

Issue 9

Summer 2023

FEATURING

**The Fight for the Christian
School as a Fight for the
Christian Worldview**

John Schaller

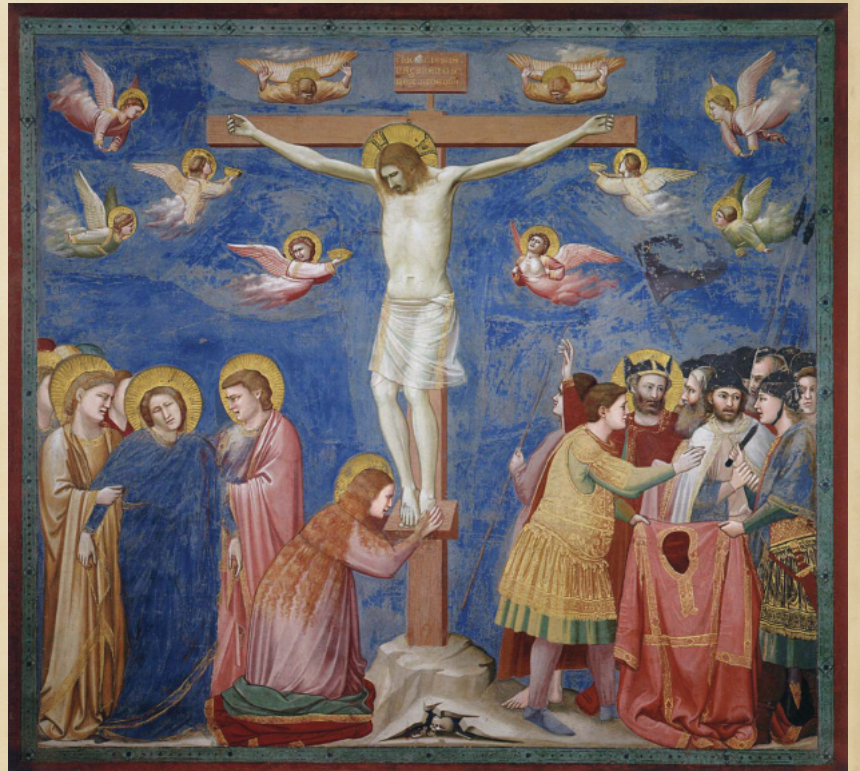
From Discipline to Self-Discipline

David Buchs

Art in Our Lutheran Churches

Adam Carnehl





Artworks clockwise from upper left:

Holy Trinity by Andrei Rublev, d. 1430

Adoration of the Magi
by Gentile da Fabriano, 1423

Life of Christ: 19. Crucifixion (Scrovegni Chapel)
by Giotto di Bondone, 1304-1306

Bearded Christ,
from catacombs of Commodilla, late 4th century

Raising of Jairus' Daughter by Ilya Repin, 1871



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Christian Culture: A Magazine for Lutherans is published quarterly by Luther Classical College, 2300 Hickory St., Casper, WY 82604. Send address changes to Christian Culture, Luther Classical College, 2300 Hickory St., Casper, WY 82604. Copyright © 2023 by Luther Classical College. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America.

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The Fight for the Christian School as a Fight for the Christian Worldview¹

Der Kampf um die christliche Schule als Kampf um die christliche Weltanschauung by John Schaller

Theologische Quartalschrift, Vol. 7, 1910, p. 204-221

Introduction and translation by Michael Holmen

INTRODUCTION

John Schaller (1859-1920) was a professor and the director of Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, MN from 1889-1908. From 1908 until his death from influenza in 1920 he was the director of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Wauwatosa, WI.

Schaller is often referred to as one of the “Wauwatosa theologians” because of the new emphases that he developed with his seminary colleagues, J. P. Koehler and August Pieper. These seminary professors wrote challenging and stimulating articles for the seminary’s journal, the *Theologische Quartalschrift*. Instead of focusing on dogmatic and practical theology (which were the dominant theological fields in Synodical Conference circles), the Wauwatosans emphasized historical and biblical theology.

John Schaller is often overshadowed in secondary literature by the esteem that is given to his colleagues, Koehler and Pieper, but he is an outstanding theologian in his own right. Perhaps because of his tenure at Dr. Martin Luther College, which was a teachers’ college, he always was concerned about excellence in education. He wrote much more in English than his colleagues ever did. He is very good at stating things clearly and succinctly. The brevity and weightiness of his books, *Pastorale Praxis in der ev.-Luth. Freikirche Amerikas* (1913) and *Biblical Christology* (1918), are evidence of that.

The article printed below, “The Fight for the Christian School as a Fight for the Christian Worldview,” shows the seriousness with which our forefathers viewed Christian education. Freedom of religion in America provided the opportunity for our churches to form and shape good

Christian men and women through quality education. This endeavor also required sacrifices, however, which were not always forthcoming. This article appears to have been written to stimulate interest and devotion for the great task that is given to all Christians to educate. Education is necessarily religious. The Christian Church must always be interested, therefore, in how all its members are being educated. — M.H.



In our circles the question of whether Christian schools should be established is far too often considered to be something altogether indifferent—having no bearing on a person’s standing with Christianity. That is why the matter is dealt with carelessly. This works against us and causes great harm to the Church, because the necessity of the Christian school is not emphasized. *Far-reaching principles* are involved with the school question in our American situation. With the fight for the Christian school we are in a contest between *two worldviews* that are diametrically opposed to each other. When this has been realized, it is impossible as a Christian to be indifferent in the matter. When the honor of the great God comes into consideration it is not possible to remain indifferent.

Despite whatever superficial differences may exist, there are basically *two possible worldviews*. They are as different from each other as day and night, light and darkness, heaven and hell, God and the devil. Yet they are so completely decisive that a man’s standing as a child of heaven



or hell is determined by whether or not one or the other worldview is what is ruling him.

THE BEGINNING OF THE TWO WORLDVIEWS

To get to know these worldviews in their simplest, most unveiled form, we will go back to the gray primeval dawn of history, the first period of the world. At that time, when men had just been created, the two worldviews arose immediately one after the other and in the sharpest contrast to each other. One or the other of these worldviews is what still governs the thinking and the will of every human being.

When God created man, He looked at what He had done and behold, it was all *very good*. Since God looked at everything, man also was very good. Many things can be drawn from this. Thereby God testified that man completely fulfilled his position in the visible creation and with his power as ruler could not enter into conflict with any creature. He grasped his earthly work in all directions and had the necessary understanding to carry it all out. Most im-

portantly, however, he was in *complete harmony with his Creator* and was not aware of any opposition to Almighty God. Thus, as he was created, he was given the worldview which, according to God's judgment, was good because it agreed with God's intentions. The innermost essence of man, also his entire will, was made in the image of God, and so his will was in perfect harmony with God's will. What was obvious to the sinless man was that everything surrounding him was there only for the *glory of God*. No selfish thoughts, no striving for personal advancement could be said of Adam, because his poetry and aspirations were entirely engrossed with God. It did not bother him that he was forbidden to eat from the tree in the middle of the Garden. God had made this prohibition known as His will, and man, created in the image of God, saw in it no limitation to his freedom, but only a part of God's will with which he naturally found himself in harmony. He was fully conscious and aware of all the circumstances, and without any inner conflict he was such a creature who pursued only God's honor. That was the *divine* worldview which the Cre-

ator had implanted in him. That worldview was absolutely *theocentric*.

Then the lie from hell accosted man and destroyed what God had so beautifully created. The tempter tricked Eve with a question that looked like a friendly inquiry: “Did God *really* say? Might it not be possible that you humans have misconstrued that?” And then, when she very emphatically repeats the commandment, Satan is at hand with his “Enlightenment” [*Aufklärung*]: “God knows that in the day that you eat of it your eyes will be opened!” That is a blatant blasphemy of God, but at the same time it is an attempt to teach Eve a new, *devilish worldview*. Eve should think of *herself*. She should covet and pursue an advantage for *herself*. Thereby God would be ousted from His ruling position in the hearts of men, and *selfishness* would take the place of the love of God.

Eve gave in. In a masterly way the succinct Biblical account shows us how Eve’s heart was changed sequentially. First, she looks at the tree with completely new thoughts. Yes, she looks at it, whereas before she probably only saw it as she passed by and had not thought of the tree as anything more than the self-evident reminder of the divine prohibition. Suddenly it dawns on her that the tree is lovely to look at. Her hungry eyes greedily trace the outlines of the object of her desire. The forbidden fruit entices her. Up to this point she did not even realize that this was a forbidden delicacy, but now she feels the irresistible craving to enjoy what she has been deprived of, and to make up for lost time. Besides, according to the tempter’s word, she had a rich profit in store for *herself*. She was promised an almost unlimited expansion of her spiritual power over the world.

She ate *because her worldview had been inverted*. God had moved out of the center and her own self [*das Ich*] had taken His place. How easily and horribly fast the change had come through, by which the whole standing of man had been changed from Godlike to *diabolical*! The essence of man was now *anthropocentric*, and a separation from God, the highest good, happened with it. From now on man is no longer heard to say: “God above everything and to Him alone be the glory!” In the place of this divinely intended motto is the diabolical one that has been reverberating through the centuries: “Every man for himself!” Without knowing it or intending it, American folk-speech has a phrase that exactly expresses the damnable corruption of human nature. It calls one’s own self [*das Ich*]: “Number One” [in English in the original].

But we know there’s more to the story. By God’s undeserved grace, the original, godly, and right worldview was

restored through the Gospel immediately after the fall. The consolation of the Word concerning the woman’s seed led Adam and Eve back to God and fixed their thoughts on God again. Since then, also by God’s mercy, there has never been an absence of a church that has held fast to the “*Soli Deo Gloria*,” albeit with great imperfection. All men are born as Adam’s children. They bear his image and bring with them into life the worldview that is hostile to God. “No one seeks after God,” is what the One who knows everything says of those who have not been born again through the power of grace to a new life in God.

From the beginning until now these two worldviews have fought bitterly. The battle has been going on for thousands of years—ever since Cain strangled his brother. *There* is the legitimate fruit of this new worldview: fratricide. Cain executed Abel because he hated his brother’s godly worldview. That is how it always happens in the world. Whenever the children of God make their confession of God earnestly and seek [God’s] glory rather than the world, the opposing forces rise up, serpent-headed, and the battle commences. It is therefore not surprising that the Christian school, born from a God-given worldview, should be recognized as an opponent to the public school, shaped by the world, and consequently be the target of the bitterest hostility.

THE TRUE CHARACTER OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

In a life-and-death struggle there can be no hope of success if the enemy is misjudged. The true character of the public school system is recognized among us all too little. All too often we are inclined to concede to it all sorts of good qualities. It is therefore important in our own circles to be crystal clear: the public school, as it is among us, *is not grounded in the godly worldview*, does not *advocate* for it, and therefore can *only produce its opposite*. Furthermore, with our circumstances, we presuppose that some kind of school system is required for the education of young people, and that therefore the school can be described as a relatively necessary institution.

The American public school differs from the German [public school], among other things, in that it is *religionless*. It does not explicitly teach any of the recognized religions. This is sometimes regarded as a good thing, but that is only making a virtue out of what is a necessity. Under our circumstances, especially with the fundamental separation of state and church, the state simply had to refrain from taking up the role of religion teacher. That is altogether correct, for the state doesn’t have a call to teach peo-

ple religion. Wherever it tries to do so, it only causes harm. But then it is obvious from the outset that it is of the fundamental character of the public school to be literally *godless*, that is, without God!²

The teacher of the public school knows nothing of God, so far as the calling is concerned, and has nothing to say of divine matters. If he does it anyway, then he is overstepping his bounds. When it comes to moral questions that he cannot avoid, he fails to point out the binding power of the divine will. He has no choice but to refer moral requirements to social conventions or the authority of the policeman's billy club. Since this school *ignores* God and divine things as a matter of *principle*, we can easily see that the theocentric view of the world simply does not come into consideration for them. Since all education, if it wants to be intelligently oriented at all, must necessarily be based on a worldview, the only remaining basis for the public

task is the education of children to be good citizens, that is to say, *patriotism*. This actually sounds as though the public school did not cultivate selfishness as its chief task, but does the practice correspond to the theory? Is it really instilled in the children that they should be driven to succeed in all the subjects because it is necessary for the well-being of the state?

Anyone who knows anything about how pupils are spurred on to studiousness in the public school knows that these schools routinely operate with the very lowest motivations that exist—*ambition* [*Ehrgeize*] and *selfishness*. But really it is just selfishness, because ambition is just a derivation of selfishness. The students are not moved to action whatsoever by consideration of the neighbor (to say nothing of God's will). The decisive factor is only what works to one's own advantage. And so the students compete with each other to gain a certain honor or a good grade. They are

It is obvious from the outset that it is of the fundamental character of the public school to be literally godless, that is, without God!

school is the worldview which led Eve into enjoying the forbidden fruit.

This [godlessness] even stands fully in agreement with the *goal* that the public school has set for itself. According to the theocentric worldview, the children of men rightfully belong to God, their Creator and Redeemer. He also clearly demands: "Show My children, the work of My hands, to Me!" [Isa. 45:11]. But nobody is even claiming that the public school intends to educate their students to be God's children. Of course sometimes you hear that the three R's—Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic—are the be-all and end-all [*Summa Summarum*] of the public school curriculum. Many people still think that the public school's goal is this elementary education. But reading, writing, and arithmetic alone would be too insignificant of an aspiration for such a great institution. The teachers couldn't get too excited about that. At their conventions, the teachers of the public school claim for themselves the task of *molding the minds of the people*. An *educational institution* is what this school will be. To be such [an institution], it has to set higher goals for itself than the rudimentary intellectual training of its pupils. Many attempts have been made to achieve something in the field of aesthetics. But otherwise, what the public school has theoretically made as its main

diligent, but only so that they can be recognized. Then they can be representatives of the school and compete in games, and so on. These events are so routine that they are automatically approved as appropriate for the operation of the school. The only time anyone might get annoyed by it is if his own child is held back. The main driving force at all times is the recognition of personal achievement, of "success" [in English], which is promised to the diligent student as a guaranteed future reward. If you want to make money, then you have to learn. This is more or less the refrain that is sung to the children in every possible key. The self [*Das Ich*] is placed in the foreground. Egotism is diligently cultivated.

That we should promote *religious* awareness is hardly talked about at all. If it still existed it would be overshadowed anyway with the whole tendency of scientific and historical instruction. Our public schools up through the universities deliberately and systematically push *evolutionism*. They do not teach evolution in the deistic sense where God is still the root cause of all that exists and develops, but in an agnostic way, or perhaps in a completely atheistic way, so that God's sovereignty over nature and history is completely eliminated. Wherever it is possible, the glory of *men* takes the place of the glory of God. Everything is di-

rected towards the glorification of man. In short, the *goals* of the public school are not remotely *theocentric*, but entirely *anthropocentric*. That this is just part of the nature of a religion-less school is no excuse. It only serves as further confirmation of the thesis that the worldview which God wants us to have is not welcome in the public school, but rather the other worldview is welcome, which has been brought into the world by the devil.

And what are the *results*? The public school has already had more than a generation of our people in its hand and molded them according to its principles. For decades we have had to endure their screaming into our ears that this institution is the safeguard of our freedom, the very foundation of the republic, without which it cannot stand. This screaming has also impressed Christians so much that most church bodies have gullibly and blindly given over the education of their youth to the state. If the public school has done something to improve our situation, then it should be able to prove it with the results. It should be recognized by its fruits. What about the patriotism that seeks the good of country by putting aside one's own interests? That is a ridiculous thought in a country that sighs and moans under the exploitation of greedy men unlike any other. And yet almost every moaning man would immediately trade places with the exploiters if he had the opportunity. The most horrible corruption has settled over the entire country, making our politics the dirtiest industry in the world. Every big city and a large portion of the rural districts are a Sodom and Gomorrah whose sins stink to high heaven. Everywhere there is the crassest *selfishness*. Man makes himself the center of the universe and claims all rights for himself. That is exactly how the devil planned it in paradise.

Will the public school take responsibility for these conditions? [By doing so] it would immediately relinquish its right to exist because of the insufficiency of its methods. [It would be] a bad school that cannot do what it should be able to do after all that investment and work. But it is understandable that a farmer who nurtured and cultivated, watered and fertilized a weed-field would not want to take responsibility for the lush growth of the most noxious weeds. But it is detestable that we Christians are often dazzled by the outward grandeur of the public school. Meanwhile the evil foe looks on with contentment as people slave away, so that the pernicious weeds that he has sown will flourish. Where the worldview that is cultivated in the public school is dominant, the devil keeps his peace. *There is nothing else that he can do.*

PARENTAL DUTY IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

We Christians are not called to erect educational institutions for the children of the world. Even if we did make attempts in this direction we should not expect success, because the world wants to be deceived. But God has entrusted to us our own children whom we should give back to Him. We should educate them in the worldview that corresponds to His divine will. What a damned sin it is—I'm saying what Luther said—if you fail in that! It is ghastly to think how many parents who pretend to be Christians have merited hell for themselves concerning their children. Take note: educating children to be Christian does not just mean *telling* them that they should be Christian. It also does not just mean that you can mentally teach them a certain repository of religious knowledge. Rather, it is to bring to them the worldview that God, their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, is the supreme good and that His honor should be the goal of all human endeavor and that the self does not count. This, and not a hair less, is what Paul means when he says that parents should educate their children in the discipline and admonition *of the Lord*.

Now to be sure, all attempts by Christian parents in this matter are as deficient as their sanctification is deficient. Here also we daily sin much and are in need of forgiveness even when we have done *everything* that we know to be right. But how can it be justified if someone does not do everything he can for Christian education, or even the hundredth part? What's more, if he deliberately exposes the children to influences that work against godliness? It is wretched to see how the Church in our day suffers unspeakable harm because so many Christians compromise in things that have to do with the education of their children. Worldliness is on the rise and the Christian faith is being left behind.

These compromises mainly take two forms. In one case the parents think that they completely fulfill their Christian duty by sending their children to Sunday school, while during the week they hand off their kids to the religion-less public school. In the other case, the parents put their firm confidence in the confirmation instruction, which is supposed to give a full Christian education in half a year. This is after the child has been subjected to an education that has been shaped by the world for more than six years. If the two compromises are merged, as sometimes happens, so that Sunday school and confirmation instruction come together, it doesn't help much. This option has only negligible advantages over the individual compromises from which it is composed. In the following discussion of these

compromises, it is not valid to judge whether Sunday school and confirmation instruction are valuable in and of themselves. That depends entirely on whether or not the Gospel is given its due. Also, where we shed light on the responsibility of *the parents*, we obviously do not have to take into account what the Holy Spirit can work in the children even through the means of the most defective religious instruction. No doubt, God can save a poor child from the abyss into which the parents have thrown him. The question for us is whether parents can give answer for throwing their child into the abyss.

Parents betray a lack of thoughtful consideration when they nourish the hope that the Christian education of their children will probably not be adversely affected when they are instructed for years on end in the public school, so long as you send them weekly for an hour of Sunday school, or after seven years of training finally entrust them to the pastor for confirmation classes. [In order for their hope to be valid], they would have to believe two things. First, that steady instruction in the religion-less school carries with it no religious implications for the children. Second, that the low level of religious instruction in Sunday school and confirmation classes is enough to provide a firmly grounded religious competency for their children.

I'd like to illustrate the first point with an example drawn from nature. Someone traveling in the Dakota prairies for the first time might notice that the few trees which have been planted by human hands never stand straight but have all grown crooked. In some it is not only the trunk that has this tendency, but the branches are also all bent so that it looks like someone's hair has been blown over his face from back to front. If asked about this phe-

nomenon that nature-lovers find disagreeable, the inhabitants of the area will tell you that it is because of the constant and occasionally violent winds, which come mostly from the northwest. Slowly but surely, their constant influence on the saplings causes them to deviate from a straight line of growth. Although the wind might blow from another direction from time to time, it cannot overcome the effect of the much more frequent northwest wind. That is why all the trees have grown crooked.

The application is easy. Those saplings resemble the children from Christian homes who are sent to the public school and left under its influence for years. The constant northwest wind is the religion-less instruction given to such poor children. The other winds are the few religious lessons that such children receive in Sunday school and confirmation classes that are meant to counteract the steady northwest wind. Is it really such a wonder that they are stunted spiritually and growing crooked? Day after day, week after week, year after year, the spirit of the world blows upon them. All the powers of pedagogy are harnessed so that their thoughts are directed to what is earthly—never to what is divine. All the influence that the school can bring to bear is meant to make pure children of the world [*reine Weltkinder*] out of the pupils. How can anyone hope that all this will pass the children by without having an effect, so that a very poor religious education offers a sufficient counterweight? Can anyone expect that such children will bring forth true fruits of godliness and serve their neighbor for *God's* sake?

Anyone who thinks thus is devoid of common sense. But that's actually how most parents think. In the thing that parents must give answer for above everything else, they

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act unthinkingly, and the deprived children must suffer as a result. The evil fruits only show themselves later when you cannot do much about it, that is, when the children emancipate themselves from the parents, and, thanks to their parents, follow the paths they have learned to walk. Then the parents see how their children are becoming more and more estranged from the Church. Then, everywhere, there are bitter complaints that so many confirmands are breaking their promise and running with the world. But let's be honest with ourselves: can we really expect anything different when we raise our children the way we do?

However, it is no less of a violation of common sense, let alone of the mind of an enlightened Christian, if lasting results are expected from instruction *only* through Sunday school and confirmation class. Consider: What lies before us is the education of children in a godly worldview that is contrary to the endeavors and the entire way of life of the natural man. It is necessary to ground them in divine wisdom. How very true is the word of the Lord here: "The children of this world are wiser than the children of light in their generation." [That is, they know how to educate.] A child should learn reading, writing, and arithmetic. He should be taught the basic concepts of geography and a certain cache of historical ideas should be acquired. Later on he might learn a trade. It would not occur to anyone to think that it would be sufficient for the child to be engaged with the subject only one hour a week [Sunday school], or to spend an hour a day for half a year [confirmation instruction]. There is good reason that lessons be given for years in reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, and history. Only in this way is a thorough knowledge obtained. It remains intellectual property that the child owns for as long as he lives. Only by learning in this way will children think correctly in these subjects. This is so self-explanatory that in the big cities we even have to contend with parents who do not want to give their children the time they need for their confirmation instruction.

With sighs, the pastors have to acquiesce. They'll only get the children after school when they are mentally exhausted and cannot make an effort anymore. In addition, they should expect as little work from the children as possible, because of the demands which their worldly instruction makes on them.



And now let us take up the astonishing view of many Christians that hardly any time at all is necessary for the Christian's education. The highest wisdom that exists, revealed by God in His Word, can just be picked up along the way. Isn't it obvious that the godly worldview [that is supposed to be acquired] is all too curtailed here? "But," you say, "there are surely many in our congregations who must be considered dear congregation members even though they have lacked the school education that has just been described." Well said. But also notice [their defects.] They are often driven to and fro by every wind of doctrine. They are often inclined to the world and its practices. They often show very little Christian understanding in the congregational meetings,

and make worldly measures the bona fide standards for congregational matters. And what about those many thousands who were born of Christian parents, but as a result of such education were so quickly estranged from Christianity? With them it is like Christ says, "They have no root. They believe for a while, but when affliction [*Anfechtung*] comes they fall away." How can you expect that the prayer of the Apostle should be fulfilled in such people?:

That He may give you strength according to the riches of His glory, to *become strong* in the inner man, and for Christ to dwell in your hearts by faith, and to *be rooted and grounded* in love, so that you may grasp with all the saints what is the width and the length and the depth and the height, even recognizing the love of Christ, which surpasses all knowledge, so that *you will be filled with all the fullness of God!* [Eph. 3:16-19]

THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

The Christian worldview requires the *grounding* of youth in the Christian truth. Therefore the Church will fight for the *Christian school* so long as it retains this worldview. With our circumstances we must have schools, and so the preservation of the Christian school is a matter of life and death for us. In many cases the importance of the matter was obscured by wanting to have *German* schools as a counterpart to the public school. Even with the name, “parochial” or “community” school, many a poorly informed Christian has failed to recognize the sharpness of the contrast [between the church school and the public school].³ There may come a time when the German language no longer has a role to play among us. There may also come a time when the Christian congregation considers the establishment of a school as an afterthought. But what matters is that the German or English *Gemeindeschule* be a *Christian* school. And, O God! Let us never experience such a time that those who strive for *this* kind of school should become a hopeless minority in our church. Our Christian parochial school is a product of the godly worldview. Whoever fights for [the worldview], also fights for [the schools].

Even the way this [Christian] school is configured reveals its origin. It cannot deny its origins any more than the public school can. Where Christian children are educated as Christians by Christian teachers who educate as Christians, then the predominant and preferred *subject matter* is what makes people Christians and saves them—*God’s Word*. The best time of the school day is given to this subject and *every* school day has at least one hour dedicated exclusively to God and divine things. Worldly, earthly wisdom comes *second* here, as befits such a people for whom the kingdom of God and His righteousness far surpasses everything else in importance. Since the Christian still lives in the world and is to honor God by serving his neighbor, the Christian child must also be provided with worldly knowledge. [These subjects] therefore also must be taken into account in the curriculum for the Christian school. But as far as their place is concerned, they do not rule, but truly only serve. Like the Christians themselves, so also are their schools: they are in the world, but not of the world.

This fact is also recognized by the world in a characteristic way. Time and time again the Christian school has had to endure hostility from the children of the world. All the education legislation aimed directly at the distinctly Christian school provides the proof that the world instinctively knows how foreign such schools are. [The Christian schools] bear a stamp that the world cannot recognize as genuine without denying their own cause. For this reason

we cannot expect recognition for the civic and social value our schools provide so long as the church pursues this work deliberately and energetically. If the parochial school is recognized by the world, then there is good cause to wonder whether it has remained a Christian school. “If you were of the world, the world would love you.”

In the Christian school the *manner of teaching* is also according to the Christian worldview and is therefore oriented towards God. We are not talking about the technique of teaching here—that is the same for all teaching. What we are talking about here is the *sensibility* [*Gesinnung*] that dominates all instruction. It has been rightly said that in the Christian school all the instruction is *religious*. Not only are the explicitly religious subjects referred to God and derived from God, but the right understanding and the right application is made according to God’s Word in all the other subjects also. The Christian teacher does not describe the necessity of worldly subjects by pointing out that man assures his earthly advancement and lays the foundation for money through them. God’s will is that we should use the gifts He has given us to serve the neighbor. The Christian lives, as a Christian, only for God and to serve God in the neighbor.

The godly worldview dominates the whole presentation especially in the more serious subjects [*Realfächern*]. There are no agnostic-evolutionist viewpoints being taught in science, geography, and world history. What is taught is that everything in the creature is created by God for His glory. All of man’s movements and accomplishments are in God’s hand. World history is the ongoing preaching of the righteousness and merciful goodness of the Creator. If, for example, we teach American history, then we do it from the point of view that the very foundation and ongoing preservation of our republic in God’s hand was only as a means of giving another opportunity for the free preaching of the Gospel in these last days. Is it any surprise, then, that the American world, which only wants to know its history in the form of hero worship, has condemned our history instruction as inadequate, if not hostile?

The godly worldview corresponds also to the *goals* of the Christian school. This has already been spoken about above in part. Since God is the highest good and union with Him is the highest happiness, the Christian school wants to do its part in the pupils becoming and remaining God’s children. The ultimate goal of [the school’s] work regarding the children is their salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. The worldly, civil education goes alongside, because it cannot be otherwise than that a man who is educated for God also is educated for what is best in the give and take of people

with one another. In other words, what the Christian school is not interested in accomplishing in the first place is nevertheless attained by the power of the divine Word anyway, but in such a degree of perfection that no worldly school can ever achieve. The Christian school is sometimes accused of not teaching the children enough worldly wisdom. Therefore, the helpless little ones are put in the world's school, where only such things are pushed. In spite of all such claims the promise holds true: "And all these things will be added unto you." It is also fulfilled here. Whoever honestly, and with Christian sense, compares this claim with Jesus' promise will have to admit that the blessing of God rests also on the Christian schools. They produce more in terms of solid, accurate school knowledge in less time than the best ordinary public school. Christian children in Christian school are learning, because God wants it that way. In addition, the Christian school has the only means of education that can develop a useful, good character. It is not that way in the public school. With all its training it has never produced a single truly good citizen, a single good father, a single good mother. If there is any school that can do such great things, then it is the Christian school and it alone.

With these things we have already started talking about the results of the Christian school. They are just as plain to see as the constant failures of the public school. It is not our intention to stress that the Christian school as a Christian school can have no evil outcomes. But the school does direct itself against all inborn and learned evil in man and fights it, and in the Gospel it offers the opposite good with divine power. We only need to look at the history of our church—that speaks louder than any individual can about the invaluable results of our parochial schools. How many preachers of the Gospel do we have thanks to our fathers being eager to keep Christian education for the young? Likewise, how many of our church's excellent teachers have been educated in those schools? And in so many of our congregations there are members who have only attended the Christian school. They truly form the core, the solid foundation. Who could number them all? It is true that in our parochial schools we educate people with a firm, divinely oriented worldview. When the world calls them "in-

stitutions for making people dumb," we take that as praise, for that which is foolish to the world is precisely what is divine.

CULTIVATING A CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD EDUCATION

The idea that our fight for the Christian school is a fight for the Christian worldview is not negated by the fact that we have to drive quite hard even to get the slightest interest in our own congregations. While this worldview cannot be entirely lacking in any true Christian, it is also immediately evident from the imperfection of sanctification in all

Christians that the godly worldview does not become pervasive in all the areas of human life without effort and struggle. Unfortunately, this is especially evident in the great harm done to many children's souls particularly when it comes to education. If a congregation opposes the establishment of its own school because it is too expensive, it clearly reveals that it lacks the awareness of what

The blessing of God rests also on the Christian schools. They produce more in terms of solid, accurate school knowledge in less time than the best ordinary public school.

is truly the case: Our children belong to God and not to the world. The same applies to parents who cannot be persuaded to entrust their children exclusively to the Christian school. Without a doubt, they are governed by the inborn [i.e. original sin] view that, above everything else, it is necessary to make the children proficient in worldly wisdom. And even if a congregation has a thriving school system, but it has declined without any purely local reasons for doing so, then it seems to be high time to carefully observe whether the godly worldview has not been pushed into the background among them. Perhaps the Word of the Lord applies: "I know your works—that you are neither cold nor warm. Oh, that you would be cold or warm! But because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor warm, I will spit you out of my mouth!" (Rev. 3:15-16)

It is easy to see how the struggle for the Christian school should be conducted from all these thoughts. There is virtually nothing that can be done with legalistic regulations, because the right zeal for the parochial school presupposes the divine attitude that is only produced by the Gospel. The paragraph in the by-laws where the congregation members commit themselves to sending their children to the Christian school does not make anyone do it in the

right way. That only has value as a reminder and belongs to the law as a rule for the Christian. It is even the case that if a father does not send his children to the parochial school, he should not be put under church discipline.⁴ This might just *look* like he is bringing them up in a way that is not at all Christian, and he should probably be asked to remove the appearance of evil. The situation is different, though, if he consciously exposes his children to the ungodly influences of the world's school and thus puts [the child's] salvation at stake. As soon as he demonstrates that attitude, and does so without any reservations, he surely deserves brotherly rebuke.

But success can only be achieved if the right, Christian worldview occupies the dominant position in the people who are to be taught. If a man is such that he is not eager to seek God's glory in all things, then he must first become a Christian before the correct position in the question of raising children is set before him. But if it is only that he is deficient and has not yet understood how decisively the Christian worldview, which he has by faith, settles the question at hand, then evangelical instruction will have the task of making it clear to him. For the sake of God's mercy, which he himself experiences, for the sake of Jesus' love, which is given to him, he will gladly accept the instruction that shows him how he can live up to the heavy responsibility he has towards his children. The evangelical exhortation will then also give him strength to overcome the incessant resistance of his flesh. Consider, too, that this cannot be accomplished all at once, as it is with any other element of sanctification. Therefore, carry on with *patience* and *instruction*.

And what if we should grow so weary in our fight for the Christian parochial school that we fall asleep? What if the testimony goes unheard and the voices fade more and more—"What's the use in trying?" God preserve us with His grace from such an evil time! Luther has spoken in his writing to the councilmen a prophetic word of admonition. This has lost none of its power or applicability and should now shake us up again:

Buy while the market is at your door; gather in the harvest while there is sunshine and fair weather; make use of God's grace and word while it is there! For you should know that God's word and grace is like a passing shower of rain which does not return where it has once been. It has been with the Jews, but when it's gone it's gone, and now they have nothing. Paul brought it to the Greeks; but again when it's gone it's gone, and now they have the Turk. Rome and the Latins also had it; but when it's gone it's gone, and now they have the pope. And you Germans need not think that you will have it

forever, for ingratitude and contempt will not make it stay. Therefore, seize it and hold it fast, whoever can; for lazy hands are bound to have a lean year.⁵ ☞

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End Notes

¹ [The article has this footnote attached to the beginning of it:] "An expansion of an outline for a lecture given at a school convention in Milwaukee."

² Omitted from the translation is what immediately follows this sentence in the original: (*Vgl. brotlos, ehrlos, arbeitslos u. s. w.*) [cf. breadless, honor-less, jobless, etc.]. Perhaps Schaller was anticipating that the reader might be shocked by the harsh idea of the public school being "godless." That might be seen as unnecessarily insulting. He therefore is pointing to other words that work the same way when there is a lack of something.

³ Perhaps Schaller is talking about how the German word, *Gemeinde*, can mean either congregation or community. Since the school was often called the *Gemeineschule*, some thought that it was a community school for German immigrants, rather than a church school for the education of Christians.

⁴ Schaller is almost certainly referring to the so-called "Cincinnati Case" which was finally being resolved at about the time when this article was written. The "Cincinnati Case" was about a Missouri Synod congregation in Cincinnati that began church discipline against a father because he took his son out of the parochial school so that his English could be improved at the public school. After a few meetings with the leaders of the congregation the father quit attending their summons, and so the congregation declared that he had excommunicated himself. Missouri Synod officials as well as the St. Louis Seminary faculty disapproved of the congregation's actions and suspended the congregation's membership in the Missouri Synod. The congregation then made some overtures for membership to the Wisconsin Synod. Some in the Wisconsin Synod, including the seminary faculty at Wauwatosa, thought this was highly improper, but others fraternized with the congregation. The question of whether synodical suspension must be honored as divine testimony (similar to the way that the divine testimony involved with excommunication should be honored), is what led to the Wauwatosa faculty's work on the doctrine of ministry and Church beginning in 1911. This would eventually develop into the so-called "Wisconsin view on Church and ministry."

⁵ LW 45:352-253, *To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools*





From Discipline to Self-Discipline



Nebuchadnezzar was irate. You would be too if your plans were foiled like his.

The music played and the people bowed down to worship the golden image. The music played and everyone obeyed. Isn't the world a lovely place

when everyone just does what you tell them to do?

Isn't the world equally unlovely when someone, anyone, decides to resist? And so Nebuchadnezzar was irate because Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego would not bow down and worship. "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter" (Dan. 3:16).

As the fire was stoked seven times hotter and as the three men tumbled fearlessly into the furnace, the contrast between those three men and all the rest was made vivid. It was not, however, a contrast between obedience and disobedience, as Nebuchadnezzar might have imagined. Instead, it was a contrast between slavery and freedom, between compulsion and love.

Nebuchadnezzar would have been satisfied to have everyone obey and for his kingdom to be full of dutiful slaves. It's all he was aiming at. He did not care what was in their hearts. He did not care if they only did it because they feared the furnace. And so he commanded and compelled and that was good enough.

But the God of Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego was different from Nebuchadnezzar. The three men worshiped Him freely. They served Him willingly. And they trusted Him with their lives: "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king" (Dan. 3:17).

That's the goal. That's what God wants: free sons and not

slaves, love and not compulsion. That is clearly so much better, and that is what every parent should want as well: children who are willing and not under compulsion. Children who are free and not slaves.

Nebuchadnezzar's tactics are enticing. Every parent knows how valuable it is when a child obeys. A child who does what you say when you say it—what could be better than that? It's tangible. It looks good. And it's attainable. All it takes is the right application of force, the right system of punishments and rewards, consistency and follow-through.

At the same time, every parent knows there's something better because every parent knows how much more glorious it is to see joyful and willing obedience than mere or grudging obedience. When there are no eye-rolls or sighs or complaints or dragged feet, that's a gracious thing in the sight of every parent. It's even better when a child obeys because he wants to be helpful or recognizes the good of the task or trusts that his parents have his best interest in mind.

Nonetheless, parents are easily tempted to imitate Nebuchadnezzar, to settle for mere obedience from their children or even to aim at it; to play the music and be satisfied if the kids go through the motions; to forget about heart and soul and to long for anything resembling compliance.

However, to settle for compliance is to deny the humanity of your child. It is to treat him like an animal, "like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you" (Ps. 32:9). Worse than that, it is to destine a child for a life of slavery. A man who is formed by compulsion never learns self-control and will always be a slave. "A man without self-

control is like a city broken into and left without walls” (Prov. 25:28). That leaves only the question of who his slave-master will be. Ultimately every spiritual slave becomes beholden to sin, death, and the devil.

But children are not animals, and they are meant for freedom. Contrary to the educational ideals of our age, children are not best formed by the indulgence of their passions or thoughtless conformity to bureaucratic standards. This is common sense, as was J. Gresham Machen’s observation that “what is good for a Ford car is not always good for a human being, for the simple reason that a Ford car is a machine while a human being is a person.”¹ Likewise, C.S. Lewis noted that former ages had a better grasp on the sanctity of human nature: “For the wise men of old, the cardinal problem had been how to conform the soul to reality, and the solution had been knowledge, self-discipline, and virtue.”²

It’s common sense, but it’s an insight that also has divine proportions beyond what the wise men of old realized. After all, Christian parents are charged with bringing up their children “in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). That is to form their children into the image of Jesus, the firstborn from the dead, the truly free Son of God. Paul Gerhardt shows us what that freedom looks like when he puts on Jesus’ lips these stunning words: “Yes, Father, yes, most willingly I’ll bear what you command Me. My will conforms to Your decree, I’ll do what you have asked me.”³

It is to that Son of God that the heavenly Father has promised a people who would “offer themselves freely” (Ps. 110:3). They are a people with whom God has made a covenant. No longer would His law come from outside of them, compelling and threatening them, but “I will put My law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jer. 31:33-34). That’s the goal: life as a forgiven and free child of God.

You could describe the process of getting there as a move from discipline to self-discipline. Somewhere along the way children must learn not merely to respond to the cor-

rection and direction of their parents towards what is good. They must learn to correct and direct themselves. They must learn not merely to do what is good, but to love what is good. They must learn not merely to obey, but to “discern what is pleasing to the Lord” (Eph. 5:10) and to be pleased by it as well.

Any lesson that needs to be learned must therefore also be taught. How do parents set out to teach self-discipline?

How do they teach their children to be free?

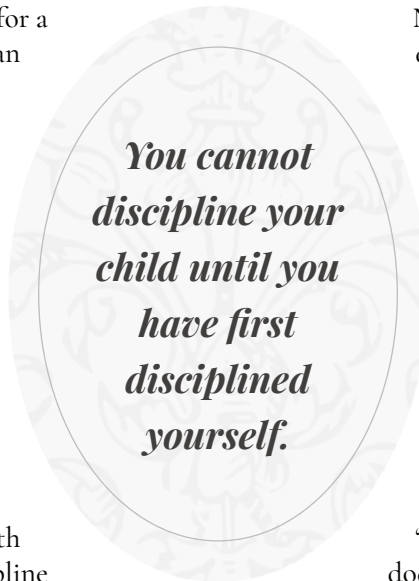
Note, from the outset, that discipline is required. You can’t get to self-discipline without going first through discipline. “Whoever spares the rod hates his son” (Prov. 13:24). A child must learn that he needs correction. He must learn to be like the wise man who loves the one who reproves him (Prov. 9:7). He learns all of that in being disciplined by a father and mother who love him and who have been charged by the Lord with training him in righteousness. Even more, he learns that best from a father and mother who have been forgiven and know how to forgive.

“For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?... For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it” (Heb. 12:7, 11).

But again, you cannot stop at discipline. The training must be towards self-discipline. Moreover, all the tools of teaching should be applied to this goal: explicit instruction, practice and repetition, and, perhaps most importantly, a sound example for imitation.

That sound example is often overlooked. Here’s one way to put it: you cannot discipline your child until you have first disciplined yourself. “None can give to another what he does not possess himself. No generation can bequeath to its successor what it has not got.”⁴ That was C. S. Lewis’s diagnosis of the failure of one generation to hand the faith over to the next. The same goes for self-discipline. In order to teach your children to be free and not slaves, you must yourself “live as people who are free” (1 Pet. 2:16).

That means diligence in the mortification of the flesh. It means saying “no” to yourself, your sinful desires, your bad habits. It means saying “no” to yourself, not just in front of your children, but also when they are not looking. After all, if you want to teach your children to indulge the passions of their flesh in secret, all you must do is indulge the



passions of your own flesh in secret.

This also means doing things willingly and with joy. How often do parents teach their children to be slaves by doing things grudgingly and under compulsion? “I HAVE to go to this meeting.” “I HAVE to go down to the DMV.” “I HAVE to go wash the dishes.” And thus the kids are taught that there are some things you must do simply because someone else is disciplining you. And they are taught that your attitude towards such tasks may be as grumpy as you like.

But there should be no such tasks for the free children of God. There should be no tasks which you only do because someone is forcing you. There’s not even a hint of goodness in acting with bitterness or contempt. “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). To do things any other way, with grumbling and complaining—it is, at best, lip-service to God and, at worst, to submit again to the yoke of slavery.

In short, parents should be the kind of people they want their children to become. Live and act as one forgiven and loved and set free by God, and your children will learn to do the same. They will see your joy in willing obedience, and that joy will become their own. They will see your treasures that are eternal and incorruptible, and they will desire those same treasures for themselves.

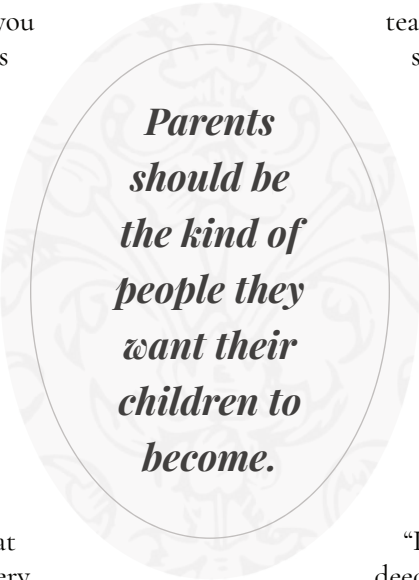
Instruction and practice are also integral in learning self-discipline. It is best to think of these lessons as preparatory. Too often parents think that nothing needs to be taught until there is an emergency. That is, you don’t need to teach self-control until the lack thereof really starts to cause trouble. But that is no way to think of such vital and valuable skills.

Consider how a basketball team practices, or how an orchestra rehearses. Consider how much time is spent repeating the fundamentals, running the plays, learning the cues, memorizing the passages, and developing muscle memory. Far more time is spent in practice than in the game or in rehearsal than in the performance.

That’s so for at least two relevant reasons. The first is that expertise takes time. You get good at what you practice, and the more you practice, the better you get. And secondly, the time to make mistakes is when the stakes are low. The time to get things right is when getting things wrong will not be costly.

Apply those principles to teaching self-discipline, and you can see how the best time to teach and practice self-discipline is precisely when it seems to matter least of all. It’s when the stakes are lowest. It’s when you’re least provoked by their grudging obedience. It’s when you’re cool-headed and hardly upset. It’s then that teaching your kids to obey willingly and insisting on cheerful and prompt behavior make for good habits that will carry them through when the stakes are high and self-discipline is needed most of all.

The world would have you think that all of this is a pipe dream. Does it seem unimaginable that your children would be joyful and willing? Does it seem too lofty a goal that they would be able to stand before a Nebuchadnezzar unfazed? It’s tempting to aim for something that seems more realistic, but listen to the promise of Jesus: “If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (Jn. 8:36). This move from discipline to self-discipline is a lesson taught by God. It’s by means of the Gospel, the power of God, that those in bondage are set free. And it is parents whom God has appointed as His instruments to communicate this freedom to their children. ☞



***Parents
should be
the kind of
people they
want their
children to
become.***

Rev. David Buchs is pastor of Concordia Lutheran Church in Fairhaven, MN.

End Notes

¹ J. Gresham Machen, “The Necessity of the Christian School,” reprint of a lecture given at the Educational Convention held in Chicago under the auspices of the National Union of Christian Schools, August 1933, accessed June 22, 2023, <https://www.pcahistory.org/documents/necessity.html>.

² C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 88.

³ *Lutheran Service Book*, (St. Louis: Concordia, 2006), #438, “A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth”, v. 3.

⁴ C. S. Lewis, “On the Transmission of Christianity” in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), p. 116.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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.

Imagine 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

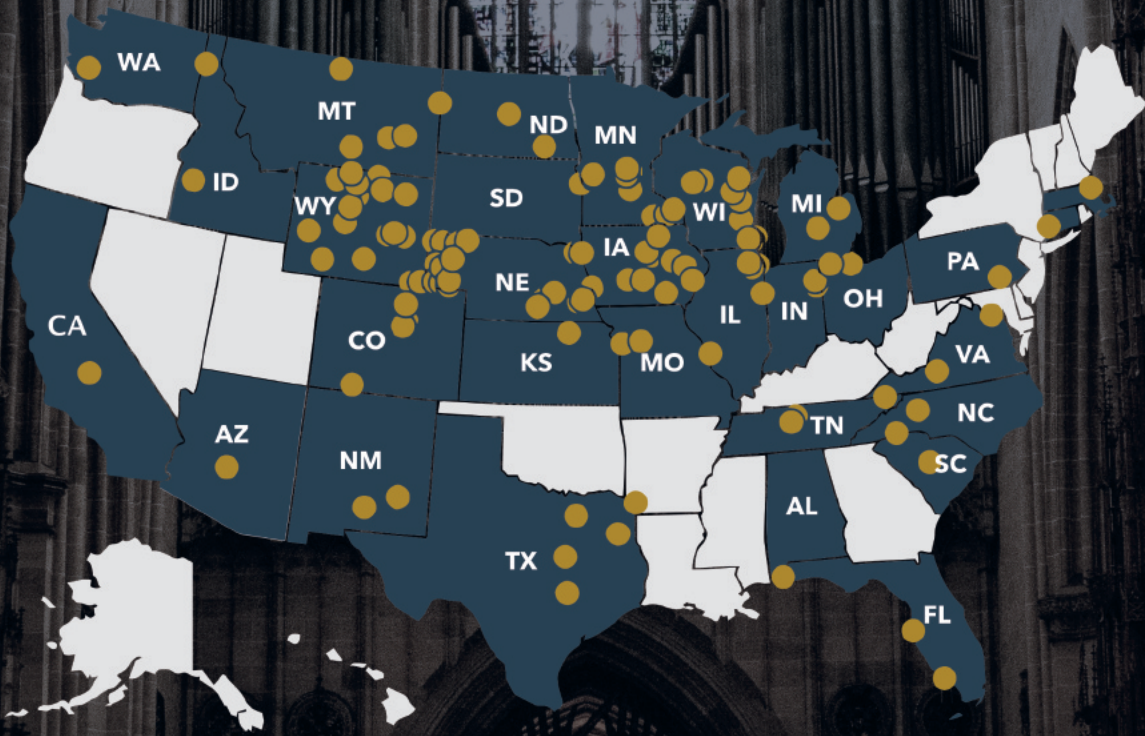
This is why Luther Classical College exists.

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 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.

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Art in Our Lutheran Churches

Early in 1522, angry crowds in Wittenberg broke stained glass, burned paintings, and toppled statues of Mary and the child Jesus. Inspired by the iconoclastic rhetoric of scholar and reformer Andreas Bodenstein von Carlstadt, the rabble believed they were upholding the ancient commandment against idolatry by smashing the sacred art of the city church. When Luther returned in early March, he put an immediate end to the violent destruction by preaching a series of powerful sermons in which he condemned the unruly violence.¹

Five hundred years later this event has become a foundational story for any Lutheran understanding of the use of images and art in the churches. Unlike other reforming groups in the sixteenth century, the Wittenberg Reformation was not iconoclastic, and most of the theologians around Luther recognized that there are both legitimate and illegitimate uses of liturgical art. When Luther condemned the iconoclastic violence begun by Carlstadt, and when he subsequently reflected upon this in later writings, he followed a very venerable tradition of image use in the Latin Church, a tradition which stretched back at least to Gregory the Great: images are useful for teaching the unlettered faithful, as they present a kind of visual Bible.²

Since the sixteenth century, at the heart of a Lutheran “Theology of Art” has been this valuable pedagogical or catechetical power of art to instruct the faithful. This may still be the fundamental understanding of art in our churches today, but in our contemporary culture, glutted as it is with cheap, fake images and thoroughly starved of real beauty, Lutherans would be wise to recover not only the pedagogical dimensions of art to teach, but the meta-

physical power of art to communicate via beauty. This adjustment is necessary in a world as ugly and barbaric as our own, and it’s one that reaches not only West, perhaps to Gregory, but East to the two greatest Christian metaphysicians of the image: John of Damascus and Theodore the Studite. This article will uncover the theological meaning and liturgical value of art for Lutherans today and then advance three challenges to pastors and churches.

Since the sixteenth century, what has happened in the world of art? Simply put, there have been seismic shifts in the purpose, production, techniques, and understanding of art. In late medieval Wittenberg the very notion of “art” was still thoroughly ancient. “Art,” from the Latin *ars*, simply means “craft, skill, handiwork.” One uses art, that is, skill, in creating objects for human use, whether functional or liturgical. Our modern notion of art as the creation of an experience for persons of high culture is utterly at odds with ancient and medieval notions.³ For them, as for the Reformers, church buildings, furnishings, pulpits, and art are simply good or bad, and we must keep in mind that the Greek for “good,” *καλός*, also means “beautiful.” Beauty for the ancients was not a subjective experience of pleasure in the eye of the beholder; it was, primarily, the radiance of the Good, the attraction of perfection.

During the ancient iconoclastic controversies in the East, John of Damascus (d. 749) and Theodore the Studite (d. 846) wrote important works which outlined a distinctively biblical understanding of beauty and the use of images in churches.⁴ Their views have impacted all subsequent Christian reflection on art and images. In their apologetics, both John and Theodore remind readers of Bezalel and Oholiab, the skillful craftsmen inspired with creative wisdom from God for the production of the tabernacle and



ancient Israelite liturgical items (see Ex. 31). Following St. Paul's teaching in the Letter to the Romans (1:21), both John and Theodore also point out that God's "invisible attributes" are communicated via visible creation. Finally, in recognizing the reality of the incarnation, these authors argue that Christians should be able to make images of Christ Himself; for Christ's divine and human natures exist in the harmony and unity of His Person, and persons may be depicted in art. Therefore, an image of Christ, such as an icon or crucifix, is itself a lesson on incarnational theology and can direct the devotional gaze of Christians to the Savior of the world who has become man for our sakes. This classic defense, along with Gregory's observation about the usefulness of images in teaching illiterate Christians, constitutes the essential core of a Christian theology of art.

Following Luther, but not the more radical reformers, Lutherans today generally recognize that scenes and symbols in our school rooms and sanctuaries can instruct us as well as aid us in meditation. Today, far from having a kind of superstitious and "talismanic" view of art, as if Christ or a saint could be "contained" in a statue or image, we rather fall into a common, uncritical, modernist mindset: the belief that images, which should just "fill up space" or "make

people feel good," are optional matters of taste, rather than important modes of communication to the intellect and soul.

If we take the more ancient notion of art as skillful, beautiful work done for the glory of God and the use of His people, and if we remember the classic defenses of sacred art, then we should see that the use of beautiful artworks in the church—that is, artistic depictions of Christ, scenes from the Bible, and lives of the saints—can be of inestimable power for catechizing and inspiring the faithful today. In approaching the end of this piece, I offer three spurs to action regarding the matter of art in the churches.

First, faithful pastors today must understand and communicate the singular power of beauty to form the imagination and lift heavenward the inward gaze of the heart. In our visual culture today, starved of true beauty and glutted with what is artificial and cheap, we should not underestimate the power of truly beautiful images to elevate souls to the contemplation of God. Good art has the power to rightly form and focus us, centering us on Christ.

Second, we must remember that the question of art in the churches is not a matter of individual taste or arbitrary decision. Unfortunately, in the latter half of the twentieth century, with the construction of many new churches and the commission of new works of stained glass, Lutherans (like so many others) frequently fell into the trap of an uncritical acceptance of modernist art styles, such as abstract expressionism and minimalism, rather than turning ever again to the rich wellspring of European Christendom. These modern styles, in turn, stemmed from revolutionary movements earlier in the century which often were based on a severely un-Christian philosophy of art. Rather than make a banner or painting "in the current style" simply because it is the one that "everybody is using," churches instead need to do their research, striving to use forms and methods that honor God's creation and the heritage of Lutheranism.

Finally, more liturgical art needs to be designed and made by Lutherans, for Lutherans. Churches should resist buying a new banner or altar cross simply based on online availability and cheapness. If there is a woman in a congregation who knows how to sew and craft banners, she must be encouraged to teach younger people to continue the craft. If there's a man in a parish who went to art school, a congregation must be supportive of his vocation, commissioning him to use his skills however he can, for example, in executing a painting for the church's narthex, a redesign of the church's website, a seasonal bulletin cover, or materials for Sunday school.

Sacred Art—skilled and creative craftsmanship that honors God and assists worshipers—for Lutherans must be biblical and beautiful. It should stem from our faith in our resurrected Lord, recognize the talents of our parishioners and pastors, and communicate to the world and to the faithful the excellencies of Christ (1 Pet. 2:9)—the very image (“icon,” εἰκών) of the invisible God (Col. 1:15)—who became flesh (Jn. 1:14).

To Christ be the glory; may all our effort and creativity point to Him. ☩

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End Notes

¹ Carl C. Christensen. *Art and the Reformation in Germany*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press. 1979. 40-41. To date this is probably the best overview of iconoclasm and theologies of art during the Reformation in German-speaking lands.

² See Gregory the Great's epistle to Serenus, included in Gesa Elsbeth Thiessen, ed. *Theological Aesthetics: A Reader*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 2004. 47.

³ See Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. *Christian & Oriental Philosophy of Art*. Mineola, NY: Dover. 1956. 27.

⁴ See John of Damascus. *Three Treatises on the Divine Images*. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press. 2003., and Theodore the Studite. *On the Holy Icons*. Crestwood, NY: 1981.

See the artworks on the inside front cover, selected with the help of Rev. Carnehl. – The Editors



Review: On Giving Advice to God

On Giving Advice to God: Devotions on the Wisdom of God and the Foolishness of Man (Two Volumes), by Daniel M. Deutschlander. Northwestern Publishing House, 2017/2018



Rev. Deutschlander has provided us with clear, evangelical, pastoral, and sound biblical devotions in these two volumes. Each devotion is about three pages long. The first volume covers Advent through the Ascension of our Lord. The second volume covers the church half of the Church Year, departing from the lectionary to cover the theological topics of redemption, the means of grace, the church and her pastors, the new life, and the end times.

The underlying theme of these volumes is Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 1:25, "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." The title, "On Giving Advice to God," puts the devotions into perspective. Deutschlander sets forth the biblical or doctrinal situation, offers the most reasonable human re-

sponse to it, marvels at how foolish God's response appears to be, and then proceeds to show us the boundless grace of God's wisdom. He understands how people think. He is familiar with the carnal objections to God's grace and is quite adept at refuting them.

Deutschlander writes with confidence that the great mysteries of the faith are inherently powerful to elicit, sustain, and strengthen faith. From the incarnation to the crucifixion of Jesus, he shows how what is contrary to human reason and expectation is exactly what the doctor ordered for our spiritual health. He does not hesitate to delve deeply into Christian doctrine to find the truth that meets all human needs. These devotions are doctrinal, catechetical, pastoral, biblical, and, above all, evangelical.

Rev. Deutschlander demonstrates how instruction in the pure doctrine is the essence of pastoral care in his devo-

tions on redemption, the means of grace, and the church and her pastors. Referring to the “pictures” of atonement, reconciliation, and justification, he teaches and applies the gospel to faith and for faith. His theology is thoroughly Lutheran and evangelical. While emphasizing faith, he does not make it the cause of what it receives, but teaches divine, gracious monergism throughout. He stays within the Synodical Conference tradition on such matters as objective justification and the efficacy of the absolution, clearly teaching both.

His presentation of the doctrine of the means of grace is clear and thorough. While following the structure of the Catechism, he does not refer to it or cite it. Among the means of grace, he includes: the gospel in the Word, the gospel in baptism, the gospel in the Sacrament of the Altar, and the gospel in absolution. He does not explicitly mention the sermon, though it might be assumed that for many if not most Christians, this is where the Word of God is most definitively given.

His treatment of absolution was to this reviewer quite refreshing. Instead of debating about whether absolution can be bestowed only by the pastor, he teaches that it is given to all Christians and assumes that Christians will make use of the keys in their daily lives. He also encourages Christians to avail themselves of the care of their pastors. He treats the corporate confession and absolution in the Divine Service, not as an inferior form of absolution, but as the ordinary way it is bestowed in the life of the Christian. Still, he promotes and encourages personal and private confession and absolution as well. His treatment of absolution shows a seasoned familiarity with people. He does not impose. He does not lecture us on how authentic Lutheranism requires a particular form of confessing and absolving. Instead, he speaks in generous and evangelical language, encouraging sinners to avail themselves of God’s absolution in whatever form it may come. Rev. Deutschlander, a pastor and teacher in the Wisconsin Synod for many years, says nothing on the topic of the church and the pastoral office that would not receive a hearty “Amen” from a Missourian.

As stated above, the theme is the counterintuitive teaching of the Apostle Paul that God’s foolishness is wiser than man’s wisdom. Developing this theme throughout accomplishes three things. First, it reminds us of our inherent spiritual blindness and utter dependence on the Word of God for spiritual light. Second, it encourages us to rely on God’s Word implicitly, especially when it appears to our human reason to be foolish. Third, it prepares us for the disdain of the world that thinks it knows so much better

than God about what is what in the spiritual realm, yet remains blinded by unbelief. Deutschlander is familiar with the daily battle the Christian must wage and endure. His devotions provide weapons with which to fight.

One last observation is in order. As Lutherans today face the threat of antinomianism from certain quarters and acquiesce to the threat by neglecting the teaching and preaching of sanctification, these volumes provide great encouragement to the preacher to preach sanctification. Deutschlander does so quite effectively, showing the organic connection between the forgiveness God freely gives us in Christ and the new life we live on account of being justified by God. His emphasis on the new life of the Christian in no way detracts from the centrality of the doctrine of justification, but rather confirms it. Reading these devotions will reinforce you in your prior Lutheran conviction that the pure doctrine is food for the soul.

I highly recommend these volumes as additions to your daily devotions. ☛

Rev. Rolf Preus is a retired parish Pastor of 41 years.



How Is One To Regard Mixed Marriages Between Christians and Unbelievers?



The following translation first appeared in the January 19, 1904 issue of *Der Lutheraner* under the title “Was ist von Mischehen zwischen Christen und Ungläubigen zu halten?” The author is Carl Manthey Zorn (1846-1928). Zorn served as a missionary in India and a parish pastor in Sheboygan, WI and Cleveland, OH. He was a prolific writer, writing many series for *Der Lutheraner* as well as devotional works and popular commentaries on books of the Bible. Zorn’s message in this short article is timeless, that we ought to prepare and train our children to enter into Christian marriages, the neglect of which imperils their souls. – R.L.L.



The Holy Spirit reports in Genesis 6:2 about such mixed marriages. He says, “the children of God saw” (those who belonged to the church) “the daughters of men” (who lived without God’s Word,) “that they were beautiful, and

took them for wives, whom they wanted.” This was in the first times of the world. Then the young men no more asked whether those whom they wanted to take for wives were believing and God-fearing. No, they only saw whether they were beautiful girls who pleased their eyes. They took the daughters of the unbelieving and godless children of this world as wives and did not resist their impulses. So at that time the church of God mixed itself with the unbelieving world.

What did God the Lord say about this? “The Lord spoke: ‘Men want no longer to be disciplined by My Spirit, for they are flesh’” (verse 3). The Lord recognized that men no longer wanted to allow themselves to be ruled by His Spirit through His Word, that they no longer sought after His grace and eternal salvation, that they no longer wanted to live according to God’s blessing, but that they wanted to live according to the desires of their corrupted hearts. They fell from faith.

And what was the consequence? A godless generation

grew upon the earth, whose evil was great, and every thought and intention of their heart was continually evil. To be sure, there were powerful and famous people among them. But what good was it? It was only earthly power and fame (Gen. 6:4-5).

And what was the next consequence? The great flood.

Why does the Holy Spirit tell us this? In order to warn us.

Even now there are many young people who grew up in the church. They are not asking whether those they want to marry are faithful and God-fearing. No, they only seek after what pleases them, and they take unbelieving and godless children of this world in marriage following their impulses. So now also the church of God mixes with the unbelieving world.

What does God the Lord say about this now? Quite the same thing as He said before. So also now many young people no longer want to let themselves be governed by God's Spirit through His Word. Also now they are not seeking after God's grace and eternal salvation. Also now they do not care to live with God's blessing, but they want to act according to the desires of their corrupted hearts. Now many also have fallen from the faith. If this were not the case, would they then enter into marriage, into this most intimate fellowship, with unbelievers and the godless? Certainly not.

And now what will be the consequence? A godless generation will grow up, whose evil is great and whose every thought and intention will be earthly, worldly, fleshly, lawless, and evil always. To be sure, there will be powerful and famous people among them who do great things on this earth. But what help will it be?

Yes, there are exceptions. It does happen that through God's grace an unbelieving husband or an unbelieving wife in a marriage is led to the church and becomes a child of God. But as a rule it happens as here the Holy Spirit speaks.

And what will now be the next consequence? God's judgment. Yes, yes, we should know, "that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly," (2 Pet. 3:5-7).

Therefore we should consider this our warning.

You ask, what should Christian parents and pastors then do with these young people who want to enter into mixed marriages with unbelievers? They should warn them with

the Word of God, which you have just heard.

Will that help? When the young folk have once cut themselves loose, then warning will help little. The old believing fathers and preachers surely gave their warnings before the great flood. But did it help? And to coerce—one is not able to coerce. The cause lies within, as God says: "Men want no longer to be disciplined by My Spirit, for they are flesh." But nevertheless—we should warn them.

But I want to say something which is better than warning.

One should take every care to raise his children from infancy in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

You parents, let God's Word dwell in your homes. Speak God's Word to all your children, young and old. Hold regular, short, and simple home devotions. Pray with your children. Give them a good example. Send your children to true Christian schools. When they are confirmed, then watch over them in the love of Christ. Pray for them without ceasing.

You teachers, give quality religious instruction. Make this time dear and worthy to the children. Paint for them Jesus before their eyes. Teach them the heavenly doctrine in such a way that they notice well that you want them to be saved.

And you pastors, let your humble colleague say a word to you too. Give your confirmation instruction, catechesis, and sermon in a way which is clear, childlike, and simple. Do it always with fervent prayer, that through these things the Spirit of God works in their hearts.

These are the means to raise children and youth in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

These efforts will not and cannot be in vain.

In this way a generation of youth will grow up which allows itself to be governed by God's Spirit through God's Word. It will seek God's grace and eternal salvation, live under God's blessing, and it will desire to fight against corrupted desire and hold onto the faith.

This generation of youth will not want to wed itself to the unbelieving world, but will let itself be warned. ❧

C.M.Z.

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Review: *Pride and Prejudice*



Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) is a novel in need of redemption. Prejudged as “chick lit” (that is, literature for young women), fit only for AP English classes in high school, it would be salutary if men and women of all ages could swallow their pride and receive it as a challenge to virtue and wisdom.

When today's traditional, American Christians call to mind the “better times” that we perhaps hope to restore, our most common images of such times are often drawn from two sources: from the time of the settling of the American plains, and from the suburban lives of white Americans in the decade or two following the Second World War. That is to say, in our imaginations, the golden age was *Little House on the Prairie* and the silver age was *Leave it to Beaver*.

However, these golden and silver ages actually contradict one another, and neither were actually terribly traditional. Suburban life of the 1950's was already a repudiation of the prairie life of the 1880's. Moreover, Roman Italy, Athenian Greece, and Medieval Europe all variously experienced that both life on the frontier and life in the city after a great victory are often quite unhinged from the life-ways of the ancestors. And these times that are in fact the least traditional leave their marks on our psyche precisely because they are such brave new worlds, and the afterglow of unprecedented experiments lives in our hearts as the memory of a lost, better world.

It is good advice to read books written before you were born. Since the frontier is closed and post-war optimism has given way to frustration and fragmentation, those seeking grounding in the good and the true will have to look for stories from before the birth of the American mythos, and from outside the scope of our nostalgia.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, we have such a story, in plain English, about normal lives in long-standing, traditional, An-

glo-Christian culture. Though set during the Napoleonic wars (1797-1815), readers hardly know that big things are happening in the world of the book, so comfortably nestled are we in rural England among middle-class households and upper-class estates.

The conflicts of the novel are stated in the title, and these domestic demons haunt a story of courtship and marriage. The plot is straightforward, without flashbacks or much foreshadowing, and it is light on symbolism. Elizabeth, the second-born of five Bennet sisters, is struggling under pressure to find a suitable husband. She is antagonized by members of her family, by the compromises of her peers and the temptation to compromise herself, and by her own misguided esteem of herself and others. As the story progresses, the middle-class Elizabeth and the upper-class Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy begin to circle one another, drawn toward and repulsed by each other, pressed together and pulled apart by internal and external motives. Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy notes, is not the prettiest or the wittiest Bennet sister, and Darcy himself is far from the most handsome, charming, or adventurous of men.

This personal drama, told with brightness and classical comedy, highlights the tensions and burdens of the classes and the sexes. Jane Austen, however, never tries to deconstruct the social and moral picture of her world. Rather, through her heroines, she points toward virtue within the social drama. Her work is notable in the history of the novel inasmuch as she shares a vision of virtue in continuity with that of Homer, Aristotle, and the New Testament; she may in fact be one of the last in English literature to do so.¹ Uniquely for this tradition of virtue, Austen is concerned about the shape of the good life lived within the contingencies of modern social existence, which was beginning to take shape in her time.

Today we often experience life as a loosely connected collection of lives: work life, family life, personal life, church life, social life, and now virtual life. Our excess en-

ergy is consumed in the deadly seriousness of our leisure activities, our attention dominated in negotiating and maneuvering various social interactions. If we are of a mind to lead the pack, we study the fine art of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*—our democratized version of Machiavelli's *The Prince*. And we are familiar, of course, with this “drama,” the cycle of pride, prejudice, shame, resentment, self-doubt, passive-aggression, slights, betrayal, ghosting, calling-out, hashing and rehashing, and the angst over introversion and awkwardness, all having to do with insignificant things said or done, which concern only a few people.

Unlike our favorite parts of the American golden or silver ages, much of the complexity and stress of social living in *Pride and Prejudice* is alive and well among us. What has withered in our day is any sense that “the drama” has a higher *telos* or goal other than itself, or that it calls for the cultivation of any virtue. Here, Austen can help, as these are her concerns.

As you read this novel or any of her others,² pay attention to the importance she places on the following themes: 1. real virtue versus counterfeit posturing and signaling; 2. self-knowledge and repentance versus self-esteem and social anxiety; and 3. a single integrity or constancy of the person within all domains of life versus the diffusion of the soul into various personalities. In the world of *Pride and Prejudice*, evil is manifest in meddling and thoughtless judgments. Virtue is small refusals to compromise coupled with a healthy sense of one's own fallibility and short-sightedness. Heroism is quietly stepping in to save a neighbor from shame. It is better, we might learn, to conquer oneself on these battlefields than it is to try to save or burn the world. And, in the end, the world of the novel is saved, but only because people get over themselves and get married.

And speaking of that, having noticed that our fragmented existence generally lacks any *telos* (What is the point of the drama? What firm footing is it all circling around?), notice that this is not the case for Jane Austen or Elizabeth Bennet. The goal is marriage, and married life. And before you dismiss this as merely the particular convention of particular women of a particular class from a particular time and place, as you might dismiss any romantic comedy, recall one final thing: finding and living with a worthy spouse is a chief topic of Biblical wisdom.

It is well-known that the wise Proverbs of Solomon conclude with the “excellent wife” of chapter 31. Less well-appreciated is that this image is not, in the first place, impressed upon young women, but upon our sons. The atten-

dant drama of proposing oneself as the head of a woman of intimidating excellence, and the cultivation of the necessary virtues to be found acceptable and competent as such—these are the challenges wisdom gives to all young kings.

The crisis of *Pride and Prejudice* is Mr. Darcy's first proposal of marriage to Elizabeth; the climax of the story is his second.

In the first proposal, after screwing up his courage to confess his affection, “[Darcy] spoke well, but there were feelings besides those of the heart to be detailed, and he was not more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than of pride. His sense of her inferiority—of its being a degradation—of the family obstacles which judgment had always opposed to inclination, were dwelt on with a warmth which seemed due to the consequence he was wounding, but was very unlikely to recommend his suit.”

Rebuffed by his affectation of condescension, and harboring her own unjust prejudices of him, Elizabeth refuses his first proposal. Some months later, he tries again. In the intervening months, things have changed for both Elizabeth and Darcy. A transformation along the lines of the virtues mentioned above has happened, and the possibility of a new *telos* has emerged. Now, says Darcy to Elizabeth: “You are too generous to trifle with me. If your feelings are still what they were last April, tell me so at once. My affections and wishes are unchanged, but one word from you will silence me on this subject forever.’ Elizabeth feeling all the more than common awkwardness and anxiety of his situation, now forced herself to speak; and immediately, though not very fluently, gave him to understand, that her sentiments had undergone so material a change, since the period to which he alluded, as to make her receive with gratitude and pleasure, his present assurances.”

We have grown accustomed, in our own times, to repeat to ourselves the meme that weak men have created these hard times in which we live, and that these hard times call for strong men who can restore the good and golden times. Perhaps, and perhaps a fine handbook to test the wisdom and virtue of such self-consciously strong men would be Jane Austen's literature for women. 🍷

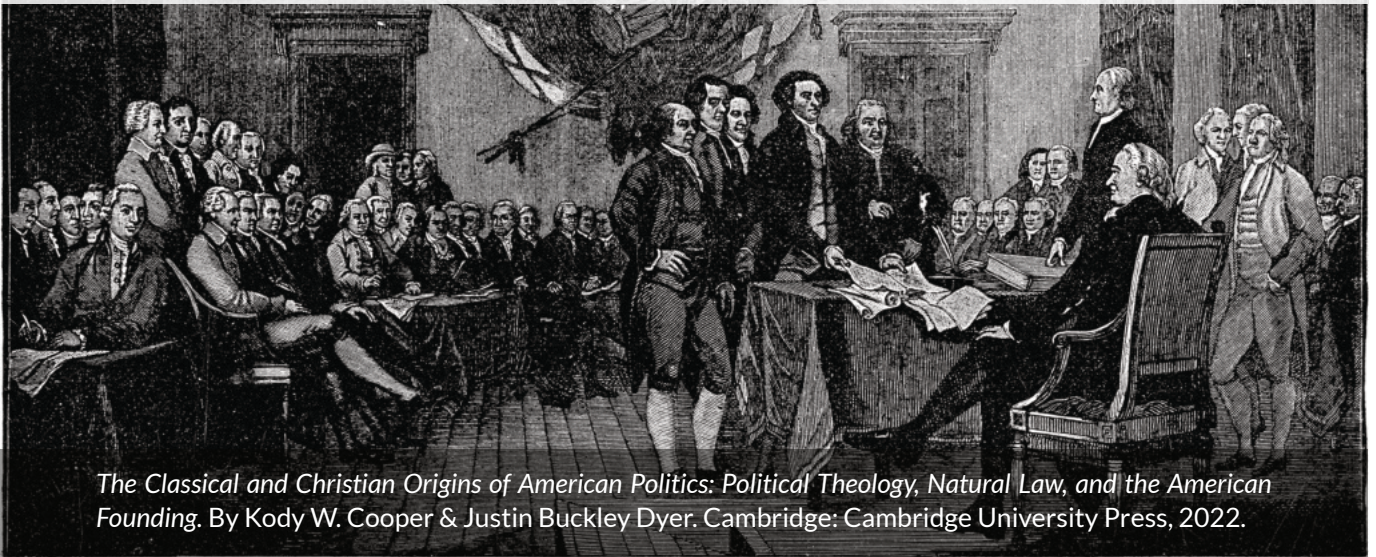
Rev. John Henry III is Pastor of St. James Lutheran Church in Northrop, MN and Zion Lutheran Church in Fairmont, MN. The following review was completed on July 12, 2023, and is dedicated on that date in thanksgiving for 15 years of marriage to Laura.

End Notes

¹ For a treatment of Jane Austen's relationship to the classical virtue tradition, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd Edition, University of Notre Dame Press, 2007, especially pages 181-87 and 239-243.

² For example, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Emma*, among others.

Review: The Classical and Christian Origins of American Politics



The Classical and Christian Origins of American Politics: Political Theology, Natural Law, and the American Founding. By Kody W. Cooper & Justin Buckley Dyer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

In this important book Kody Cooper and Justin Dyer argue that the American founding formed a synthesis of Christian theology and classical philosophy. When 18th-century patriots advocated for liberty, innate rights, popular sovereignty, rule by consent, and resistance to tyranny, they were doing nothing less than claiming inheritance of a Christian natural law tradition that predated the Enlightenment by hundreds of years. They gave breath to what became the public ethos of American life at its birth and which provided it coherent direction for the future. That future was one of dedicated constitutionalism that fostered the common good not merely for short-term dividends in the immanent frame, but one that oriented community life toward a transcendent reality. Law, rule, and citizenship were anchored to eternal principles. To this end, the study's six central chapters consider the Pamphlet Debates of the 1760s and 1770s (Ch. 2), reassess Thomas Jefferson's political theology (Ch. 3), analyze Just-War theory on the eve of the revolution (Ch. 4), survey Diplomacy and Intelligence networks (Ch. 5), recount post-revolutionary disputes about popular sovereignty (Ch. 6), and summarize the jurisprudence of the Supreme Court Justice James Wilson (Ch. 7). None of these chapters attempts to break new ground, and their thesis is not meant to be a rev-

elation. This is a work of correction. Decades of revisionist scholarship have so obfuscated American history that once-clear truths are now "hiding in plain sight" (pp. 6).

At the heart of the book is the question of what role God played in the conception of American political authority and its execution. Of course, America was not founded to be a sectarian confessional state, but Christianity nonetheless deeply influenced its founding. It is not for nothing that the American founders cited the book of Deuteronomy more often than they did the entirety of John Locke's corpus. This was not merely superficial language that packaged otherwise secular ideas; Christianity gave shape to America's most fundamental principles. Yet scholars have been at pains to advance the "subversive theology thesis," which takes mention of God and "Nature's God" as really referring to some kind of Hobbist or Rousseauian pantheism. On this reading, the founders effectively gave up the Christian natural law tradition and instead embraced a new secular liberal individualism. This ideological revolution, so the argument goes, takes God's sovereignty as absolute and "unbounded by anything other than arbitrary will" (pp. 13). The implications are profound because politics, like morality, derive from theology. Both Hobbes and Rousseau assumed a metaphysics that renders virtue artificial and erases meaningful distinction between good and evil. They take the Euthyphro question and bullishly an-

swer it by saying things are only good if the gods (or, here, read the monarch or general will) say so. If natural law is not tethered to eternal precepts, laws are little more than civil conventions designed to keep peace and stability. Human flourishing becomes defined by arbitrary sovereign will. As long as the social contract remains intact, governments and societies have unlimited license to pursue any course of action and call it good.

Cooper and Dyer carefully demonstrate the opposite: the founders took for granted that human reason can comprehend natural laws established by a lawgiver who is separate from creation. They believed that nature imposed moral obligations that order things to their proper good. And they assumed that all authority emanates from God and that legitimate rule, in whatever form, remained subject to eternal principles revealed in nature and Scripture (pp. 4-5). The American founders thus answered the Euthyphro question quite differently: God's goodness and justice were coterminous, and that meant governments are legitimate only as far as their ordinances align with natural law. It was not the arbitrary assertion of American will that justified resistance to British rule. It was rather that the British government mandated unjust legislation contingent on George III's unbounded sovereignty. The Christian natural law tradition had always recognized the role of consent, even in monarchical societies. So, when the United States Constitution speaks of "We the People," it means what the authors call "secondary sovereignty," which recognizes that man depends on God for his existence and is subject to an objective moral reality, and that governments are "a form of participation in the eternal law" (pp. 180-1). In short, the former reading of American politics sits squarely within a this-worldly context; the latter recognizes that the founders accepted without question a transcendent reality beyond the immanent frame.

The debate of whether or not America was founded as a Christian nation is often really about whether or not she ought to be one. One gets the feeling there isn't much of a debate anymore. The fact is mainstream America is abandoning the values that once defined it. Those who think patriotism, religion, and having children are "very important" have dropped by 32 percent, 23 percent, and 29 percent, respectively, over the past twenty-five years.¹ Meanwhile, vicious identity politics divide the world into oppressors and oppressed, deny a common human nature, and reject universal reason. An identity group's arbitrary will forms the basis of a truth that is defined chiefly by its transience. Like the pagan poet Ovid relates in his *Metamorphoses*, they "speak of forms changing into new enti-

ties."² Hobbes and Rousseau may not be the wellspring of American politics, but they sure do track now. They both invite an immanentist faith that sacralizes the world and worships the creature rather than the Creator. Is it any surprise to see a push to make Earth Day a religious holiday³ or that paganism is among the fastest growing religions in the country?⁴

Given this discussion, it is hard to avoid a cynical outlook with the current state of affairs or to indulge in a sinful nostalgia that neglects to thank God for mercies that are new every morning.⁵ But what do we do? Against these trends some Christians have felt the right path is to enter political office and, once there, clandestinely draw closer together church and state to achieve a conservative common good. This "integralist" approach seeks to expand government regulations according to Christian ideals in the attempt to make the state an arm of the church. While ostensibly attractive as a counterweight to identity politics, Cooper and Dyer caution against this chiefly because it is inconsonant with American constitutionalism and limited government. It also ironically depends on the very immanent, Hobbist basis for authority that undermined American ideals in the first place. We would do well instead to take Cooper and Dyer's advice and re-embrace the constitutionalism of the American founding. It does indeed direct local community life toward the transcendent good, and so we should learn it, teach it, and practice it in our vocations as citizens. But we do even better to heed Augustine's words in *The City of God Against the Pagans*: "So it falls out that in this world, in evil days like these, the Church walks onward like a wayfarer stricken by the world's hostility, but comforted by the mercy of God."⁶ ❧

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End Notes

¹ Aaron Zitner, "Americans Pull Back from Values that Once Defined U.S., WSJ-NORC Poll Finds," *The Wall Street Journal*, Mar. 27, 2023, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/americans-pull-back-from-values-that-once-defined-u-s-wsj-norc-poll-finds-df8534cd>.

² Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book I, quoted in Liel Leibovitz, "The Return of Paganism," *Commentary*, May 2023, <https://www.commentary.org/articles/liel-leibovitz/paganism-afflicts-america/>.

³ Paul Greenberg and Carl Safina, "The Case for Making Earth Day a Religious Holiday," *Time Magazine*, April 21, 2023, <https://time.com/6273684/earth-day-religious-holiday/>.

⁴ Leibovitz, "The Return of Paganism."

⁵ I learned of this insight on sinful nostalgia second hand from some who listened to Rev. Dr. Adam Koontz speak at the Wittenberg Academy Family retreat in April of 2023 at Camp Okoboji, Okoboji, Iowa.

⁶ Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God Against the Pagans*, Books XVII-XXII, trans. Gerald G. Walsh, S. J., and Daniel J. Honan (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 174.



BEDE

Getting to Know the Fathers: The Venerable Bede

The forty days after the resurrection of our Lord were coming to an end. The Eve of the Ascension had arrived, the celebration of Christ's departure from this world to take His place at the Father's right hand. The time for the old monk to depart and ascend to God had also come. He had been ill since Passiontide but had remained active teaching, dictating, and praying in spite of the growing weakness of his mortal frame. With labored breath he had chanted the daily antiphons, psalms, and hymns, rising also during night to keep vigil with psalmody and prayer, his diligence and joy undaunted by the feebleness of his lungs. Now at last he sat in his cell, too weak to rise; but still the words of Scripture and liturgy sprang forth from his lips to the ears of his companions. With tears he chanted, among the other hymns and bits of liturgy, the Vespers antiphon for the day's feast: "*O Rex gloriae, Domine virtutum, qui triumphator hodie super omnes caelos ascendisti,*" etc. that is, "O

King of Glory, Lord of power, Who, triumphing this day, ascended above all the heavens, do not leave us comfortless, but send the promise of the Father to us, the Spirit of Truth, alleluia." The whole day long he kept at it reciting, praying, encouraging. As the sun drew near to the horizon again, having said his goodbyes and having made bequests to his friends of his meager possessions, he asked one of his disciples to place him on the floor facing the chapel, so that he could face the place where he had worshiped for nearly his entire life. And there on the pavement, with his final breaths he quietly chanted, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen," and died.¹

Thus passed one of the greatest minds of the early middle ages, the Venerable Bede. Almost all that we know about this great doctor of the church comes from an autobiographical note appended to what most would consider his *magnum opus*, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*,

as well as from a few autobiographical clues scattered here and there in his other writings, and from a letter from his disciple Cuthbert to another monk which describes their beloved master's death. But then there probably is not much to know about him. He was a man who rarely ever left his monastery, a place he had lived since the age of seven, and upon the lands of which he was born. The few times he did travel he never left the isle of Britain. And yet from his little cell in Jarrow, Bede became one of the most important figures of the Northumbrian renaissance.

By his own report, much of his greatness was due to the influence of his two abbots, Benedict Biscop, the founder of the monastic community at Wearmouth and Jarrow, who, during his travels through Europe, gathered together a very fine library of books for the monastery; and Ceolfrid who educated and ordained Bede, and, evidently, made him a teacher of his brethren. Bede read voraciously—Scripture, patristics, classics, scientific and historical works—and then, having made the knowledge his own, taught others what he had learned. Like many great men, his excellence was not limited to any one field of scholarship. He was a prolific author and penned some sixty books over his lifetime.² Among his writings are works of history, Biblical commentary, homiletics, hymnody, science, philosophy, geography, and hagiography. In all of these Bede shows himself to be most competent. His homilies on the Gospels prove him to have been both an excellent exegete and an eloquent preacher. And while some of Bede's Biblical commentaries seem little more than a recapitulation of Augustine and other patristic authors, they stand as important links in the chain of theological transmission, bringing early Christian thought to a medieval audience.

His most important and influential work, however, is his *Ecclesiastical History*. Here Bede shows us just how careful a scholar he was. Unlike most medieval chronicles which simply record a date and a few lines about what had happened that year, Bede gives us a rather sweeping narrative of England's story from the time before the Romans down to his own day. Conceived of as a history of the English church, it is also one of the only witnesses extant to the early days of Saxon England and the stories of its people, rulers, politics, wars, and of its faith. It is from Bede that we learn much about the Christianization of the Saxons, both through the work of Roman missionaries like Augustine of Canterbury, Paulinus of York, and James the Deacon, and by Irish monks from Iona like the holy abbot Aiden of Lindisfarne. It is also from Bede that we hear the exciting history of the seventh century kings of Northumbria and their battles with the pagan King Penda of Mercia

and the Welsh and Christian King Cadwallon of Gwynedd.

But it is not just the subjects and personalities that Bede covers in his *Ecclesiastical History* that are important, but also his historical method. Unlike so many "historians" before and after him, Bede was a true historian. He painstakingly researched his subject matter. On the few occasions when he did travel to visit people, or when travelers visited him, he recorded what he could discover from them, sometimes their eye-witness accounts, other times recollections of what they had been told by those who had been eyewitnesses of the history of which he wrote. He wrote letters to others seeking such knowledge. He sent to Rome to gather documents concerning St. Augustine's mission to England. He even set up a network of people across Britain to help him gather his data.³ Bede was a true historian in the modern sense of the word! His work remains the basis for nearly every attempt to tell the history of Saxon England.

He was also a man of humble and pious faith. Diligent in his study of the Scriptures and of the Church's theology, serious in his prayers, arduous and thorough in his work as priest and scholar, he is a shining example to all who take their faith and their vocations seriously. His is also a wonderful example of a Christian death. Having died in faith on the Eve of the Ascension, it is fitting that the one hymn by Bede in *Lutheran Service Book* is that great Ascension hymn, "A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing" (#493). Here again we see Bede's faith in life and in the face of death, a faith rooted and grounded in Christ Jesus:

"Be now our joy on earth, O Lord,
And be our future great reward...
Then throned with You forever, we
Shall praise Your name eternally." ❧

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End Notes

¹ Cuthbert. "Letter to Cuthwine." Stpeters-wearmouth. Accessed April 27, 2023. <https://www.stpeters-wearmouth.org.uk/cuthberts-letter/>. This is but a paraphrase. It is really worth reading the full letter.

² Bede, *History of the English Church and People*, p.286-288. London: The Folio Society, 2010. Bede provides a list of all his works, most of which have been translated into English.

³ Melvin Bragg. Introduction to *History of the English Church and People*, by Bede, p.xxiii-xxiv. London: The Folio Society, 2010.

Meet Johann Crüger



The following is an imagined setting-down of the early life of composer and cantor John Crüger (1598-1662), perhaps as if he left a record behind to inspire his sons and daughters, to inspire you, dear reader, with a good example of how Lutheran education, like that which will be provided by Luther Classical College, can form people who produce things that glorify God and spread His saving Word for generations.



Like so many other people who make a name for themselves in Berlin, I was not a native Berliner. I was a proud son of Lower Lusatia, formerly ruled by the Habsburgs. Since the deal between Emperor Frederick II and Elector John George, my homeland has been ruled by our neighboring Electoral Saxons. Despite having dubious rulers like the Habsburgs and Elector John, who catered to Roman Catholic rulers and forces throughout the great war, my people have been Evangelical since the days of the Reformation.

My father Georg was a well to do and pious father and husband. He was what our family name says we are: “der Krüger,—the innkeeper or tavernkeeper of Groß Breesen, a village north of Guben. And he was a pious Evangelical. He married the daughter of the town pastor, the Rev. Kohlheim. He stayed strong in the faith even as the Jesuits threatened the Habsburg lands with their drive to return Evangelical territories to the papacy. He later endured through the various plagues, wars, and other unrest that swept through Lusatia.

“The Breesener village school is no longer enough for you, John, and God would have you do more in life than be an innkeeper.” Father sent me off at age twelve to daily Latin school down in Guben. There I learned Latin thoroughly, and in addition, theology, music, and singing. I sang in the *Knabenchor*, in which the other boys and I were paid to sing chorales throughout the Church Year on Sundays and feast days. This was where language, poetry, Evangelical theology, and music first began to interact in my heart and mind.

After three years of Latin school I was deemed a scholar, so at the age of fifteen and with my parents’ encouragement, I set out walking to find the best education I could. I walked five hours to the school at Sorau, the oldest city of Lower Lusatia. Before that winter set in, I moved on to Gymnasium at Breslau. The next spring, I set out for a nearly 200-mile walk into Roman Catholic Moravia to study at a Jesuit College in Olmütz. I guess you could say I was up for a challenge. Yet the Jesuits were not too inter-

ested in this “Lutheran” student. They could be very mean! So I put 400 more miles on my walking boots, this time to the Free Imperial City of Regensburg.

There I studied under Cantor Paul Homberger. He took me in, but the old Cantor always was very critical of my musicianship. He drove me to work hard on my organ skills, my improvisation skills, my composition skills. It was the best thing for me, considering the path I was called to follow.

After an intense year with Cantor Homberger, I walked through Bavaria, Bohemia, and Austria, through Habsburg Hungary, Moravia, and Saxony, from where, as the year 1615 was drawing to a close, I first reached the old double city on the Spree River: Berlin and its small sister city, Cölln. Little did I know Berlin would become my home where my career as a church Cantor and composer would flourish. Gymnasium studies took back my attention, while I was also tutoring children of a wealthy Berlin merchant to make ends meet.

By 1616 I completed my studies as a scholar and prepared for advanced study in theology. I had learned my basic foundations in language and poetry and literature. I had learned organ and composition and music theory from the old Cantor in Regensburg. Now it was time to learn thoroughly God’s Word. What Cantor worth his walking shoes should not have that?

I would walk one final stage—a pilgrimage, of sorts, to the home of Luther’s spiritual heirs: Wittenberg. There Luther’s spiritual children taught, and his spiritual grandchildren studied. There Luther still seemed to be breathing and full of life—it was intellectual and spiritual and physical home. There I matriculated on 18 October 1620, finishing my studies in the spring of 1622.

God blessed me then with a quick call to service in His Church: the honorable city council of Berlin called me to a double office of Cantor of St. Nikolai Church, and Gymnasium teacher of the Grey Cloister school. I arrived back to my friends in Berlin and was installed on Sunday, 23 June 1622. I was just 24 years old. I was paid more than enough to care for myself: forty talers and about 45 gallons of rye to drink or sell at my choosing every three months. Turns out, once a tavern keeper...

All was not pleasant in those days. The coming clouds of the Thirty Years’ War overshadowed all we did, even though it usually raged on elsewhere in Germany away from Berlin. But there were plenty of plagues, rampant inflation, poor harvests, and dysentery to make life miserable and death a constant companion here in Berlin. The ruling electors tended to dabble in Reformed theology, and our

Evangelical pastors were constantly making a stand for the truth of God’s Word.

Nevertheless, my duties were to accompany the daily church services, teach the grammar school boys to sing and read music and know music theory, to teach arithmetic, and to take care of all music at city and church festivals, at funerals and processions, at weddings, and at baptisms. In those days I started my own *Knabenchor* of twenty-four of the poorer students attending the Gray Cloister school.

God blessed me with a wife in the summer of 1628, bringing me together with Maria Beling, the daughter of the mayor of Bernau. Maria had already suffered the death of one husband before marrying me. God gave us five children to raise to His glory. But the cross comes to Christians to strengthen our faith. My dear mother, who had come to live with us after my father died, was taken from this life in 1632. Over the next four years the Lord took unto Himself two of your fellow siblings. Finally in 1636, Maria died. This pushed me into depression and illness, and I nearly died from it. As I struggled, I stopped composing music, and buried myself in my daily duties.

But the Lord shone His light upon me through two people. First, I met an innkeeper’s daughter! Half my age, Elisabeth Schmidt was a cheerful, brave woman, a talented singer, and one industrious mother. We were married in winter 1637, and God blessed us with fourteen of you dear children!

Secondly, God brought me my friend and pastor, Paul Gerhardt. I met this man, one of the greatest of our Evangelical pastors and poets, in 1643. He had already endured much cross-bearing in his life too. Working together, we praised God and made known His deeds in Christ in many memorable spiritual songs.

John Crüger’s “Praxis Pietatis Melica,” a hymnbook he first published in 1647 with fifteen of Gerhardt’s hymns set to his tunes, would go on to be published for 29 editions through 1702. Among other hymns, Crüger set “Awake, My Heart, With Gladness,” “O Lord How Shall I Meet Thee,” and “Jesus Priceless Treasure,” collaborating with the golden age of Lutheran hymnists like Paul Gerhardt and John Franck. He also composed the tune to Martin Rinkart’s immortal text, “Now Thank We All Our God.” Upon his death on February 23, 1662, his numerous eulogists called Crüger the Asaph of their day, after the legendary progenitor of the singers’ guild under kings David and Solomon. 🍷

Rev. Jacob Sutton serves as the chaplain of the Lutheran Community Home, Seymour, IN. He previously served as associate pastor at Faith Lutheran Church, Plano, TX, and pastor of Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church, Terre Haute, IN.



The Night Will Soon Be Over

Mark Preus, 2018

7.6.7.6.D

Ach Gott vom Himmelreiche; Anonymous (1536)
Setting: Michael Praetorius (1609), *Musae Sioniae*, VII.90
alt. *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941)

1. The night will soon be o - ver, When dawn will bring to sight
2. Take cour - age then, my spir - it, With flesh still weight-ed down;
3. Still heav'nward you are go - ing, Though nar - row is the way;
4. It is His guilt - less suf - fring, His pure and ho - ly death,

What Je - sus will un - cov - er With His own glo - ry's light,
Take hope you will in - her - it A glo - ry - weight - ed crown,
Christ's Word the path is show - ing So that you will not stray;
Which is the on - ly of - fring That gives a sin - ner faith;

When all that brings us sor - row Will fade a - way like mist,
When Christ, your bod - y rais - ing From dust that you be - came,
He leads you to re - pent - ance To be con - formed to Him,
It shows a gra - cious Fa - ther, Who knows your fee - ble frame,

And heav - en's bright to - mor - row Will ush - er in the Feast.
Will bring His child - ren, prais - ing His ho - ly, sav - ing name.
Who dai - ly cleans your con - science In blood shed for your sin.
Who gave His Son, your Bro - ther, To give to you His name.

5. Then claim what God now calls you—
His child should know his place!
When sin on sin appalls you,
Abounds much more His grace,
And when in all your weakness
You see no strength within,
The Crucified with meekness
Will take away your sin.

6. Dear Abba, hear my crying,
I know not how to pray!
Your Spirit in me sighing
Has greater words to say;
Then let Life's Giver lead me
To seek in Christ Your love,
And with the words that feed me
To prayer my spirit move.

7. So that when comes the hour
When all will be made known
And Christ in glorious power
As Judge of all is shown,
I will appear before Him
Judged holy in His blood,
And sinless will adore Him,
My Brother and my God. ❧

PRESIDENTIAL PROFILE

Luther Classical College is seeking a president to lead the College in the Lutheran confession, academic excellence, and pious integrity. Our ideal candidate will have the following qualities:

1. Confession of Faith

- a. Candidate is an ordained pastor of the LCMS.
- b. Candidate possesses a high view of Scripture as the inerrant Word of God and holds a quia subscription to the Book of Concord.
- c. Candidate is committed to the practice, preservation, and promotion of traditional Lutheran liturgy, hymnody, and music.
- d. Candidate enthusiastically agrees with the LCC Confession of Faith.

2. Piety of Life

- a. Candidate's personal and family life exemplifies the Christian culture we promote at LCC: the husband of a pious wife, with devout children, in the habit of daily devotions, self-controlled, hospitable, kind, etc. (Titus 1:6-9).

3. Understanding and Promotion of Classical Lutheran Education

- a. Candidate genuinely understands classical Lutheran education and sees its promotion as serving the divinely ordained estates of family, church, and civil government.

4. Established Member in the LCMS (or in a synod in fellowship with the LCMS)

- a. Candidate has a genuine love for the LCMS and wants to work for her to remain faithful to her Lord, and when she strays, to return to His Word.
- b. Candidate has and wants to retain good relationships with various entities and offices with the Synod.

5. Competence in Development and Finance

- a. Candidate has the competence to direct and collaborate with the CFO and the Office of Advancement in order to make wise financial decisions for the college and help in fundraising.

6. Effective Administrative Leadership

- a. Candidate demonstrates competence to lead the various components of the college effectively.
- b. Candidate can confidently lead the faculty and staff.
- c. Candidate can effectively establish and maintain relationships with other college presidents.

7. Teaching Experience

- a. Candidate has teaching experience at the college or seminary level, or has demonstrated ability teaching at conferences, retreats, etc.

8. Academic Qualifications

- a. Candidate has the academic qualifications to teach faculty and students, give confidence to donors, and fit the accreditation standard.
- b. Candidate has an earned Ph.D., D.Min., or equivalent, or will complete the same by Fall of 2024.



LUTHER CLASSICAL COLLEGE

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

— PRESIDENT —

OF LUTHER CLASSICAL COLLEGE

The Regents of Luther Classical College are pleased to announce a call for nominations for President of Luther Classical College. We have drawn up the **Presidential Profile** to describe the ideal candidate for the first president of the College (*see the inside back cover*). He will be the man who leads the College as spiritual head, as administrator, and as the chief representative of the college to supporters and to the public. The office of President of the College is a high and difficult position, but the Regents have already nominated many competent men. We are now opening nominations to our supporters.

WAYS TO NOMINATE

Any member of a supporting congregation of Luther Classical College is invited to nominate a qualified candidate by emailing us at nominations@lutherclassical.org.

Any member of an LCMS congregation may recommend a qualified candidate to the Board of Regents. The Board may then nominate from these recommendations. We are happy to receive recommendations at nominations@lutherclassical.org.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR NOMINATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For nominations or recommendations, please include name and contact information for the candidate as well as a description of qualifications for the position.

DEADLINE

All nominations for President must be emailed to nominations@lutherclassical.org no later than October 15, 2023. The Regents will then publish a list of candidates who have been nominated and let their names stand.

We commend the **Presidential Profile** to your reading (*see the inside back cover*). We pray our gracious God and Lord to bless us with a faithful and capable man to lead Luther Classical for years to come!