, but the sacrifice of the mass benefits everyone as many times as it is sacrificed. Education for the churchly offices was therefore not only anti-family and anti-government, but anti-church, as even a seven-year old child knows that church is the gathering of the saints to hear the Word of God (cf. Smalcald Articles, 3.12.2) and not the private prayers and works of monks and priests in their cloisters and side altars.

We see the same disregard for the three estates in the educational system today, with the same results. The government schools and very many religious schools do not make it their aim to prepare the youth to be husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, patriotic citizens, and faithful members of the Christian Church. This is not in their mission statements. They want to prepare people to enter into the workforce, maybe. And they teach them to identify themselves not in relation to the three estates—to God, to family, to country—but in relation to their inner desires.

The public elementary school across from my church just put up a new digital sign, which I have to see every time I drive to church. It flashes the words: "You are unique. You are essential. You are known. You are a hero." Notice, it does not say, "You are an American. You are a Christian. You have parents who love you. You need a Savior." It focuses the children on whatever unique characteristic they might have in themselves and encourages them toward expressing their own individuality, or, as we hear so often in the leftist echo chambers, discovering their own truth. This has been the philosophy of education pursued in our schools for generations, with roots all the way back to Rousseau and the French Revolution, but first vocally championed and implemented in our country by John Dewey at the beginning of the 20th century. Dewey, a thorough-going Darwinist, imagined that knowledge cannot be imparted from outside a person through the teaching of objective truths anchored in a created order. Instead, knowledge had

to be gained actively by learners as they interacted with their environment. This denial of the created order and stress on experience has led to the contemporary insanity of educational theory, where the point is to get the student to authenticate himself or herself or zerself. And this has gone so far as to include allowing and encouraging students to identify as the opposite sex or even as cats (putting litter boxes in the restrooms at elementary, middle, and high schools). The eschewal of education directed toward the three states leaves people to descend to bestial levels, which fits well with Luther's frequent complaint against his fellow Germans, who, he said, live like pigs and don't know what it means to be a human being. This is, as Luther says, the destruction of both God's kingdom and that of the world.

When you look at university education in our day, you see much the same thing, but both the radical individualism and the career-oriented emphases are magnified. The overspecialization of our universities trains men and women for a particular career. We have simply grown to accept this. And this shows our unspoken priorities. It shows how deep mammon-mindedness has sunk into our psyche. If you contrast the way Luther or Melanchthon or Caspar Cruciger or even Erasmus spoke about the purpose of education with the way we speak of the purpose of college, you will see the difference of night and day. They consistently spoke of the need for a good education for the good of the church, the family, and especially the state. Never will they talk about making money as the ultimate goal. Education is to train a person for life. And life is more than food and the body more than clothing. Life does not consist in the abundance of one's possessions. Making money is certainly part of life. The worker is worthy of his wages (Lk. 10:7). If a man does not work, neither should he eat (2 Thess. 3:10). Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need (Eph. 4:28). But preparation for career is only one aspect of education, and even then, career is for the sake of the family, for the sake of the church, for the sake of the community. Education is for life lived in the three estates. It is moral insanity to teach knowledge and skill without teaching to what end that knowledge and skill should be employed.

The problem with the educational system of Luther's time, which he and Melanchthon and many others sought to reform, should be seen from this perspective: it failed to educate for life in the home, the church, and the state. The sterile scholastic academies of Luther's day looked very different from the progressive propaganda mills that our secular universities have become today, but they have this in common, that in service to a false religion they undercut the estates the Creator had instituted. The educational reform at Wittenberg and throughout Lutheran lands, both in preparatory schools and at the university, purposefully turned education away from self-serving scholastic intellectualism and toward the service of the family, the church, and the state. This is the task ahead of us in our day also.

Even before Luther, the need for educational reform was obvious to many. Erasmus, the great humanist of the north, who would become Luther's fierce opponent in 1525 as they battled over the doctrine of the bondage of the will — Erasmus protested the sterility and uselessness of the medieval, scholastic education system long before the Reformation had begun. And when you read his writings, despite his horrible moralistic theology (and it is horrible), his arguments for educational reform are almost in line with Luther's. The state needs capable rulers and useful citizens. The home needs obedient children. The



Classical Christian education works because it respects God's order, the whole human being in his God-given vocations in church, home, and society.

church needs capable pastors who can actually teach God's Word understandably to families and to the state. Here is Erasmus talking to a teacher who is thinking of quitting his thankless job:

To be a school master is an office second in importance to a King. Do you think it a mean task to take your fellowcitizens in their earliest years, to instill into them from the beginning sound learning and Christ himself, and return them to your country as so many honorable upright men? Fools may think this is a humble office; in reality, it is very splendid. For if even among Gentiles it was always an excellent and noble thing to deserve well of one's country, I will not mince my words: no one does more for it than the man who shapes its unformed young people.2

We see the same stress here as in Luther: teaching children the Word of God, morality, and good thinking makes them a benefit to their country and to the church.

The reforms Erasmus encouraged in universities can be summed up in the phrase ad fontes, back to the sources. Read the great works of the past in their original languages. Learn how to speak well, think well, and live well from the great orators and thinkers and church fathers of the past. Instead of reading competing commentaries on Lombard's Sentences and tertiary works commenting on secondary works, instead of learning academic jargon that stays in the academy because it is impractical to everyone else in home and church and state, learn what is good for all the estates and learn how to communicate it well through ordered, convincing, and attractive speech. This movement, the humanist movement, was already well on its way by the time of Luther's reforms at Wittenberg.

But the reforms at the University of Wittenberg and then throughout Lutheran lands were greater than any reform Erasmus accomplished. Luther not only had the pure Gospel. He not only had the courage and resolve and uncompromising bent. He had the prince, he had the Elector of Saxony, on his side. In 1518 Luther asked the elector Frederick the Wise to approve changes in the curriculum at the university, expecting delay and the excuse that there wasn't enough money for reform. Luther instead got exactly what he asked for. Frederick the Wise was more than happy to fund the curricular reforms. He immediately added Greek and Hebrew to the curriculum of Wittenberg. He tossed out secondary philosophical textbooks and had them read Aristotle's own writings. Classical authors like Cicero, Pliny, Plutarch, and Ovid replaced medieval works on natural science, rhetoric, and history. Literature became an emphasis. Stress was applied not only to the acquisition of knowledge but to its effective communication through rhetoric and logic. Biblical study, lectures on books of the Bible, replaced the stale theologizing of the scholastics. And then Wittenberg began to call new professors, the greatest of whom was Philipp Melanchthon. Joining the faculty as professor of Greek in 1518, Melanchthon soon won the affection and respect of all his colleagues, Luther in particular. His zeal for reforming education at Wittenberg and then around Germany was unparalleled. His teaching from the primary sources was unrivaled. Everyone wanted to hear him. The first time Luther heard him, he immediately asked the elector to give him a raise. We can't lose Philipp, he said. Melanchthon earned his honorary The students flocked to Wittenberg because they wanted a serious and practical education that would prepare them to live life in the home and the state and the church. Students today are looking for the same thing, and they are finding it in classical colleges.

title, "Praeceptor Germaniae," Teacher of all Germany, by a ridiculously productive 42 years of teaching at Wittenberg and reforming schools and universities across Germany, until his death in 1560.

The growth of the University of Wittenberg was quick and substantial. By 1521 many students came to Wittenberg only to have to turn back and go elsewhere because there simply wasn't enough room for them in the little city. Melanchthon would regularly have virtually the entire student body—up to 600 students-attend his lectures. The learning was so exciting that professors would attend each other's lectures whenever they could.3

When you look at Luther's, Melanchthon's, and others' explanations of their reforms, you see very clearly that their chief concern was for the maintenance of the three estates. Caspar Cruciger, a professor at Wittenberg, says it outright in a speech to the graduating class of 1531, "You ought to keep in mind the purpose of your studies and realize that they are provided for giving advice to the state, for teaching in the churches, and for upholding the doctrine of religion [in the homes]."4 Veit Dietrich, Dean of the arts faculty at Wittenberg, insisted that the study of Greek and Latin language and literature was necessary not only for pastors and theologians, but for all professions and all positions in society. Pastors obviously need the languages and classical learning, but so does nearly every other profession. Says Dietrich, "I declare that those who will be undertaking the study of medicine or law should be educated in advance in some noble teaching that includes philosophy and a

knowledge of the ancient world. The practice of public speaking also has to be added." Then, as far as positions in the government, nothing, he says, nothing can happen in either private life or the life of the state for which you can't find a precedent in ancient history.6 In fact, it's impossible to understand how to run a state well without seeing how other states have succeeded and failed throughout history. In opposition to the elitist mantra so popular during the Enlightenment,7 the Lutherans consistently argue that we should study the classics not only for pleasure—though it's pleasurable enough—not only for our own betterment, but out of necessity, because nothing so practically teaches the mind and directs it toward virtue, nothing so benefits state, family, and church, than the study of the classics and the greatest classic, the Bible.

Luther and others warned that it was dangerous, in fact, to allow people to study for a specific field too soon, in particular theology.8 The basics had to be learned first, and that meant the study of literature, history, philosophy, rhetoric, mathematics, music, and natural science. Much as St. Paul insists that a recent convert shouldn't become a pastor, Luther argues that those who haven't learned Latin and Greek well, rhetoric well, philosophy, history, and literature well, should not jump to the study of theology. He saw many turn into fanatics this way. Their untrained minds misunderstood the Bible and their uncontrolled zeal led them to rash departure from orthodox Christianity. The Anabaptists and enthusiasts were perfect examples of why a little learning is a dangerous thing. They don't know how to read texts properly in context, they can't control their passions, they don't know how to employ logic consistently, they don't know their history and so are doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past. Their uneducated study of theology and the Bible led to horrible rebellion against the state, riotous upheaval of society, and serious theological confusion. The Peasants' Revolt was due to this sort of lack of classical education.

Luther and Melanchthon also dealt with financial problems and the reality of economic pressure in Wittenberg. They needed to fund the university. It has never been cheap. Bringing on new faculty costs money. Changing the curriculum was expensive. By 1524 Luther was terrified that Melanchthon would leave Wittenberg to another university post because he was paid so poorly. Melanchthon himself was thinking the University of Wittenberg might not survive because poor pay was forcing competent professors to go elsewhere. Luther once again approached the elector-by this time, it was John the Steadfast-and



"You ought to keep in mind the purpose of your studies and realize that they are provided for giving advice to the state, for teaching in the churches, and for upholding the doctrine of religion [in the homes]."

once again received exactly what he asked for and more. Melanchthon's pay was doubled immediately. The other professors were given substantial raises. The fact was that there was no way the Elector was going to let Wittenberg die. It was the greatest university in Germany—the greatest, in fact, in the world. While other universities were losing students, Wittenberg couldn't contain the number of students who wanted to attend. Wittenberg had captured the hearts of the younger generation with a serious and optimistic educational program that was specifically formed with the goal of benefiting all of society, from the church to the home to the state.

The parallels to our day are obvious. I don't need to speak of the secular universities—they are failing and will continue to fail, just as the liberal churches are shrinking at an increasingly accelerated rate. The sterility and impracticability of their social and scientific theories are not enticing the serious among the next generation. The expected decrease in university attendance in the next few years is 15%.9 While NPR elites continue to act as if going to Harvard or making it into Yale means something, the brilliant of the next generation are eyeing colleges like Hillsdale or Patrick Henry or Wyoming Catholic College or the soon-to-be Luther Classical College. Wittenberg had to turn away students. Other universities were begging for students. The same is happening today. Not just the secular universities, but the religious universities and colleges that refuse to take a strong conservative stand and commit to a sane classical education, are reduced to begging for students. The conservative colleges, the classical colleges, that take a stand and offer the kind of education that prepares people to live as Christians in state, home, and church—these are beginning to have to turn competent applicants away.

And the financials tell the same story. Concordia Portland,

Concordia Bronxville, Concordia Selma all went bankrupt, and Concordia Ann Arbor would have gone under if it had not joined with Concordia Wisconsin. The Elector of Saxony rearranged funding and made sure he could pay the professors at Wittenberg because he knew the education provided there would help his kingdom, would help his people, would help the church. The mission was clear and honest and obviously worthwhile. The donors of the failed Concordias were told no such clear mission. The students flocked to Wittenberg because they wanted a serious and practical education that would prepare them to live life in the home and the state and the church. Students today are looking for the same thing, and they are finding it in classical colleges.

Lutherans are pessimistic creatures; call it the German influence, call it a Norwegian curse. I'm no sociologist and no psychologist, but the fact is that the Reformed have started several classical colleges, the Roman Catholics have started many, and they are thriving. Wyoming Catholic in tiny Lander, Wyoming had close to a thousand applications last year and had to turn down most of them. The classical Hillsdale is down to a 20% acceptance rate, having five times as many applicants as it can admit. People are competing to get in. The last few years have seen literally millions of students leave the public school and begin homeschooling or attending classical schools. Wittenberg Academy, an online Lutheran classical school, has record enrollment. The baby glut amongst the liberals and the birth-control moderates contrasts with a baby boom amongst the conservatives of this and the coming generations who want conservative, classical, Lutheran education.

It is far past time that we start a classical Lutheran college, and that is exactly what we're doing in Casper, WY in the founding of Luther Classical College, which will be opening its doors to students in the Fall of 2025. But of course a Lutheran classical college will have the advantage that Luther had over Erasmus the pure teaching of God's Word and an uncompromising zeal for the furtherance of Christ's pure Gospel in the home and the church and the community.

We are facing a situation very similar to that which Luther and Wittenberg faced in the early years of the Reformation. We see it especially in the harm our educational system has done to the three estates. But education includes the preaching of the church, which has not taught on the three estates with the urgency and consistency that we see in the Reformation and which Luther in the Small Catechism demands of us. Contrast Luther's preaching, Gerhard's

preaching, or Walther's preaching with your typical LCMS sermon in our day, and you will see a marked contrast. The law/gospel reductionism, where every sermon is reduced to a message of "you are a sinner, but Jesus died to take away your sin," was unheard of among our fathers. Ten-minute sermons were rare then too. The pastors took it as their duty to teach people how to live at home and in society. They took it as their duty to warn them about societal and political evils. The Bible speaks to these things. They are not tangential to the Christian life. Luther explicitly and frequently tells pastors to command magistrates and fathers to rule well. We always preach the Gospel. The Gospel is our joy, the Lord Jesus' death for our sins our boast, His resurrection to life our glory. But the instruction many of us pastors received that we shouldn't preach on political items, shouldn't advise parents how to raise their children in our sermons—this is not only in direct conflict with the teaching and practice of our Church, it is in direct conflict with the instruction of our Lord Jesus and His apostles. Classical education, which returns us to the sources, especially the Bible, keeps us from falling into the ditch of conforming our teaching and preaching to some secondary standard instead of to the very Word of God. which tells us to teach the whole counsel of God.

Classical education in school and college is meant to dovetail with this biblical instruction at church, with beautiful music at church, with great speaking at church, so that these exercises of piety also move into the home and we see their

Luther could not, and we should not, separate the reform of the church from the reform of family life and society and the government itself. And at the center of this is the reform of education.

fruits in society. Specialization has its place. The world has to be made up not of doctors and doctors, but of doctors and farmers, as the old proverb says. But a man who is trained in some specialization without an education in literature and letters and music and history will not likely be reading the

Bible to his children at home. He will likely be embarrassed or terrified of singing at church. Singing hymns at home will likely be torture for him, nor would it be practical, since he hasn't trained his mind to memorize tunes or words. He will likely also be more easily deceived by the wanton rhetoric of some pandering politicians. We see this constantly in our congregations. Pastors bemoan the fact that many publicschool students attending their confirmation classes can't read at a level that would ever induce them to actually read the Bible at home. Reading is painful for them. Singing is foreign to them. Memorizing is unthinkable. And they have the political opinions of their parents until they get out of the house, and then anything goes.

The beauty of learning history is that it teaches us what has worked in the past for the glory of God and the furtherance of His Kingdom. Classical Christian education works because it respects God's order, the whole human being in his God-given vocations in church, home, and society. We have an extremely bright future ahead of us in the Lutheran Church. We don't need to wring our hands at the closing of failed universities or the damage the devil has done against our families, churches, and states. The Word of the Lord endures forever, and so long as we have it and fight for it, we have everything to look forward to. The renewal of classical education among us must be not for its own sake, or for the sake of intellectual achievement, but for the sake of the preaching of, believing in, and obedience to this Word in church, home, and state.

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End Notes

- 1 Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions, ed. Paul McCain, (St. Louis: CPH) 2005,
- 2 Letter to Johann Witz, 1516
- 3 cf. Gregory Graybill, The Honeycomb Scroll: Philipp Melanchthon at the Dawn of the Reformation (Minneapolis: Fortress) 2015
- 4 Philipp Melancthon, Orations on Philosophy and Education, (Cambridge University Press) 1999, 6
- 5 Ibid., 32-33
- 6 Ibid., 33
- 7 Namely, that we should study only for pleasure
- 8 Martin Brecht, Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation, 1521-1532, trans. James L. Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress) 1990
- 9 https://hechingerreport.org/college-students-predicted-to-fall-by-more-than-15-after-the-year-2025/



The So-Called "Social Gospel"

The following is from Paul E. Kretzmann's Popular Commentary of the Bible. He appended it to his comments on 2 Corinthians. We have updated the manner of Biblical citation. – The Editors



ne of the significant features of the present-day theology is its emancipation from what it sneeringly designates as the "other-worldliness" of Christian doctrine. The movement began in Germany, almost a century ago; it had reached a high point in America even

before the World War, and has now, when "reconstruction" has become a watchword, even in religion, assumed alarming proportions. The object of the movement, as stated recently by a prominent speaker, is not the salvation of souls, but "that of Christ Himself, to establish the kingdom of heaven or a celestial civilization on earth, to fight all injustice and sin, individual or social."

Just where this movement has led its exponents, may be seen from various books and pamphlets which have appeared in recent years. Only a few of the errors which are tending to undermine the foundations of our faith can be noted here. They speak of a "development of the Christian religion," whereas the content of Christian faith is fixed in Holy Writ. That they regard neither Scriptures nor history is seen from the statement of a writer who speaks of "the new theology of Paul" as being the "product of fresh religious experience and of practical necessities," who writes of the conversion of Paul in the following words: "Paul's experience at Damascus was the culmination of his personal struggle and his emergence into spiritual freedom. But his crisis got its intensity from its social background. He

was deciding, so far as he was concerned, between the old narrow nationalistic religion of conservative Judaism and a wider destiny for his people, between the validity of the Law and spiritual liberty, between the exclusive claims of Israel on the Messianic hope and a worldwide participation in the historical prerogatives of the first-born people."

If one can so coolly dissect the miracle of conversion, it is not surprising that all the fundamental doctrines of Christianity fall before his onslaught. The doctrine of the fall and of inherited sin, so plainly taught in Scriptures, is set aside as of little consequence. The existence of Satan and of the evil angels is calmly denied: "The demons have faded away into poetical unreality." Salvation becomes merely "the voluntary socializing of the soul." Conversion is but "our own active break with old habits and associations and our turning to a new life." Not a word of God's quickening power. Saving faith does not fit into the new system, and so it is calmly set aside: "It is faith to assume that this is a good world and that life is worth living.... It is faith to see God at work in the world and to claim a share in His job." With regard to the benefit of Baptism the statement is made: "Original sin and baptismal regeneration seem to be marked for extinction."

But the climax of blasphemous exposition is reached in the chapter on "The Kingdom of God." The author expressly says: "This doctrine is itself the social gospel. Without it, the idea of redeeming the social order will be but an annex to the orthodox conception of the scheme of salvation.... The kingdom of God is humanity organized according to the will of God." So that is the aim of the social gospel, to establish the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God here on earth, as an outward visible organization.

In forming the proper and just estimate of this movement, we are guided by the fact that the Bible stresses the otherworldliness of Christ's reign and kingdom. "My kingdom is not of this world," Jesus tells Pilate, John 18:36. And to the Pharisees He says: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation," Luke 17:20. Altogether in harmony with this fact, Paul writes to Timothy: "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal. The Lord knoweth them that are His," 2 Tim. 2:19. This fact is supported by a great many passages in all parts of the Bible. The believers are called guests, strangers, pilgrims in the world, Ps. 119:19; 1 Pet. 2:11; Heb. 11:13; Ps. 39:12. The Apostle Paul dwells upon this fact in many of his letters. He says of the Christians that they groan within themselves, waiting for the redemption of their body, Rom. 8:23. To the Corinthians he writes: "We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord," 2 Cor. 5:8. His eager longing is expressed to the Philippians: "Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better," Phil. 1:23. And of all Christians he says: "For our conversation is in heaven," Phil. 3:20. The Colossians he admonishes: "If ve, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth," Col. 3:1-2. Cp. Heb. 13:14.

On the basis of these plain passages we Christians reject the social gospel of these latter days with uncompromising emphasis. We know that the life of the Christians here on earth is but a preparation for eternity, that our work as well as our recreation is included in this making ready for our great homecoming. Our money and goods are not our permanent possessions, but are only entrusted to us as stewards, to be used for the glory of God and for the welfare of our neighbor, Ps. 62:11; Jer. 9:23; 1 Tim. 6:17. Husband, wife, and children are gifts of God, and it pleases the Lord if we are happy in the circle of our family and elsewhere, and yet it remains true: "It remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away," I Cor. 7:29-31.

Only if we keep these facts in mind shall we be able to lead our lives on earth in harmony with the Word and will of the Lord. Incidentally we reject the insinuation as though we, in our care for the world to come, were forgetting the duties of this present life. It is just because we have the right conception and estimation of the eternal possessions which await us that we guard against the loss of these wonderful gifts both by sins of commission and of omission. It is because we know what our Savior did for us in unselfish love that we are all the more ready to serve our neighbor in all works of love and mercy and to perform all the duties which devolve upon us as citizens of the state. In this way we are in the world, but not of the world, and await with eager longing the day of the revelation of the Kingdom of Glory. •?

Paul E. Kretzmann, M.A., PhD., B.D. (1883-1965), was a pastor in Shady Bend, KS, professor at Concordia College in St. Paul, MN, and author of The Popular Commentary (1921-1923). http://kretzmannproject.org/

Cp. [Walter] Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel [New York: The Macmillan Company, 1918]

Getting to Know the Fathers: St. Cyril of Jerusalem





ome of the Church Fathers are important for their expansive theology, some for their political prowess, some for their contributions to the Church's liturgy and hymnody, some for all of these things. Some, however, are

important to us because their writings give us a window in time through which to gaze upon very specific things. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (bishop from 349-386) is of the latter sort. Only a few of his writings have come down to us; but those that have survived give us a rare glimpse of the catechetical practice and liturgical life of the midfourth-century church.

We know quite a bit about the era in which St. Cyril lived and worked. It was a time of great change in both church and empire, a time of transition and of challenge. His bishopric began during the reign of the Emperor Constantius II, a son of Constantine the Great. Christianity, though legal, and, arguably, becoming the preferred religion of the empire, was just beginning to settle into its newfound status. When John was ordained a bishop, it had only been 24 years since the Council of Nicaea. In spite of the council's rulings, the Arian heresy had not disappeared, and the language of the Nicene Creed had not yet been fully embraced even among the orthodox. Constantius himself favored the Arian party. Moreover, the empire was not fully evangelized. Christianity had been legal only since 314, and the old paganism, while having suffered a severe setback under Constantine and his successors, had not yet faded from either official or private Roman life. Moreover, although Jerusalem was becoming important as a destination for pilgrims (especially after

the archaeological efforts undertaken by Constantine and his mother, Helena), and, while by edict of the Council of Nicaea the bishop of Jerusalem was to be accorded special honor, the see had not yet been recognized as a patriarchy and therefore exercised little direct influence on the Church as a whole. What influence it did exert was accidental, and, due to the number of pilgrims who visited the churches and participated in the worship services, mainly liturgical.¹

It is not too surprising, then, that we do not find St. Cyril among those deeply involved in the controversies of the day. If he wrote any theological treatises, they have not come down to us. If he weighed in on the pressing issues of the time among his contemporary ecclesiastics, there is no record of it. Exiled and restored several times over his career, presumably for his orthodoxy, he did attend the Council of Constantinople in 381 as one of the 150 orthodox bishops, but was never singled out for any particular contribution to the proceedings.2 After the council, he was lauded for his opposition to the Arians in general.3 But any details, or even anecdotes, illuminating his opposition to the heresy are lacking. What we do have from Cyril, however (in addition to a solitary sermon, a single letter to the emperor Constantius, and a few fragmentary bits), are his catechetical homilies.

In this somewhat tumultuous period, not only were grand theological treatises, conciliar edicts, and the like important for the life and direction of the Christian Church, but also the basic catechesis of the laity in the course of regular, local, pastoral service. Cyril was a master at this. His 23 catechetical homilies (divided into 18 protocatecheses delivered over the season of Lent, and five mystagogical catecheses delivered during Eastertide) cover topics that would be familiar to any Lutheran: The Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Christian morality, the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, and the Sacrament of Holy Communion. While more homiletical in tone than Luther's catechisms, Cyril's approach to these basic texts and to the sacraments is remarkably similar. Take, as an example, Cyril's explanation of the introduction to Lord's Prayer:

We say the prayer which the Savior delivered to His own disciples, with a pure conscience calling God our Father, and saying, "Our Father, who art in Heaven." O most surpassing loving-kindness of God! On those who revolted from Him and were in the very extreme of misery has He bestowed such complete forgiveness of their evil deeds, and so great a participation of grace, as that they should even call Him Father.

He says regarding the first petition, "we pray that in us God's Name may be hallowed; not that it becomes holy from not being holy, but because it becomes holy in us when we become holy and do things worthy of holiness." He continues with each petition in a similar manner.4

As he is addressing the chief catechetical items, he also speaks in some depth about other issues that are as important to the Christian today as they were to our brothers and sisters in the fourth century: the importance of nurturing faith after baptism, how to deal with temptations, the causes of evil, the nature of faith, the necessity of faith to receive the benefits Christ bestows by His Word and Sacraments, the importance of confessing one's sins, and, above all, the immensity of the grace and mercy that is ours in Christ Jesus.

Let us not be ashamed of the cross of Christ, but rather glory in it... For it was not a mere man who died for us, as I said before, but the Son of God, God made man. Further; if the lamb under Moses drove the destroyer far away, did not much more the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, deliver us from our sins? The blood of a silly sheep gave salvation; and shall not the blood of the Only-begotten much more save?⁵

Throughout his teaching, moreover, Cyril shows a depth of Biblical fluency, connecting multiple events, figures, and prophecies from throughout the Old and New Testaments to the topics at hand.

Cyril's homilies are also important to liturgical historians. He gives us a glimpse of the liturgical life of the Church in Jerusalem, including its unique movements to and from the locations associated with Christ's saving works. Of particular interest are the insights his writings provide regarding the ancient rituals associated with the catechumenate, the rite of Holy Baptism, and the Divine Service.6

This does not mean that Lutherans won't encounter a few difficulties with some of what Cyril says. But, over all, his catechetical homilies would serve all Christians as fine devotional fare to deepen our appreciation of the catechism, and of the manifold gifts our Lord bestows upon us. As Cyril himself says in the first line of his Sermon on the Paralytic: "Wherever Jesus appears, there is salvation."7 ₩

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- 1 St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Lectures on the Christian Sacraments, the Protocatechesis and the Five Mystagogical Catecheses, Frank L. Cross, ed. Texts for Students No 51 (London: SPCK, 1960) p. xix.
- 2 Cross, p. xx.
- 3 Henry R. Percival, Philip Schaff, and Henry Wace, "Council of Constantinople. A.D. 382. The Synodical Letter," in The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church: Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees, Together with the Canons of All the Local Synods Which Have Received Ecumenical Acceptance, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2, Vol. 14 (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1994), p. 189. In the same breath this letter also upholds the legitimacy of his ordination as bishop of Jerusalem-an important endorsement for one having been exiled and restored multiple times.
- 4 Cyril of Jerusalem, "Protocatechesis XIII," in Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nazianzen, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2, Vol. 7, Philip Schaff and Henry Wace eds. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc, 1994) p. 82.
- 5 Cyril of Jerusalem, "Lecture XXIII (On the Mysteries V)," in Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nazianzen, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2, Vol. 7, Philip Schaff and Henry Wace eds. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc, 1994) p. 155.
- 6 See especially Cyril's catechetical lectures for explanations of what the newly baptized experienced in the baptismal rite and in the liturgy of the Divine Service. For a curated collection of texts from the catecheses on this subject, see The Springtime of the Liturgy by Lucien Deiss (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1979), or Worship in the Early Church: An Anthology of Historical Sources, Volume 2 edited by Lawrence J. Johnson (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2009). Another helpful volume for understanding the liturgy of the Jerusalem Church is Walking Where Jesus Walked: Worship in Fourth-Century Jerusalem, by Lester Ruth, Carrie Steenwyk and John D. Witvlift (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman's Publishing Company, 2010). See also Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrimage, George E. Gringas, tr. Ancient Christian Writers, Volume 38 (New York: Newman Press, 1970).
- 7 Cyril of Jerusalem, The Works of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Volume 2, Leo P. McCauley, Anthony A. Stephenson, tr. The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, Volume 64 (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1970) p.209.



Our Shepherd Says, "My Sheep Are Mine



For all is well when Christ is near; He shines, and none can darken. He calls and leads through deathly shade; We're unafraid,

And to His voice we harken.

He satisfies, and want has ceased. His Word is rich and living. He also has a table spread: His flesh is bread;

His blood is wine forgiving.

On Jesus' righteousness we graze; Our cup is overflowing. He wipes our tears when eyes grow dim. We rest in Him, As homeward we are going.



Luther Classical College (LCC) is a conservative, classical, Lutheran college located in Casper, WY, opening doors to students in the Fall of 2025.

THE MISSION OF THE COLLEGE IS to educate Lutherans in the classical, Lutheran tradition and to prepare them for godly vocations within family, church, and society, fostering Christian culture through study of the best of our Western heritage.

Image a college where students learn:



To value family over success



That men are men and women are women, with beautiful, God-given differences and roles



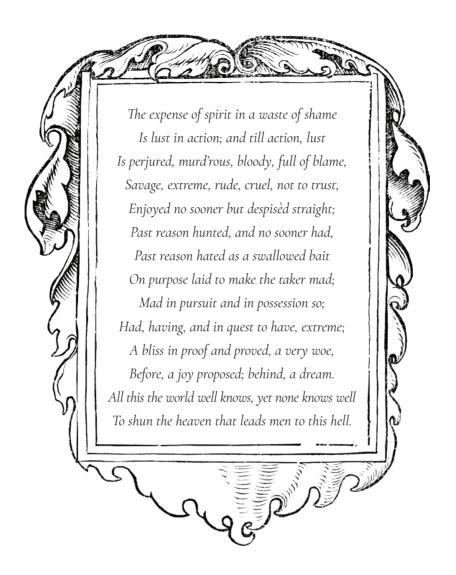
That Christian culture grows through supporting faithful churches and leading pious homes

This is why Luther Classical College exists.

We're passionate about authentic Lutheran culture, lives rich with learning and Christian virtue, and humble service in Lutheran homes, churches, and communities. Proudly and unapologetically Lutheran in liturgy, theology, and culture, we seek to be a college of Lutherans, by Lutherans, and for Lutherans.

Our plan is to accept our first class of students in the Fall of 2025. We will be an accredited institution, offering our students associate and bachelor's degrees in the Classical Liberal Arts. At full capacity, we will have accommodations for 300 students, 14 faculty, and 9 full time staff.





Wretched Man That I Am: Commentary on Shakespeare's Sonnet 129



illiam Shakespeare (1564–1616) came from a middle class family in Stratfordupon-Avon, and his education provided him with the stories that would later inspire and inform his plays. The Bible, classical literature, and British history would be the streams that fed his

imagination. He became a husband and father early in life, marrying Anne Hathaway at eighteen and having three children with her in less than three years. Between 1590 and 1613, Shakespeare worked as a playwright, actor, and partner of a theater company in London. In this time, he wrote 38 plays, 150 sonnets, and a few other poetic works. Everyone attended his plays, from monarchs (Elizabeth I and James I) down to the common laborer looking for entertainment. Today, many think of Shakespeare as highbrow, but there was something for everyone in his art. Yet, even as his fame and fortune grew, he continued to divide his time between the theater in London and his family in Stratford. Eventually, he was able to buy a house in his hometown and it was here that he died.

Scholars repeatedly say that, after the Bible, Shakespeare is the bestselling author of all time. What they do not so often say is that Shakespeare's works are deeply Christian. Much scholarly ink has been spilled on the question of Shakespeare's personal life and faith. Almost everyone has laid claim to him. Was he a genius or a humble craftsman? Was he a Roman Catholic or a Protestant or a modern man

with no religious conviction? Was he a devoted husband and father or a secret homosexual? First, it might be wise to notice that the claims people make about historical figures are usually more revealing about the ideology of the person who is making the claim than about the historical figure in question. Second, it must be admitted that there are many gaps in the biography of the Bard. But what we have intact are his works, the art produced by his imagination. So, who is William Shakespeare? He is the mind, the imagination that I encounter in his poetry and plays. And the ideas which are clothed in his works are classical and Christian. These ideas are the heritage of that Old Western Culture—arising from the Greeks and Romans, grafted and refined by the Early Christian Church, preserved and enriched throughout Medieval Europe—and that heritage was still alive and flourishing through the Renaissance and Reformation. Shakespeare's imagination was clearly influenced and filled by the Christian culture he inherited. Shakespeare assumed and explored the ancient and Christian understanding of reality, which makes his works exemplary for the Elizabethan age.

Given his popularity and status as the representative of his time, it should not be surprising that his name serves as a classification for sonnets. An example of the English or Shakespearean Sonnet is seen here in Sonnet 129, "The Expense of Spirit in a Waste of Shame." The traditional components are all there: fourteen lines of iambic pentameter, three quatrains and a final couplet, and the rhyme scheme abab-cdcd-efef-gg.

This sonnet is a meditation on the blindness, deceptiveness, and fruitlessness of lust. But before examining the poem, it is important to remember that the imagination and art we meet here is not necessarily describing any particular experience of the poet. Many have tried to retrieve autobiographical clues from Shakespeare's sonnets. This is untenable. Let us remember that art is not primarily self-expression. This is especially true in the case of Shakespeare, a great dramatist and actor, who can embody and give voice to any number of persons, historical and fictional. Furthermore, what the poet clearly articulates in this sonnet is common to fallen man in general. The speaker describes not only what has happened to him but what always happens to all men driven by the blind and unreasonable power of their lust.

The speaker of the sonnet begins by calling lust an "expense of spirit in a waste of shame," that is, lust spends the spirit of man, yet profits nothing. It is a shameful waste. Before a man acts on his lust, it is lying to him, seeking to murder him, devour him. The promises of lust are not to be trusted. Immediately following the gratification of those desires, the lies are revealed and despised, and the man is full of selfloathing. His lust hunted him so that he lost his reason and allowed his passions to drive him. Only after giving in does he see himself rightly as an animal that has been caught, deceived by the "swallowed bait." He was driven mad in the pursuit of his lust, and now having come to its end, he is still mad. While swept along in his lust, he thought he experienced bliss, but the lust having been "proved" (tried or tested), he finds it to be "a very woe." Before lust is acted upon, it proposes joy; after, its joys vanish like a dream and the man is left with nothing.

The final couplet brings the meditation to a head, but provides no real answer. If everyone knows intellectually that the end of lust is dissatisfaction and self-loathing, that the end of sin is despair and death, that the end of this profane "heaven" is "hell," then why do men continue in their sin? This question is not that different from the complaint of Romans 7: "what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do" (Rom. 7:15). Why? Both the sonnet and St. Paul seem to agree that it is not enough to know that sin is wrong. We cannot be argued into virtue. Our intellects are not enough to stand against the irresistible forces of lust. Some greater power must give us a new spirit and must shape in us rightly ordered affections so that those shameful lusts lose the strength of their appeal.

But Shakespeare's sonnet remains in the realm of the natural man. The speaker recognizes the problem, but offers no solution. Still, the sonnet drives us to search out the answer to this paradox. It is Christian, in so far as all true human wisdom is Christian. The answer to the puzzle is not given in the sonnet's final couplet, and yet a Christian knows where to turn at the end of this sonnet. Scripture provides the lasting and satisfying answer: "I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God-through Jesus

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Wisconsin and Missouri: Overcoming Our Differences



he Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) comprise the vast majority of conservative Lutherans in America. These two Lutheran bodies were in fellowship with each other in

the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth centuries. The Wisconsin Synod broke fellowship with the Missouri Synod in 1961. Several doctrinal issues occasioned the break, the most prominent being differences between them on the practice of church fellowship.

There were other issues as well, one of them being the doctrine of Church and ministry. This topic was an issue sixty years ago when the Wisconsin Synod broke fellowship with the Missouri Synod, but it was not the main reason for the break. It has assumed greater importance in recent years. If we want to work toward overcoming the differences between Missouri and Wisconsin, we need to address the doctrine of Church and ministry.

As to what the Church and ministry are, Missouri and Wisconsin never disagreed. The Church is all Christians. It is the Communion of Saints. It is all believers in Christ who are justified through faith alone. The ministry of the Word, by which the Church is born and sustained in the true faith, is the pure preaching of the gospel and the right administration of the sacraments. The Church, properly speaking, is invisible. She is identifiable by her marks, which are the pure preaching of the gospel and the right administration of the sacraments, which are the functions of the public ministry of the Word. On these matters Missouri and Wisconsin have not disagreed.

Their disagreement has been on the form of the visible church and her ministry. Does Christ's visible Church on earth have a divinely fixed form? Does the Church's ministry have a divinely fixed form? Wisconsin said no. Missouri said yes. Missouri said that the divinely fixed form of the visible Church is the local Christian congregation and the divinely fixed form

of the public ministry of the Church is the pastorate of the local Christian congregation. Wisconsin argued that there was no New Testament ceremonial law that would empower the means of grace. They were inherently efficacious. The Holy Spirit establishes His Church through the means of grace regardless of what form the gathering of Christians takes or what form the ministry of the Word takes. The means of grace give authority to the ministry. The ministry does not give authority to the means of grace.

The Missouri Synod argued that the Church is not just any gathering of Christians, but the gathering of Christians among whom the gospel is purely preached, and the sacraments are rightly administered. Where is this done? In the local Christian congregation. Who does it? The pastor of the congregation. The form of both church and ministry are not determined by an arbitrary or legalistic decree about form, but by the very nature of the Church and ministry.

So, who is right and who is wrong? They are both right. If we want to overcome our differences, we need to be able to identify where those with whom we disagree are indubitably right. If a Missourian begins his evaluation of the Wisconsin position by showing where Wisconsin is wrong and a Wisconsinite begins his evaluation of the Missouri position by showing where Missouri is wrong, it is unlikely that we will overcome any differences.

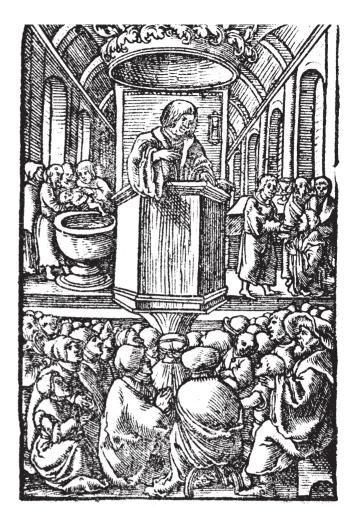
Here is how the argument about "no divinely fixed form" goes. The Missourian tries to refute the "no divinely fixed form" argument by appealing to the divine institution of the pastoral office. He will point out that our Lord Jesus Christ himself established the form of the office when he instituted it. The Wisconsinite will ask the Missourian where in the New Testament Jesus instituted the pastoral office. The Missourian will point to Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, and John 20:21-23. Here is where the argument will quickly get bogged down in confusion. The Missourian knows that the Church has historically appealed to these texts as establishing the pastoral office.

The Wisconsinite knows that these texts have been used in the LCMS and the WELS to teach that Jesus gave the ministry to all Christians. This is how they are applied, for example, in the Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. When a Missourian appeals to these texts to prove that Jesus established the pastoral office, the Wisconsinite may conclude that the Missourian does not believe that Jesus gave the ministry to all Christians. The Wisconsinite may be confirmed in his opinion that insisting on a divinely fixed form of the office is a legalistic stricture that militates against the gospel.

For the Missourian, the WELS argument against any divinely fixed form is an attack on the pastoral office. It is not so for the Wisconsinite. His opposition to a divinely fixed form is not a criticism of the pastoral office, but an affirmation of the inherent efficacy of the Word. You cannot bind God's Word to a particular form. You cannot impose legalistic requirements on gospel proclamation. Here is where Missourians must respond to WELS with a hearty Amen!

We must say when those with whom we disagree are indubitably right. The WELS is right. God's Word cannot be bound. The ministry of the Word is given to all Christians, male and female, young and old. The gospel and sacraments are efficacious because of their inherent power, not because of who administers them. The ministry doesn't empower the means of grace; the means of grace empower the ministry. Wisconsin is right when she says that Christ gave the office to the whole Church and to every individual member of the Church. Wisconsin is right when she says that the efficacy of the Word is not dependent on who preaches it, but on the Word itself. Wisconsin is right, and Missouri should say so.

Missouri is right. Missouri is right when she says that Jesus personally instituted the pastoral office. It was Jesus who established this office when he put the first Christian pastors into it. This is the clear meaning of the words of Matthew 28, Mark 16, and John 20. These words teach the dominical institution of the pastoral office. Jesus did not establish this office in and for His Church to put the means of grace into a straitjacket. He did so in order that His sheep would be fed with the wholesome spiritual food they need. The gospel may not be truncated. We Lutherans teach a full gospel, and the full gospel is the gospel and the sacraments. It is written. It is read. It is preached. It makes the water a washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit. It makes bread and wine the very body and blood of Jesus. We Christians need the full gospel. This is why our Lord



Jesus instituted the full office. This fully formed office does not come to us as a legal requirement. It is given to us as an evangelical gift.

Both Wisconsin and Missouri have evangelical motivations for what they teach. The WELS argument against a divinely fixed form is an argument for the inherent efficacy of the gospel. The gospel does not need pastors. It can be delivered by any Christian to any troubled soul. This is true: the gospel does not need pastors; but we Christians do! We need the full gospel. If Wisconsinites and Missourians can agree on this, perhaps we are on our way to overcoming our differences.

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Luther and the Three Estates

Creation and Virtue

When God made the heavens and the earth, He did so in an orderly fashion. The Lord put the planets in motion; He gave the sun, the moon, and the stars for signs and for seasons (Gen. 1:14). The orderliness of the Cosmos was also found on earth—seed wasn't scattered, but a garden was carefully planted (Gen. 2:8). This garden was not an end to itself, but was a gift to the man, who was to work it, eat of its fruit, and enjoy its beauty. Soon after, God founded His Church when He placed trees in the garden that were to be the geographic location of worship and spoke rules to the man about what he could and could not eat. On the same day that the Church was born, so also was the gift of marriage bestowed on man-it was not good that he was alone, so the Lord God formed a woman from the man's rib. After the woman was deceived by the serpent and encouraged her husband to participate in the same rebellion against God and the Church He established, sin increased, and thus the Law increased.

In short, this is the Lutheran understanding of the Three Estates, namely the Church (ecclesia), the Family (oeconomia), and the State (politia). I add the caveat "Lutheran," because literature about the Estates was a well-known genre by the time of the Reformation. In general, the medieval estate literature spoke of three estates, or hierarchies: those who pray, those who fight, and those who work. When Martin Luther speaks of



the three estates, he's using an established pattern of speaking. But Luther doesn't limit estate to man's stations in life; rather, he sees the orderliness of creation and its working (cosmogeny) as directly related to the way in which man is to act within creation (virtue). Thus the orders of creation did not expire with the fall into sin, nor with any of the other epochs of man. In the mind of Martin Luther, creation continues to be governed by God in three ways: through the Church, through the Family, and through the State.

Medieval Satire

Perhaps the most familiar of the "estates literature" is Geoffrey Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales. These tales are not merely meant to entertain or to teach some sort of virtue, but are actually meant to critique so many of the persons in Chaucer's England that bore the title parson or knight or clerk or merchant.2 Jill Mann, in her book Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire, catalogs the different ways that medieval authors satirized the estates, and while the numbers grow (comically) beyond three, they are always firmly etched in one of three pillars: those who work, those who fight, those who pray.3 To the medieval mind, the estate was a singular hierarchy in which one existed: for instance, a priest fell into "those who prayed," and would never belong to the working or ruling class. So too, a King could never be a bishop, nor a prince a shoemaker.⁵ It was as though the three estates existed as tall towers: you could ascend one tower (for instance a deacon could become a priest who could become bishop or pope) but you could never jump from one tower to the other. One's estate was his status, and status could not be changed.

The difficulty with this system is that it is demonstrably false. Many men and women would take vows of nun or monk, even though they had been born into a working class family. It was possible for a merchant to gain favor with a prince and become landowner and, thus, a lord (one who fought). The idea of status being assigned at birth (or even before) and ordained by God was often laughed at, and thus most of the literature that dealt with estates was, in fact, satire. An example of this is David Lyndsay's play A Pleasant Satire of the Three Estates, which was performed as early as 1550.4 In this play, the anthropomorphized three estates are constantly at odds with each other, and, in the end, it is the working class that proves to be the only sane ones in the mix. The satire is not, as we often understand the word, always light-hearted. Several scholars suggest that Chaucer's Summoner and Pardoner are an image of the disordered relationship between "Church" and "State" that dominated the middle ages.5

The Three Estates, though a well-established way of speaking in the middle ages, were more often mocked than they were honored. The presence of satire, and especially satire that derides Church and State and elevates the working class, gave rise not only to Reformation re-evaluations of status and vocation, but also to more diabolical usurpations of authority such as Marxism and Communism.6

Luther and Lutheran Theology

Concerning Luther's theology of the Three Estates, as one theologian put it, "Though Luther writes no treatise on the matter, it percolates almost ubiquitously through his writings."7 To say it differently, Luther doesn't feel the need to devote a single volume to the Three Estates, because he assumes it to be the way in which the Bible presents creation. In terms of the catechism, the understanding of estate belongs to the First Article of the Creed. Unlike the medieval system, the Lutheran teaching does not inform the way in which one acts within society, but instead presents a way in which the world is ordered. Again, the medieval teaching of the Three Estates is "those who work, those who pray, those who fight." While Luther's three estates of Household, Church, and State seem parallel, the way in which they are applied to the life of the individual is radically different.

Remember the tower model? In the medieval system one can move up or down within the Estate, but can never truly change his status; to do so would be to rebel against God. However, in the Lutheran view of the Three Estates, it is not as though one is sometimes in one and sometimes in the other, but an individual is always acting as a part of creation, and thus is participating in all three orders of creation. This doesn't necessarily inform particular action—in Lutheran theology, such works are informed by the Decalogue and the Table of Duties.8 For Luther, there are not three towers, but rather one creation in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free (Gal. 3:28). There are three umbrellas that are over all aspects of creation; there are three ways in which the Sovereign Lord rules, namely in the realm of the Household, in the realm of the Church, and in the realm of the State. While this may initially seem abstract, it actually frees up the Christian to understand

his place in life without the burden of relativism, which was wildly prevalent in the medieval system.9

Freedom Today

The medieval system still exists today, and it is invoked not by those who want to claim power for themselves (as the Church and the State did in days of old), but is now co-opted by the working men of the world, who are commanded by their deities to "unite" in opposition to authority. Christians, following the example of Martin Luther, are freed from this invented form of oppression and subjection by understanding that all men—whether they be priests, princes, or parents—are part of the creation, and thus are subject to the laws that are given at creation and still abide in creation. Moreover, all men are subject to the One who spoke creation into existence. To be a Lutheran is to be free, and to be free means to act in accordance with the natural law and to delight in the Law of the Lord (Ps. 1:2).

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- 1 That is, those who bear the sword, those who rule.
- 2 Jill Mann, Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire: The literature of social classes and the General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).
- 3 Mann, Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire, 203-206.
- 4 Sir David Lyndsay of the Mont, Ane Pleasant Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis: In commendation of Vertew and Vityperation of Vyce, Edinburgh: Robert Charteris,
- 5 Mann, Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire, 146-147.
- 6 As an example of this, see Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès, What is the Third Estate? (1789), available from the University of Oregon at https://pages.uoregon.edu/ dluebke/301ModernEurope/Sieyes3dEstate.pdf. So too, the Manifesto of the Communist Party, by Marx and Engels uses satirical and tongue-in-cheek language to criticize the established rule of both Church and State.
- 7 Jonathan Mumme, "The Three Estates," https://lutheranreformation.org/ theology/the-three-estates/. May 28, 2017.
- 8 For more on the Orders of Creation and the role of natural Law, see Gifford Grobien, "A Lutheran Understanding of Natural Law in the Three Estates," Concordia Theological Quarterly, 73 (2009), 211-229. A catalog of Luther's quotes on the Three Estates was compiled by Bryan Wolfmueller in 2016 at https:// wolfmueller.co/threeestates/
- 9 Mann, Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire, 200.



Theory of Eternal Life, Philipp Micolai, Part 2

In the preface translated and published in the last issue of Christian Culture Philipp Nicolai introduces two mysteries which he says all Christian pilgrims in this vale of tears must know, namely, the theory and practice of eternal life. These two mysteries are treated in two major works, Theory of Eternal Life (1606) and Practice of Eternal Life (1619)¹, which together represent the culmination of Nicolai's deep thoughts on the topic. The following translation is the second in a three-part Nicolai series, excerpted from Book II, Chapter 2 of the Theory of Eternal Life.



y soul asks, "Beloved, what kind of a life is this eternal life in which you so greatly rejoice and which you praise as so blessed, so exceedingly blessed, before the children of this world? 'I meditate within my heart,' says David, 'and my spirit

makes diligent search' [Ps. 77]. Beloved, what opportunity is there for us in this heavenly life and in its eternal goodness?"

To this I respond with joy, and as carefully and clearly as one can: "Listen, my soul. Eternal life is a sweet fellowship², bond³, linkage⁴, and communion⁵ of all Godfearing and pious Christians with the only begotten Son of God and, through the Son, with the eternal Father and Holy Spirit. Yet such sweet fellowship consists in and is grounded in love and requited love. That is, that God lovingly knows us and in turn is lovingly known by us, and that by means of such love and requited love, as through a heavenly covenant and by spiritual pleasure, we have our existence and the joyful bliss of our hearts in God the Almighty. Moreover, God the Father, together with His only begotten Son and God the Holy Spirit, also resides, lives, and rests in every elect Christian through such a covenant of love and requited love as in His noble pleasure-home and palace and makes him a partaker of His divine nature. (...)

Dear children of the light, that the true kernel and sweet sap of this precious mystery might be revealed to us all the more, let us now all together properly consider these three points: first, what is God according to His essence; second, what opportunity is there in the fellowship between Him and us, His chosen children; and third, how far or wide does such a fellowship extend?

First Point

I cannot refrain from speaking with God my Lord and Savior like a child, and from asking Him so fairly, "Who are you, my God, You Maker of my body and soul? And what is Your essence? Oh, grant that I may learn to know You rightly. Show Yourself to me in Your revealed Holy Word, that I may find You and rightly know who You are." My most beloved Savior Jesus Christ answers, "God is My Spirit" (Jn. 4). And the Apostle St. John says, "God is love" (1 Jn. 4). Oh how good it is, and sufficient for a blessed beginning, to hear that God is a spiritual being whose very essence is love. (...) I no longer allow myself to lose hold of these precious words, but rather diligently ponder them and understand them just as they are written. And so when I am asked who God really is, I learn to speak with Scripture and answer with Christ, "God is Spirit," and with St. John, "God is love."

It is true that love is also attributed to the children of

man—for it is often rightly said that one loves another and that we ought to love among ourselves. But such a love in man is only a qualitas6, a created virtue. In contrast, God is the essential love, that is, neither a qualitas nor a created virtue, but an eternal, unending, and almighty spirit and the divine essence itself.

This unending, almighty, and eternal essence (as has been said) is nothing else than love itself, and all the works of this divine essence, the internal as well as the external. and the external as well as the internal, together with all its attributes, cry out to me and testify that God Himself is love. Now when I consider the internal works of the divine essence, God's Word tells me that in God there is an eternal begetting, the image of the begetter, which sits eternally in the bosom of the begetter, and a proceeding breath, which the begetter and begotten image together eternally breathe out so that He eternally proceeds from both. The eternal begetter is the Father, the eternally begotten image is the Son, and the eternally proceeding breath is the Holy Spirit. Where else does this begetting come from than from love? (...) Now if this eternal

begetting, this eternally being begotten, and this eternal proceeding from the begetter and from the begotten are the opera Trinitatis interna, that is, the internal works of the holy, highly praised Trinity within the eternal and unending essence of the Almighty, what else do they teach and testify to us than that God Himself is love?

Now when I arrive at the external works of God. as in the creation, the redemption of the human race, the regeneration of man, the revelation of God in the law and gospel, and in all works of His governance, I again find that God Himself is love. For He loves all things that are, does not hate what He

has made, and gives us His dear Son out of fervent love. He also pours out His love into our hearts in the sending of the Holy Spirit. And in the law He demands from us principally nothing else, as His chief mandate, than love toward Him and our neighbor. Likewise, He proclaims to us His sincere love in the holy gospel, shown to all the world in Christ Jesus. He protects out of love the whole Christian Church on earth. He nourishes and sustains us out of love. And when He is angry, punishes, and curses, all this He does as a one who is zealous, that is, on account of His offended love and for the salvation of His name, because He Himself is called love and therefore must of necessity resist all works of hate. See how strongly and mightily the external works of the Almighty, which St. Augustine calls opera Trinitatis extra, also testify that God Himself is love. (...)

Second Point

Let this much be said concerning the first point. Now for the second point, it is truly a great glory and inexpressible blessing that this great God and holy Lord of Sabaoth (who is essential love itself) unites, binds, and keeps Himself in loving fellowship with us (who are but dust and clay).

> Therefore it may well be asked in amazement. "Beloved, what kind of a fellowship is this, and what opportunity do we have in it?" (...)

Now it is God Himself who, according to His very essence, is eternal, unending, and almighty love. (...) And as it pertains to the three persons of this divine essence, God the Father is the heart, fountain, and headspring of eternal immeasurable love. The Son, however, is the aeternus logos, ratio, sapientia, vita, imago,⁷ that is, the eternal reason, wisdom, eye, mirror, appearance, image, and soul of the eternal and unending love within the Father's heart. And the Holy Spirit is the strength, the breath, and



the movement of eternal, unending love in the Father and the Son, as in the heart and soul of the Godhead.

From this we deduce that the Christian truly must have a heavenly life and fellowship with God in which God the Father kindly condescends out of fervent, sincere love with the image of His essence, namely, with His only begotten Son, logo aeterno, the eternal wisdom, reason, soul, thoughts, life, and the eye of His love. And with such lovely mien and penetrating, sincere expression He pours out His Holy Spirit, the holy and heavenly seed and breath of His essence. For it is just in this way that He possesses, imbues, inflames, and fills all righteous Christians so lovingly that in return they open wide the eyes of their hearts toward the Son of God, logon aeternum, the heavenly light and mirror of the almighty Father, and lay hold of Him in His revealed Word. They let His voice be more delightful to them than gold or silver and let it taste sweeter to them than sugar, honey, and the honeycomb. They view the fair countenance of the Father nowhere else than in the Son, aeterno logo, in the mirror and image of His glory, taking joy and receiving their heart's desire in such a heavenly expression. Moreover, they commit their bodies and souls to Him as His possession and everlasting dwelling place, allowing themselves to be governed, guided, and led by His Spirit and breath.

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the heavenly orator, counselor, and interpreter of the heavenly Father, calls this fellowship, using one intelligible little word, the knowledge of the true God and of Him whom He has sent, His only begotten Son (In. 17). Mark this well and diligently observe it. For wherever any true love, any works of loving refreshment, loving joy, and loving fellowship are described in God's Word, as for example in conjugal love and in the conjugal relation of husband and wife (in which is there joy, pleasure, and unity8), the word know is given, and in it is understood all the works of gentle love. "Adam," says Scripture, "knew his wife Eve" (Gen. 4). (...)

In the same way, this eternal heavenly life is also a pure and lovely knowledge filled with sweet heavenly pleasure. For my soul is wonderfully known by God's Son, my Creator, Lord, and Savior, as a bride by her bridegroom, unto spiritual union. And I in turn blessedly know Him, to the eternal praise, glory, and honor of God, and to my eternal salvation and fellowship with the divine nature. (...)

The heavenly life of a Christian is therefore a sweet knowledge, a lamp in his heart, a pleasure of his soul, a joy of his spirit, and a knowledge that surpasses all the science of this world, all the earthly wisdom of man, and all art and



Such a heavenly life bestows and creates in me a joyful and invigorated spirit, so that I can overcome the world, move mountains. drive away the devil. destroy my enemies all around in the name of the Lord, and perform great wonders.

experience of the learned heathen. For wherever a Christian denies himself and commits to this One his body and soul, there is a knowledge of sweet love, inflamed by a sincere kiss and fervent desire. With such knowledge he practically jumps out of his own skin toward this one object⁹, grasping and clinging to it. And that other object to which he turns and directs such knowledge, namely, all his thoughts, his heart, soul, love, desire, passion, confidence, rest, longing, kiss, joy, and all he has been given, is neither gold nor silver, neither the pleasure of his eyes or flesh nor some pompous being of this fleeting world. It is neither heaven nor earth nor any mere creature, however it be named, but rather (oh, the exuberant eternal glory!) such knowledge reaches God, clings to God, and possesses God in heaven— God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, the true God, one in essence and Trinitarian in person—and nothing higher, nothing better, nothing lovelier may be preferred to Him.

Third Point

Here follows now the third question. (...) How closely and deeply can such a fellowship reach? Is such a bond and union to a spirit like many citizens being one corpus¹² or like Christian spouses, man and wife, according to God's institution being one body, one flesh, and one blood¹³?

Answer: O my dear soul, this heavenly fellowship (where God and His elect are knit and bound together) reaches far more deeply than civil community or than the loving marital union between God-fearing spouses could ever reach. For our blessed fellowship with God reaches ad mutuam immigrationem et inhabitationem, 4 that is, unto the lovely inhabitation of one being in the other, so that, namely, the Lord our God through sweet love and requited love considers and knows us as a possession in which He powerfully, kindly, and so lovingly resides and dwells with His divine nature, Spirit, and gifts. And in return, He causes us to be in Him and to have in God our Lord and Savior our rest, our joy, our sweet life, and all our pleasure, and to consider Him our heart's sole inhabiting comfort, inhabiting power, and inhabiting eternal salvation, so that I say to Him: "Lord, You joy of my heart, You strength of my life, and my highest treasure in my inward part, my highest good, when I only have You I ask nothing of heaven and earth. And when my body and soul pine, then You, God, are the comfort of my heart and my confidence forever" (Ps. 73). (...)

Therefore it is said, and I also can say: "God is in me, and I am in God my Lord and Savior." For here one dwells, rests, and keeps himself in the other through a wonderfully sweet, lovely, and wholly joyous commercium¹⁵, or fellowship—that is, God the highest Majesty, the eternal Father, together with His only begotten Son and Holy Spirit, with fervent sincere love for man comes in the Word, with the Word, and through the Word (where in His name it is preached, heard, and clung to by believing hearts) into me and gives Himself to me with His bountiful goods as my possession, so that He Himself deigns to be my greatest treasure, my very great reward, my life, my joy, and the inner light of my soul. He occupies and wholly seizes me—my heart, my soul, my body, and all my members—and knows me so exactly and intimately that all the hairs upon my head are known and numbered by Him, and that I am with both body and soul His temple, palace, and possession and am entirely owned by Him. (...)

It is indeed a strong bond of my body and soul that the two creatures, body and soul, are one person, and that my body exists, moves, and lives by the indwelling of the soul. But this life is by far not to be compared with my heavenly life, whereby I say with St. Paul that it is not I, but rather God's Son who dwells and lives in me with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and who is the life of my soul, the joy of my heart, and the power of my spirit. Such a heavenly life bestows and creates in me a joyful and invigorated spirit (which no earthly life either does or can do), so that I can overcome the world, move mountains, drive away the devil, destroy my enemies all around (since they surround me as thick as bees) in the name of the Lord, and perform great wonders. For I am stronger than a lion, immortal, knowing nothing of death or of the power of hell, but rather I scorn death, devil, hell, the whole world, and all foes and bravely cry: "I defy you, O death, and you, O hell, and you, all wicked spirits and tyrants, all you who would bereave me of my life! Be shattered, O you peoples, and be cursed" (Is. 8). "O death, where is your sting? O hell, where is your victory?" (1 Cor. 15). "I go forth in the strength of the Lord God" (Ps. 71). "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4). "By my God I can leap over a wall" (Ps. 18).

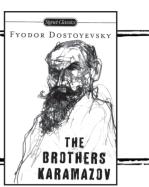
Behold, you children of the light, the joyous boldness and the power and strength that eternal heavenly life bestows and creates in me, which is therefore far more greatly to be preferred to my natural life, just as the heavens are higher than the earth, and as eternal heavenly goods are exceedingly more greatly to be preferred to temporal goods. (...)

Therefore a child of the light says, "Farewell, O world, with all your prideful pomp. Farewell with your lustful eyes and flesh and with your whole arrogant life. Depart all wisdom, strength, and wealth, which neither is nor is called the blessed knowledge of God. The Lord does not delight in the strength of the horse, nor does He take pleasure in the legs of man, but rather delights in them that rightly know Him and wait for His goodness and are attentive to His Word, that He may reside and dwell in them. Therefore I will make my boast in the Word of God. I will boast in the Word of the Lord. I boast that He has let me know His secret wisdom, and I say to my soul, "Now bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits" (Ps. 103). Amen. 🛶

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- I Posthumously written and published by Nicolai's friend and assistant at St. Katherine's in Hamburg, George Dedeken.
- 2 Gemeinschaft
- 3 Verknüpfung
- 4 Verbindung
- 5 Vereinigung
- 6 quality
- 7 eternal word, reason, wisdom, life, image
- 8 Blutsgemeinschaft
- 9 objectum
- 10 ibid.
- 11 all sein datum
- 12 body
- 13 ein Blut; cp. text from paragraph omitted above, "daß der Mann sein Weib sich so nahe zu ihr helt ... und helt sie aus Gottes keuscher Ordnung für sein Fleisch und sein
- 14 unto the mutual moving into and dwelling in
- 15 lit. social intercourse; reference to the right of Roman citizens to form contracts and own property under Roman law.

Review: The Brothers Karamazov



The Brothers Karamazov by Fyodor Dostoyevsky Book Front Cover



yodor Dostoesvky's masterpiece *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) is many things at once. It has elements of a murder mystery and a courtroom procedural drama, set in 19th-century small-town Russia. It is also a dark melodrama about what are now called

intergenerational curses, narcissistic behavior patterns, the toxic traits of our parents, and post-traumatic stress. It is a philosophical novel, asking and proposing answers to life's hardest questions about what kind of God may or may not exist, what he wants with the world, and how we should live. It features the classic triad of the Sinner, the Skeptic, and the Saint. Most of all, I think, Dostoevsky intended to tell a modern redemption story about sin and forgiveness, death and resurrection, working themselves out in a fractured family. *The Brothers Karamazov* is perhaps the most explicitly Christian and thoroughly modern in theme and outlook of any of the books thus far reviewed in these pages; and for those who appreciate these pages, I would recommend the novel as essential reading.

Despite the fact that all the major characters of the novel are written to embody big ideas, big questions and answers, they are nevertheless painted vividly and colorfully human. Often, in fact, the many players of Dostoevsky's drama are larger than life, almost superhuman in feeling and action, expressing themselves in profound gestures. My own experience suggests that, to read for maximum profit, it is helpful to come at the novel from the outset with a list of the main names of the story, in their relations to each other. Many are known by several combinations of name, surname, and nickname, and here I am going to refer to those most used for each person.

The main crisis of the novel is the murder of **Fyodor Karamazov.** Fyodor is certainly the father of the three brothers Karamazov, and probably of a fourth. He caused misery for both his wives, the mothers of his sons, who are long dead by the opening of action. He has spent his life amassing a fortune, making enemies, and pursuing sexual debauchery. Greedy, boorish, and selfish, equally adept at victimizing as playing the victim, he has few to mourn his death.

Dimitri Karamzov, most often called Mitya, is Fyodor's oldest son, of his first wife. As a child, Mitya was neglected by father and mother and cared for by a relative, Mr. Miusov. This Miusov, who despises Fyodor, appears in a few scenes. Like his father, Dimitri is gripped by emotional enthusiasms for women and money. Through this common concupiscence, he implicates himself in and is tried for the murder of his father. Unlike his father, however, Mitya is frequently repentant and desirous to overcome his deep flaws. He spends his life turbulently poised between degradation and reformation, and he finds the beginning of redemption only when he is on trial.

Ivan Karamazov is Fyodor's second son, from his second wife. In the novel, he makes the most vigorous case against Dostoevsky's own vision of faith and life. Personally moral but intellectually amoral, Ivan is not a blithe atheist, but a sincere skeptic, who cannot mentally reconcile the specter of tortured children with the proposition of a loving God. But how then can Ivan justify his rejection of his father's degeneracy? His own love for humanity is abstract and does not seem to extend to real human beings. He brilliantly theorizes about what makes for human flourishing, but is without warmth or compassion. He expresses his conflicted convictions most famously in "The Grand Inquisitor" (Bk.

5, ch. 5), which has earned its place as a standalone essay in anthologies of religious thought. As he learns the truth about his father's murder, Ivan must contend concretely with the consequences of his ideas.

Alexei Karamazov, often Alyosha, Fyodor's third son, is the hero of the story. His purity and his perceptive, sympathetic love for the people in his life flow from his genuine faith. He lives at the Russian Orthodox monastery in town under the mentorship of Father Zosima, and is entangled with and for a time engaged to the capricious and superficial Lise, the daughter of the family acquaintance Madame Khokhlakov. Through the course of the story, Alyosha grows more and more into the embodiment of Zosima's teaching, which is to love and forgive everyone and hope tirelessly for their salvation, to suffer cheerfully, and cherish creation. As he experiences the death of both Fyodor and Zosima, Alyosha himself becomes a spiritual father to young boys of the town, among them Ilyusha and Nicolai (often Kolya). He is contrasted in the novel with the cynical seminarian Mikhail Rakitin, who jealously desires to corrupt Alyosha, just as Zosima is antagonized in death by the rigorist Father Ferapont, who hates him. These two counterpoint the guileless love to which Alyosha and Zosima aspire.

Fyodor's fourth son is only suspected to be such, though we are meant to believe the suspicions are true. Pavel Smerdyakov was born of Stinking Lizaveta, a mentally handicapped girl in the village who died in childbirth. It is assumed that only Fyodor Karamazov is sufficiently degenerate to have forced himself upon the poor girl. Smerdyakov was raised by Fyodor's servants, Grigory and his wife Marfa. He is malicious and hateful, but hides behind displays of deference and loyalty. As the true murderer of Fyodor, Smerdyakov is the consequence of both his father's thoughtless debauchery as well as Ivan's thoughtful amorality.

The source of much of the antagonism between Fyodor and Dimitri is the beautiful Grushenka. Before the opening of the novel, she was brought to the Karamazov hometown by Kuzma Samsonov. By the time we meet him, Dimitri has already abandoned his francee, Katerina (Katya), to compete with his lascivious father for Grushenka's affections. This unseemly rivalry, together with disputes about inheritance, brings explosive scenes and threats of murder. However, Mitya never actually consummates his homicidal feelings, just as Grushenka herself is too proud and ambitious to live up to her promiscuous reputation. Katya, for her part, is determined to play the martyr of Mitya's ill treatment; so determined, in fact, that she cannot act on the barelyconcealed feelings that she and Ivan share. Thus Ivan and Katya, Mitya and Grushenka are all psychologically frozen into their personal betrayals and spiritual conflicts, their unrequited, unexpressed desires and resentments. Though desperate to do so, none can move past the moment of life in which they find themselves on the eve of Fyodor's murder. Families are complicated things, sometimes in need of death and resurrection.

In this review, I have spoiled some of the surprises of The Brothers Karamazov, but I have done so in order that a new reader might have a clear path through the tightly wound scenes, the fraught revelations, and the golden thread of redemptive love at play. However, a few things here I will not spoil.

First, I will not tell you the outcome of Dmitri's trial, whether or not he is convicted of the murder of Fyodor, his father. As the final scenes play themselves out, pay attention to the way the novel has been wrestling all along with the question of accountability: for whom, and for whose fate and faith, am I responsible? And recognize that, in raising the question of guilt and innocence, the novel wants to do more than gesture at mere technical, forensic answers to "Am I my brother's keeper?" Rather, the deeper question posed to Christian culture might be: If the guiding star of my life is "I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come," then for whom must I voluntarily assume responsibility? See what you make of Dostoevsky's answer.

Second, I will not tell you whether this answer is a compelling rebuttal to the rigorous, clear-eyed, fullhearted skepticism of Ivan, in his age or ours. Obviously, the author means to put forward the way of life of Zosima

and Alyosha as the antidote to what ails the world of the Karamazovs. Is this enough? Don't assume anything until you've read the book. And, if I may suggest, attend not so much to who wins the argument of ideas, but rather weigh each idea by the fruit it brings through those who live it. •?

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Fyodor Dostoyevsky



A Biblical Theology of the Cross

The Theology of the Cross: Reflections on His Cross and Ours, by Daniel M. Deutschlander. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2008. 283 pp. Paperback. \$21.99. https://online.nph.net/the-theology-of-the-cross.html



hen you see a book called, "The Theology of the Cross," you might expect it to begin with a discussion of Luther's Heidelberg Theses, another author throwing his hat into the ring of Luther research. But Daniel Deutschlander does something

much more Lutheran. Just like we should return to the words of institution when we begin to understand the teaching of the Lord's Supper, Baptism, and the Office of the Keys, Deutschlander begins his discussion on the theology of the cross by turning to our Lord's words in Mark chapter 8: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." As in

any good theological discourse, the words of Jesus set the foundation for his treatment of the theology of the cross.

To be sure, Deutschlander gives no shortage of quotes from Luther and other good teachers of the church. He discusses the Heidelberg Theses in the middle of the book, but he begins and ends with Scripture. Here the reader holds in his hand a truly biblical theology, reinforced by the sound teaching of the Small and Large Catechisms and other statements in the Lutheran Confessions. A biblical theology engages with the text of Scripture without getting caught in the weeds, keeping focused on the scope and goal of God's Word.

This book is a reflection on the cross of Jesus and the cross of the Christian. These two crosses must remain distinct, lest we confuse

God's act of saving us by the crucifixion of Jesus with our own bearing of whatever cross he lays upon us. The Christian cross is a consequent cross, following the cross of our Lord Jesus. It is necessary for each Christian. And it is heavy and painful. Jesus says, "If anyone would come after me," not, "All who come after me." He makes it personal: "he must deny himself." This bearing of the cross marks each Christian. We learn it in the liturgy through the many chants of Kyrie, Christe Eleison "Lord, Christ, have mercy!" The cross of the Christian sends him again and again to the comfort of Christ, who alone made full satisfaction for sins. It sends the Christian back to the Word and sacraments, the true means of grace.

Deutschlander shows both that the cross is something the Christian wants and at the same time not something the Christian chooses for himself. He boils down the essence of cross-bearing to this point. It is Self-denial. The old Adam, whom Deutschlander continuously calls the old self, always wants to do his own will. This dynamic between the old man and the new man, or the old self and the new self, is at the heart of bearing the cross. Here he brings out the crucial difference between the worldly and the regenerated will of the Christian.

Deutschlander goes on to flesh out why it is so difficult to bear the cross. While the world places human will above the will of God, a do-gooder philosophy, which undermines and outright denies the reality of original sin, spirals into moral relativism and utter chaos. Yet, the author shows how we so easily breathe in the air all around us and slip into spiritual sloth. Here the devil, the world, and the sinful flesh are in league together. But Deutschlander is more than a mere cultural critic. He continually brings the discussion into the Table of Duties, mentioning the neighbor right in front of us who is often difficult to love. Drawing on 1 Corinthians 13, he beautifully writes of love bearing all things in the various stations in life, as well as how we deal with sin and its consequences both in ourselves and in our neighbors. Focusing on fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, children, teachers, and especially pastors, his ability to sift out the scuffles of the heart in both the young and the old is an art, which marks him as a skilled theologian. In other words, he's clearly a pastor.

Anyone who is familiar with literature on the theology of the cross will immediately recognize such themes as paradox and the hidden God. The sinful self constantly fighting against the Christian's new will presents a paradox, a conflict, a seeming contradiction. On the one hand, the cross is a dear gift of God. On the other hand, it is often stained with our own sin. This conflict is resolved only in the cross of Jesus, where all sin is borne and all wrath is turned away. With a crystal clear articulation of the atonement and the efficacy of the Word, Deutschlander shows how the theology of the cross, the means of grace, and justification are not three separate doctrines. Rather, they serve as a single doctrine. Holding to this conviction puts teachings such as providence and predestination in their proper context. Allow me to share this one snippet, which illustrates this well:

One thing alone is sufficient: grace! And only the bearing of the cross makes it clear that the meaning and essence of real life and everlasting life is grace! That is, God freely chooses to love me. And he chooses to love me for reasons of his own, reasons that have nothing to do with any good that I have done or ever will do. Even before the world began, when he knew already all of the reasons he would have not to love me, he nevertheless loved me. In such love and in Christ, he did everything, absolutely everything, that was necessary for my eternal salvation. He even ruled over all history, so that my hearing of the gospel and my trust in it would not be mere coincidence, much less the result of my will and choice; it would be altogether and alone his gracious doing in accordance with his gracious good will! (pp. 38-39)

What is revealed in the means of grace and in Christ's work of salvation remains hidden as the Christian bears his cross. In fact, Deutschlander shows how the glory of Christ is hidden in every act of God. By the example of the saints who went before us, we see how the glory of God is hidden in the Word. The great wonders shown to Moses and Elijah, along with other prophets and saints, were handmaidens to the glory hidden under the Word of promise. Deutschlander casts a magnifying glass upon the text to show how miraculous every aspect of Jesus' earthly life was, maintaining the great historical witness of his death and resurrection. Yet even in these wonders, the power to create faith was always in the Word. Rather than pitting the historical account and the Word against one another, Deutschlander uses the historical account to illumine all the more the great efficacy of God's Word.

The last two chapters draw on Luther's insights from the sixth petition on how trials come through different stages of life. With examples of how the young, middle aged, and elderly bear the cross, concluding with a focus particularly on pastors, Deutschlander's book gives the reader words of great understanding and wisdom. Those who are familiar with the works of J.P. Koehler and Paul Hensel on the hardening of the heart will notice how Deutschlander comes to very similar observations about the calluses of the soul, which one experiences with age. I was especially struck by his keen insight into the cross borne by young Christians. I said, "This man is obviously a father." However, from a subsequent conversation with a friend of mine, who serves in the Wisconsin Synod, I was amazed to learn that Deutschlander remained a bachelor his entire life. This man, who received his eternal reward in October of 2020, was truly blessed by God as a theologian. What other kind of theologian is there than this? If you desire to be a theologian, to apply God's Word to yourself and to others under the cross, then this book will certainly not disappoint you.

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On Flolbein, Allegory of the Old and New Testaments



he Summer/Fall 2022 Issue of Christian Culture featured both Lucas Cranach the Elder's 1529 painting, "Law and Grace," as well as a woodcut imitation. You can easily see that the painting here, Hans Holbein the Younger's

oil painting, "An Allegory of the Old and New Testaments" (early 1530's), is both the continuation and the perfection of this theme, which became prominent in the iconography of the Lutheran Reformation.

In content and composition, Holbien borrows heavily from Cranach, et. al. Reading down the left hand side of the painting, one encounters first the giving of the Law (Lex) to Moses. From this, the eye moves to Adam, Eve, and the serpent, as the Law reveals Sin (Peccatum), which then falls into Death (Mors). Since the painting is not strictly a display of Law and Gospel, but of the Old and New Testaments, the story of Moses and the serpent in the wilderness is also included on the left side, directly adjacent to the serpent who overcame by the tree of the Garden—and more on that shortly.

Reading down the right hand side, one finds first the gracious (Gratia) Annunciation to the Virgin; the eye then follows the path of light to the angel announcing the birth of Christ to the shepherds, who are placed at the right hand of the Crucified. Emerging from the shadows on the far right edge of the panel is Christ, the Lamb of God (Agnus Dei). All of this is consummated in the lower right, as Christ breaks forth from the tomb, granting us Our Victory (Victoria Nostra) over death.

The artist would also have us read his painting from left to right, placing the Annunciation/Gratia as the answer to the announcement of the Law/Lex, the Agnus Dei who takes away the sin of the world across from the coming of Sin/Peccatum, and the Resurrection/ Victoria Nostra as the undoing of Death/Mors.

As similar as it is to its predecessors, the sophistication of this composition clearly surpasses that of Cranach, as Holbein's figures move in more vivid light and shadow, and are placed perfectly on a realistic, three-dimensional landscape. There is no unused space, but neither are

characters repetitively crowded into a simplistic series of panels. This more masterful arrangement brings out deeper connections between the Biblical stories. At the center of the painting, the congregation of Israel gathered around the bronze serpent (Mystery of Justification/ Mysterium Iustificationis) is paired with the Christmas shepherds next to the crucifixion (Our Justification/ Iustificatio Nostra), teaching that Christ and His Gospel are hidden, a mysterium, in the Old Testament and revealed in the New. This creates a new pathway for the eye, which is also the pathway of faith: from the serpent's congregation at the tree, to the congregation of Israel at the serpent's pole, to the congregation of shepherds and sheep anachronistically near the cross, to the congregation of disciples around the living Lamb of God.

Now, notice man (Homo), front and center, and then the tree that divides the two sides of the painting. The tree is dying through the revelation of the Law, and is coming to life with the revelation of the Gospel—and this tree is assimilated into Man in the painting, becoming almost an extension of his spine.

In the art and culture of the Renaissance, Man was well on his way to becoming, as Protagoras predicted, "the measure of all things" (Plato, Theaetetus), and one might be forgiven for seeing an anthropocentric worldview in Holbien's choice to place Man at the center of his painting. Traditionally, this place was reserved for Christ or one of the saints, not Everyman.

What is centralized here, though, is not the apotheosis of man, but his degradation; he says "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7:24). And since it is not good that Man should be alone, the Prophet Isaiah (Esayas Propheta) steps out from the Old Testament to address Man directly, while John the Baptist (Ioannes Baptista) places his hand on Man from within the New Testament. "Behold," says Isaiah, "the Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son" (Ecce Virgo concipiet et pariet Filium. Isa. 7) indicating the Mother of God in the upper right; and John, pointing at Christ, says, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (Ecce Agnus ille Dei, qui tollit peccatum mundi.



lo. 1). Under the influence of this proclamation, Man is turned away from sin and death, and is also no longer curved in upon himself. It is an uncomfortable posture, but so is the death of the old and the birth of the new.

So Holbein has expanded Cranach's visual formula to include you, the viewer, in the story, as if to say, "Quid rides? Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur!" (Horace, Satires: "What are you laughing at? Change the name and the story is told about you!"). The painting is not merely a didactic diagram of Law and Grace, but a lively representation of the daily death of your old Adam and the daily coming forth of the New Creature, under the power of the living Word. So may our lives in Christ always be, and so also every endeavor of Christian culture: not mere repristination, much less wooden imitation, but the perfection of the old, and also new creation. – J.H.



Christian Culture Conference

Luther Classical College's first annual Christian Culture Conference was June 6th-7th, featuring six presentations, an address from the Academic Dean, an excellent banquet, worship services (with boisterous singing), and great conversations. There were 250 attendees, and a good many children.

On the morning of June 6th, there was an open house on the grounds of Mount Hope Lutheran Church and School. It was a nice opportunity to visit together and view the site of Luther Classical College (it will be built on the land behind and to the right of the pavilion canopy in the picture). It was anyone's guess how many people would come to see an empty field, but there was a very good showing, and excitement was running high.

The conference offically began that afternoon at the Wolcott Galleria in downtown Casper and continued the morning of June 7th. The presentations were:

Rev. Dr. John Bombaro: Christian Culture and the Home

Rev. Hans Fiene: Can Lutherans Get Along and Still Be Orthodox?

Rev. Dr. Gregory Schulz: Wokism in the University System

Mr. Timothy Goeglein: Lutherans in the Public Sphere (Banquet Speech)

Rev. Dr. Adam Koontz: Past and Future of The Lutheran Church in the U.S.

Rev. David Petersen: The Bright Future of Lutheran Congregations in America

Watch videos of this year's presentations at lutherclassical.org/ccc2023

Save the date! The next Christian Culture Conference is scheduled for June 4th and 5th, 2024 in Casper, WY!





