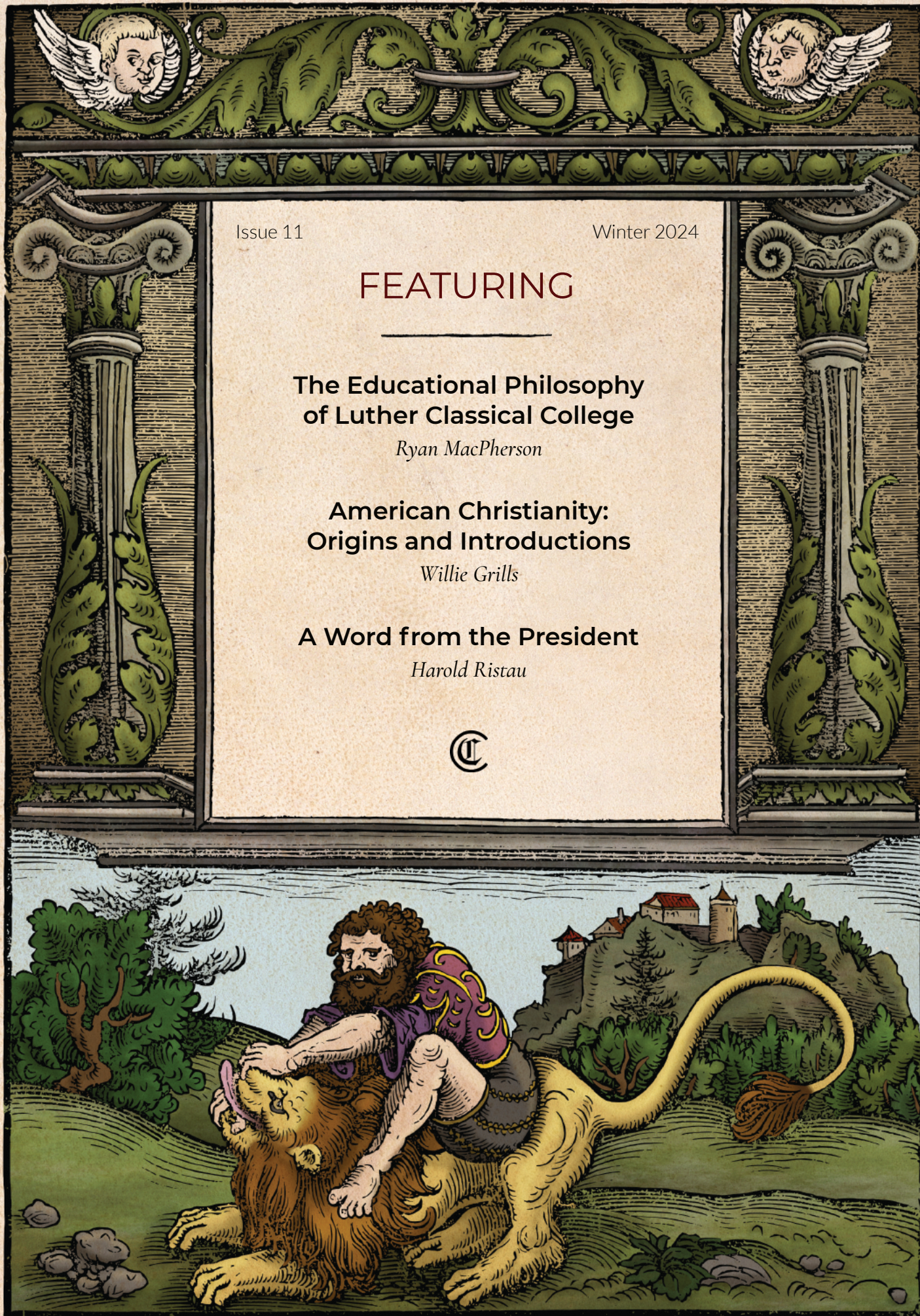


Christian Culture

A MAGAZINE
FOR LUTHERANS



Issue 11

Winter 2024

FEATURING

The Educational Philosophy of Luther Classical College

Ryan MacPherson

American Christianity: Origins and Introductions

Willie Grills

A Word from the President

Harold Ristau



NOW ACCEPTING “GAP YEAR” STUDENT APPLICATIONS FOR FALL 2025

Luther Classical College is pleased to welcome **early applications** from students who will complete high school by June 30, 2024, i.e., students who expect to have a “gap year” between their completion of high school and the launch of LCC in August 2025. Applications will be processed this spring. Students who are granted admission will have the opportunity to reserve their seat by May 1, 2024.

Additional applications from next year’s high school senior class will be accepted during the 2024–2025 school year. Together with successful “gap year” applicants, these regular applicants who are accepted for admission will begin classes in August 2025.

All students desiring to attend Luther Classical College in its first year or a subsequent year are strongly encouraged to begin their admissions journey by filling out the Pre-Admission Form at lutherclassical.org/pre-admission.

For more information about the application procedure and timeline, visit lutherclassical.org/admissions, or contact Arika Kleinschmidt, the Admissions Coordinator, by email at admissions@lutherclassical.org, or by phone at 307 284 1730.

TWO VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUSICIANS

attending the Christian Culture Conference, June 4-5, 2024

Luther Classical College is pleased to present a **Benefit Concert at 6:30 pm on Wednesday, June 5** in conjunction with the Christian Culture Conference. This concert will be open to the community and to conference attendees in an effort to raise support for LCC’s music program, to the glory of God. The first half will consist of a recital showcasing great classical and sacred pieces, while the second half will present portions of Handel’s *Messiah*. If you can commit to a **dress-rehearsal from 1-5 pm** on the afternoon of June 5, in addition to the concert that evening, consider volunteering in two different ways!

First: Musically-talented students and professional musicians are encouraged to submit auditions of sacred and classical pieces from the Western canon to be considered for the first half of the program, not to exceed 10 minutes in length. Deadline is **March 30**, and selections will be announced by **April 30**. Please view directions and submit auditions at tinyurl.com/CCCaudition2024.

Second: Conference attendees ages high school and older are welcomed and encouraged to join our “Grand Chorus” for the *Messiah*, consisting of “The Hallelujah Chorus” and “But Thanks Be to God.” Please view directions and sign up at tinyurl.com/CCCgrandchorus2024 to receive a link for a virtual orientation meeting in April.

Thank you for your consideration!

Questions? Comments? Please reach out to benefitconcert@lutherclassical.org

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Educational Philosophy

of Luther Classical College

The following article has been excerpted from the “Educational Philosophy” section of the Luther Classical College Academic Catalog. lutherclassical.org/academic-catalog

I. JESUS CHRIST IS THE GOOD, THE TRUE, AND THE BEAUTIFUL



classical liberal arts education pursues the Good, the True, and the Beautiful by standing on the shoulders of giants, that is, by reading the Great Books of Western Civilization. From the Great Books, students glean wisdom from the past that will instill virtue in the present as they continue the Great Conversation into the future. The Great Conversation—probing the depths of human nature and reaching toward the heights of human potential—encompasses the Trivium (Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric) and Quadrivium (Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy). Such an education fosters a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom and, indeed, beyond the diploma. The student is thus “liberated” (hence, the term “liberal arts”) from a slavish submission to the grueling tasks of checking off boxes to complete one’s schooling, get a job, and enter the rat race of the global economy. But where is Christ in the preceding summary?

Christianity corrects what is misaligned in secular traditions of the liberal arts not by *claiming* that Jesus is the Good, the True, and the Beautiful to which all scholarship should be devoted—for that would still be pagan man’s arm reaching toward God—but rather by *proclaiming* that Jesus *was, is, and ever shall be* the Good, the True, and the Beautiful *from* which all scholarship derives both its proper origin and its proper aim. One does not establish the Christian liberal arts simply by adding Jesus to the Greco-Roman tradition; rather, one discovers that God was there all along, albeit hidden, as Luther said, behind a mask. Before the Greeks began philosophizing, when Romulus had barely built Rome, King Hezekiah “did what was *good* and *right* and *true* before the Lord his God” (2 Chronicles 31:20), *beautifying* the temple and purging it of idolatry (2 Chronicles 29).

Hezekiah endured problems still familiar today—a time when leaders of church and state alike had turned from the ways of the Lord, when an idolatrous parent was likely to murder a child and call it a holy act, a time when genuine education had been banished from the kingdom. Hezekiah

studied the Scriptures, cleansed the temple, revived the Passover celebration, and clung anew to the words and promises of the coming Christ. That Messiah came with the birth of Jesus, who taught, “No one is good but One, that is, God” (Matthew 19:17). It is Jesus alone who came as God in the flesh. Therefore, He was and is and always shall be “the Good.” Jesus furthermore revealed himself as “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). God’s people “worship the Lord in the beauty of His holiness” (Psalm 96:9), and St. Paul wrote of those who proclaim Jesus as the Christ: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!” (Romans 10:15, quoting Isaiah 52:7) Thus, the Good, the True, and the Beautiful—the one God-Man Jesus Christ—pursues us, not through our own studies of the ancients, but through His called servants preaching His Word and administering His Sacraments. To be educated in the Christian faith is not to grasp for God, but to learn *that* He came *for* us (as the atoning substitute for sinners) and *how*

before God that at last brings eternal comfort to the sin-struck conscience (Romans 3). The valuing of “philosophical” righteousness—of the pagan’s best efforts at goodness, truth, and beauty—as useful for this life, but the disparaging of all human efforts as useless before the throne of God, and the corresponding celebration of Christ’s own righteousness offered to the Father on behalf of sinful man (Romans 4–5)—this distinction between two types of righteousness drove Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon to reform the curriculum at the University of Wittenberg and thereby to reform the church (Apol. IV [II]). It all began with careful attention to language: “The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17, quoting Habakkuk 2:4). From the plain grammar and vocabulary of Holy Scripture, all else flowed: the Six Chief Parts of Luther’s Small Catechism, the distinction (but never quite a separation) between God’s two kingdoms of church and state; the equipping of the saints for vocations within family, church, and society; the cultivation of the visual arts and music; and, from a renewed

Before the Greeks began philosophizing, when Romulus had barely built Rome, King Hezekiah “did what was good and right and true before the Lord his God,” beautifying the temple and purging it of idolatry.

He still comes to us (through His means of grace).

God comes to sinful man in a redemptive way only through Word and Sacrament, but God comes to all men in a providential way through the testimony of the conscience, the exercise of right reason, and the usefulness (at least for matters in this life) of the senses. What the Greeks and Romans accomplished in seeking goodness, truth, and beauty relied upon God’s blessing of natural revelation. While some of them rejected the Creator and committed grave sins against nature (Romans 1), others recognized the work of God’s law in their hearts and trained themselves in civil righteousness by respecting God’s gift of the conscience (Romans 2). Thereby they planted Western Civilization in the soil of history, a civilization rooted in the natural law of the Creator but bearing the best fruit only when also nourished by the Gospel of the One who alone is Good, True, and Beautiful. When the Goodness of Christ becomes the goodness of man as a gift received by faith, then the result is not merely an outward civil righteousness that even the best citizens among the pagans were able to produce in ignorance of the Gospel, but a righteousness

perspective, the pursuit of the great learning of the past—in service to man in the present and in glory to God without end. Luther Classical College has inherited, and stands ready to cultivate, this tradition of classical, Lutheran education.

IV. THE VALUE OF STUDYING MULTIPLE DISCIPLINES

Each academic discipline brings both a unique set of methods that form the mind and a unique set of subjects that fill the mind, equipping students not only to pursue depth within that discipline but also to achieve greater breadth as one discipline is integrated with another. The disciplines are not equal partners in the pursuit of wisdom, but rather theology serves as *regina scientiarum* (“the queen of the sciences”), to which all other studies are subordinate. Classical languages come next in importance, because without them a student cannot directly grasp the foundational texts of Western Civilization, nor adequately understand the grammar and rhetoric even of modern English. Just as the Northern Renaissance (and the Lutheran Refor-

mation that it fostered) focused on the *studia humanitatis* (“the humanities”), so also at Luther Classical College the disciplines of history, law, literature, and philosophy receive strong emphasis. The University of Wittenberg cultivated mathematics and natural science (or what then was called “natural philosophy”), even as Reformation theology encouraged the Scientific Revolution. Finally, no classical curriculum, especially not a curriculum for Lutheran students, would be complete without due attention to the fine arts. Woodcuts, paintings, and church architecture (ornamented with sculptures and stained glass) give visual expression to the “*solas*” of the Reformation, even as church music carries the Gospel to people’s ears and implants those saving truths deep into their memories.

THEOLOGY

Unfortunately, theology became in the nineteenth-century a pseudo-scientific discipline by selling the birthright of faith in exchange for a pottage of rationalism, from which liberalism arose in triumph: denying the miraculous, downplaying human sin, and celebrating each person’s contemplation of divine transcendence. With theology departments thus secularized, anthropology departments struck the next blow, relegating Christianity to one belief system among many in a cross-cultural smorgasbord on a menu of “comparative world religions.” The resulting separation of faith from fact, with a coincident relegation of faith to feelings, ushered in an era of postmodern subjectivism. A retreat to medieval scholasticism would at least reestablish objective truth in the realm of theology, but the rigid gaze of the hyper-logical scholastics too often missed the forest rooted in grace for the trees that bore good works.

The Lutheran Confessions approach theology differently from the prevailing medieval, modern, and postmodern alternatives. The Confessions return to Scripture alone, pursuing theology as God (*theos*) talking (*logos*) to us about Who He really is, not man talking about whom he mistakenly supposes God to be. Lutherans deploy reason as a servant to faith, not a master over faith, gathering from the plain patterns of Greek and Hebrew grammar what the Holy Spirit’s words mean. The Scriptures proclaim Christ: the Son of God who became the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world. The plain words of Him Who is the Word mean that “baptism now saves you” (1 Peter 3:21), and likewise that “is means is” in Christ’s institution of the Holy Supper. The core teachings of the Old and New Testaments have best been summarized in the Six Chief Parts of Luther’s Small Catechism. Just as a heartfelt compassion

for souls and the pastoral care of troubled consciences receive repeated emphasis in the Lutheran Confessions (even amid necessary and proper academic debates over the definitions of “*de congruo*” and “*ex opere operato*” and “*genus majestaticum*”), so also Lutheran theology simultaneously serves both the mind and the heart of man. The modernist’s choice between rationalism and pietism need not be made, because a third option, orthodox confessional Lutheranism, shall be preserved for all eternity, to be taught and preached, chanted and sung, lived and passed down the generations.

Understanding man’s First Article creation in God’s image, Second Article redemption from sin, and Third Article vocation in faith and sanctified works puts the study of any academic subject into proper perspective. What Saint Anselm called “faith seeking understanding” begins not with wishful thinking but with Biblical faith, that is, a confidence grounded in the words and works of Christ the Risen One. The true theologian’s *oratio* (prayer), *meditatio* (Scripture study), and *tentatio* (struggle, *Anfechtung*) returns each day anew to the Gospel proclamation that for Christ’s sake one has a clean conscience before God. In the divine liturgy and the historic hymns of the church, Christians across the ages are built up into one body, the Body of Christ, that confesses and sings, world without end.

CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

“Grammar” in the liberal arts trivium traditionally meant Latin. The study of Latin trains the mind like the study of no other language. Latin is precise, having noun declensions and verb conjugations that indicate exactly how words relate to one another and how they together say something about the world. Latin is consistent, having only a few irregular forms, and even those exceptions are quasi-regular. Latin is elegant, capable of concisely summarizing Caesar’s triumphs in Gaul or allowing endless wordplay in Cicero’s speeches before the Roman Senate. Latin is historical, being both the native tongue of so many foundational works in Western Civilization and also the mother tongue from which many daughter languages emerged. About 60% of all English words derive from Latin; among academic terms in law, medicine, and theology, the ratio is closer to 80%. The mastery of these professions in English requires, therefore, a familiarity with Latin.

Furthermore, the study of Latin enables a person to translate from English to English, that is, from sophisticated English to simplistic English. One cannot comfortably read great works in English—such as *The Federalist Pa-*

pers' defense of the U.S. Constitution or Jane Austen's stories of aristocratic match-makings—without a command of the higher, more Latinate, dialect. One cannot fully understand English grammar apart from recognizing within modern English the vestiges of the Latin-like subjunctive that still was expressed explicitly in Shakespeare's well-measured verse. It was to students' great advantage that Latin used to be required for entrance into American colleges and universities, a tradition now being revived by Luther Classical College.

Of course, English has a mixed ancestry, being derived also from the Saxon tongue—spoken today, in modified form, in Germany and Scandinavia; the interplay between the Saxons and the Normans has left its mark in nearly every English sentence. From the Normans' Latin-becoming-French, England received words of authority (like *crime*, *police*, and *justice*). From the Saxons, England retained the words of the conquered tribes who tended animals (like *cow* and *sheep*) for the Normans to eat in the conquerors' luxury (how telling that *beef* and *mutton* derive from the Norman, not the Saxon, speech). The best American orator knew how to employ both languages, but took care to keep each in its own place, referring in one breath as a Norman to the American nation “conceived in liberty” (*concepta libertate* → *conçu en liberté*) and in the next breath speaking as a Saxon about the “rebirth of freedom” (*Wiedergeburt der Freiheit* → *genfødsel af frihed*). Though interwoven, the ancestral tongues of English have not been fully merged, and thus the mongrelized alternatives “conceived in freedom” and “rebirth of liberty” did not flow so readily from Lincoln's lips.

Just as Latin provides a means for mastering English rhetoric and exploring American heritage, so also Latin provides a foundation for studying other languages and cultures. Greek grammar closely tracks Latin grammar, which means that the hard work expended in mastering Latin syntax pays a handsome dividend when the student takes up the second great classical language “as a treat,” as

Winston Churchill advised. The lesson learned by struggling to align English and Latin when they never quite make a one-to-one correlation also stretches the mind to recognize that each culture, through its unique language patterns, maps the world in unique ways. Sometimes the chasm can be bridged by swapping active for passive and subject for object when translating a Latin gerundive into an English gerund. At its extreme, however, a linguistic gap results in the confusion experienced at Babel. Thankfully, the same God who judged Nimrod's nation with division in the days of Peleg (Genesis 10:25; 11:1–9) also sends forth the everlasting Gospel for the redemption of “every nation, tribe, language, and people” (Revelation 14:6). To appreciate diversity of languages is, therefore, to participate more fully in the mystery of the Body of Christ. Latin directly connects the student to church history, while also laying a foundation for learning modern, and especially Romance, languages spoken by brothers and sisters throughout the ever-one Holy Christian Church.

HUMANITIES

History

History contributes to the virtue of prudence, or decision-making that is both wise and practical. History broadens one's experience through the examination of the thoughts and actions of other people in various times and places, while seeking to identify general patterns among the circumstances and consequences of their choices. History provides the material for effective oratory, for one must not only know how to speak but also have something to say; history fills in the rhetorical *topoi* (topics), the facts about various subjects, necessary for responsible debate.

Although each historical epoch has unique features, all of history shares in common the humanity of its actors and the divine providence of God, who created us in His own image and still preserves us according to His mercy. Moreover, in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, God Himself en-



tered human history to redeem us fallen sinners. Even the seemingly random or destructive acts of human history fit the unfolding of God's eschatological plan. History, accordingly, serves not only the virtue of prudence across the three estates, but also the closely related tasks of apologetics and evangelism within God's kingdom of grace.

The student of ancient history has several starting points from which to select: the dispersion of seventy people groups from Babel (ca. 2200 B.C.), as recorded in Genesis 10–11; the chronicles of the Shang Dynasty in China (ca. 1600–1046 B.C.), as recorded on oracle bones; the Trojan War on the western coast of present-day Turkey (ca. 1200 B.C.), as told by Homer and retold by Virgil; the founding of Rome (ca. 753 B.C.), and its subsequent rise to world dominance, as told by Polybius, Livy, and Plutarch; the monumental struggles within and between the Persian and Greek empires, (ca. 536–323 B.C.), as told by Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, and Arrian; or, the emergence of early civilizations in Sumeria and Egypt, often said to have occurred some 1,000 years before the Biblically established

lible.

A classical education in the Western tradition privileges the Greek and Roman authors above the insights from ancient China or the theories of present-day archaeologists. This Greco-Roman emphasis does not imply that those other sources lack importance, but rather that they lack relevance to the particular aim of the classical, Western tradition, particularly when pursued by Lutheran scholars: to rediscover the rise and fall of a civilization that became, in varying stages, the cradle, the nemesis, and the sponsor of the New Testament church whose fathers authored the three ecumenical creeds. The fall of the Roman Empire and its replacement by the Papacy's "Holy Roman Empire" supplies the necessary factual background for understanding the Lutheran Reformation, a theologically focused but politically transformative event of epic proportions. Moreover, through a courageous act of intellectual *fiat* ("let there be...") by influential thinkers of the late 1700s, Greco-Roman antiquity also became the cornerstone of ordered liberty for the world's longest-standing republic, the United

The living legacies of the Lutheran Reformation and the American Revolution teach us still today that when people learn well the lessons that ancient Greeks and Romans offer, great and wonderful things become possible.

date of Noah's Flood (ca. 3,500 B.C. versus ca. 2,400 B.C.), as told by present-day archaeologists.

The Biblical account alone comes by inspiration of God and contains no errors. The Old Testament's historical narratives serve as a grand prologue to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, and the New Testament traces His life, death, and resurrection and the early spread of His Gospel throughout the Roman Empire. To learn more about that ancient world, secular sources also must be consulted. When seeking to understand aspects of the ancient world that are not recorded in Holy Scripture, Christians properly turn to extra-Biblical sources, but always with a measure of caution. Every secular account of ancient civilizations has been colored by its author's motives and limitations. Each text continues to be reinterpreted according to the proclivities of present-day readers. Reading those texts well requires a pious even if precarious balance between humility—as one learns from one's elders—and skepticism—as one remembers that (excepting only God's prophets, evangelists, and apostles) even the best scholars of antiquity were not infal-

States of America. The living legacies of the Lutheran Reformation and the American Revolution teach us still today that when people learn well the lessons that ancient Greeks and Romans offer, great and wonderful things become possible.

In brief, those lessons center upon the natural relationship between virtue and liberty—a mutual dependence that can be ignored only at great peril to both oneself and one's nation. Tacitus and Suetonius found this fact of human nature revealed in the contrast between the despotic emperors Tiberius through Domitian and the more temperate, at times even benevolent, rulers who preceded and followed them; Gibbon extended those accounts of the first century into the fifteenth century, the eve of the Lutheran Reformation. Burke repeated the analysis in his comparative evaluation of the two great modern revolutions: the American (favorable) and French (unfavorable). The saga continues to our own time. How better to understand Stalin, Hitler, and Mao Zedong in the twentieth century than to study Claudius, Nero, and Domitian first?

Similarly, how better to understand Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, and Ronald Reagan, than to study Cicero, Constantine, and Justinian first? Human nature, both at its worst and at its best, is the same the world over and changes not with the centuries, but nowhere do we find vices, virtues, and their far-reaching consequences more instructively recorded than in the works of ancient Greece and Rome. Later authors—Dante, Milton, and Shakespeare among them—resound with echoes of those same ancient truths. The time for producing great works has not expired, but for those seeking to lead the way forward, the first step must—however paradoxically—be backward, “*ad fontes*,” return to those ancient sources!

Law

According to its theological use, *lex semper accusat* (“the law always accuses”). Nevertheless, according to its civic use, the law curbs, educates, and protects. The Augsburg Confession pays respect to “lawful civil ordinances” as God’s Romans 13 blessing to all people (AC XVI, 1). Just as the two marks of the church are the pure preaching of the Gospel and the pure administration of the sacraments (AC VII), so also the two marks of legitimate civil authority are the punishment of evil doers and the protection of the innocent (Romans 13:3–4; 1 Peter 2:13–14).

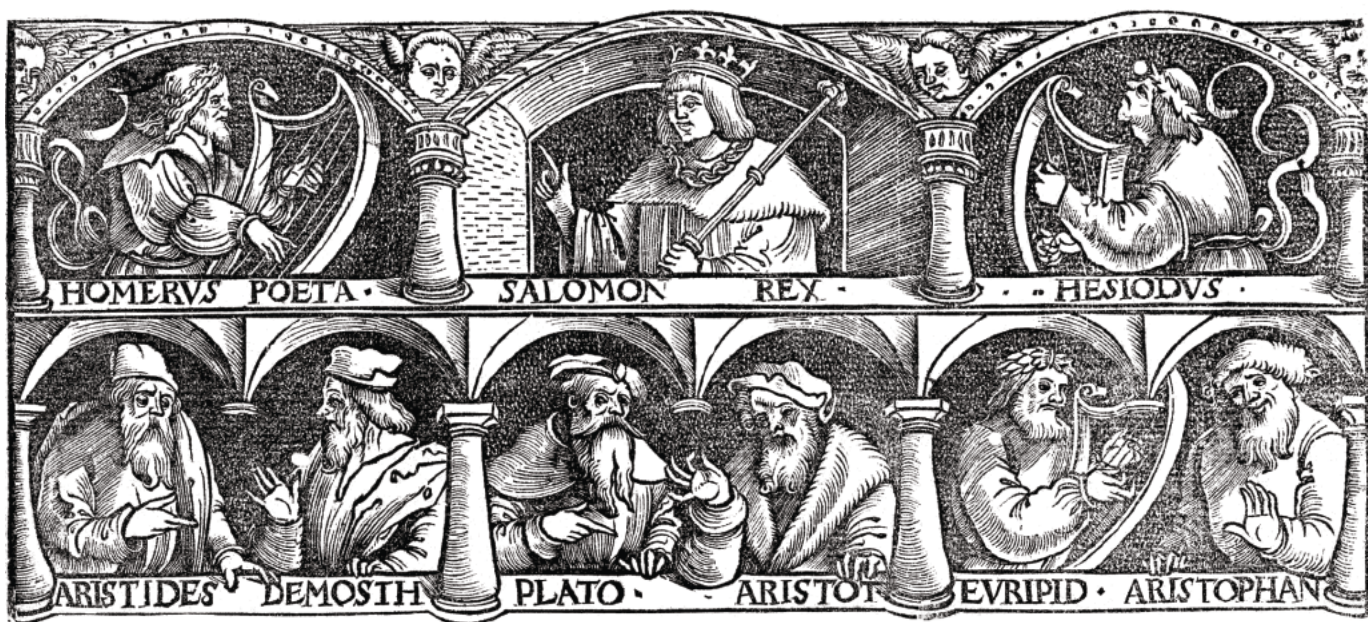
While different societies may have different laws and even different systems of political order, all civil governments must bear those same two marks if they are to lay claim to Fourth Commandment authority; conversely and perversely, to punish the innocent and protect the evildoer is to become a false state, an establishment of Satan under Revelation 13 rather than an establishment of God under Romans 13. So concluded the Lutheran confessors at Magdeburg who withstood a year-long siege by Papal-Imperial forces, an apostate church united with an illegitimate civil authority. So concluded the courageous Lutherans Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Nazi Germany and Eivind Berggrav in Nazi-occupied Norway when they exercised political resistance against tyranny. Frederick the Wise’s protection of the “outlaw” Martin Luther was no different; the ramshackle edict from the Diet of Worms had no proper claim within the divinely established civil government of Saxony.

As seen from the preceding examples, Lutheran theology and Lutheran history together provide guidance for evaluating and responding to civil authorities. Generally, a subject is called to obey. Simultaneously, a ruler is called to serve as God’s own representative of justice. Rarely, a lesser magistrate may need to interpose on behalf of the people

against a tyrant from the top. Occasionally, a pastor may need to preach from the pulpit that Caesar has wrongfully claimed what is God’s, or that a wayward church leader has wrongfully claimed what is Caesar’s. God alone draws the line between the Two Kingdoms, and all are called to respect His ordinance above all others. Whether as ruler or subject, as soldier or civilian, each person has an office within the civil realm. Likewise, within the church, pastor and laity have distinctive callings from God. Through those individual vocations, as well as those within the home, each person navigates between the Two Kingdoms in appropriate ways that diminish neither kingdom but instead serve one’s neighbors in accordance with God’s will within each kingdom.

Within the broad contours of Lutheran political theology, various political philosophies can be critiqued and, to greater or lesser degrees, adopted. Plato’s *Republic* criticized democracy and championed aristocracy, but Aristotle’s *Politics* argued instead that monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy each have their characteristic virtues and vices. Cicero cherished the Roman Republic but even more so celebrated the natural law, which is unique to no society but foundational to all of them. Augustine, Aquinas, and Melancthon each articulated a Christian philosophy of natural law and on that basis sketched out principles for political order, including also a moral framework for waging a just war. Indirectly, the Lutheran Reformation led to the American Revolution; more directly, the Lutheran Reformation encouraged healthy civic participation by all Christians according to vocation. Lutherans neither joined the Anabaptists in eschewing marriage and property ownership, nor joined the Papacy or the Calvinists in commingling church and state into one estate. Rather, Lutherans cultivated all the good and Godly institutions of home, church, and state, each as given by God.

God providentially causes kingdoms to rise and fall, and He places each person within a particular society to serve as a channel of His blessings to the people in their midst. Politics is the chief tool by which they do so within the Kingdom of the Left. The American Experiment has offered unparalleled opportunities to forge a just society, but also unique challenges. While armchair political philosophy has a vital role within the academy, students ultimately need to be prepared for where the rubber hits the road within their own communities. God does not call anyone to love humanity in the abstract, but He does expect each one of us to love our actual, concrete neighbors as ourselves, exactly as we encounter them within our vocations.



Economics relates so closely to politics that often the term “political economy” appears in the modern Great Books. In them, the student finds a wealth of examples demonstrating the profound importance of beginning with the proper foundational principles. What rights, and what responsibilities, apply to property ownership? Is the possession of wealth itself a sign of injustice? Or, is a free market sufficient for justice? Are humans mere animals, best to be governed by a powerful zookeeper? Or, are humans angels, not needing to submit to any earthly authority? Given that people with power seldom use it benevolently for long, what sort of constitution best protects subjects not only from one another but also from their rulers? Recognizing both the dignity and the depravity of man—created in God’s image and fallen into sin—Christian social thought provides a sound pathway through these perennial puzzles. People have natural responsibilities (love your neighbor as yourself by obeying legitimate authority, protecting innocent life, respecting genuine marriage, and preserving each other’s property) and corresponding rights; governments properly exist to protect those rights.

But civil government is not alone in addressing people’s economic needs; nor is the state the primary institution for doing so. Entrepreneurs, as they provide for their families, their workers, and their customers, fulfill a station in life distinctive of the modern West, in which those blessed with capital have the duty to serve those whom God has placed within their economic care. Trade and commerce flourish when well-crafted laws foster ordered liberty

among a virtuous people who use the market as a mode of match-making rather than as a tool for opportunism.

Oeconomia historically referred to the household, not the society, for the home is the true foundation of the state, and the householder is the original entrepreneur. The church, too, has an interest in promoting charity to support the needs of the poor. When the state oversteps the work of the family or restricts rather than supports the work of the church, the results will be unavoidably uneconomical—contrary to the home’s (*oikos* → *oeco* → *eco*) natural order (*nomia*). Recognizing the distinctive vocations that each Christian has within the family, the church, and the civil realm lays the groundwork for addressing the challenges of fostering a humane political economy. Preparing faithful citizens for this work is a great gift that the home and church can together foster, guiding the state to take up its role in turn.

Literature

Epic poems and sonnets, tragic plays and comedies, novels and short stories all stir the imagination toward a rediscovery of the same truths revealed by the great works of nonfiction—histories of hope and despair, of conquest and defeat, of friendship and loneliness, and of everything else that fills and empties the human heart.

“What is man, that You are mindful of him?” asks the Psalmist of God, to which all of the world’s great literature attempts an answer. To understand man, of course, one must also understand his Maker, and so literature never drifts far from theology. Even pagan literature has re-

deemable value. Martin Luther remarked that by reading Virgil's *Aeneid* he learned the fundamentals of poetry that enabled him to write Christian hymns. Philip Melancthon, for similar reasons, encouraged the study of the Roman playwright Terence, albeit with caution against the vulgar content. The Lutheran Reformation did not cherish all pagan works, but rather selected those which by either form or substance could be useful to the vocations of redeemed children of God.

Advancing the English Reformation, John Milton transformed Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which told of capricious gods and goddesses who meddled in the affairs of ambitious and blood-thirsty men, into a monumental retelling of Adam and Eve's fall into sin that concluded with a preview of Christ's redemptive work. Milton's *Paradise Lost* demonstrates by poetic elevation that even the lowest depth of humanity is not so far gone that God cannot reach down, indeed come down, to save. Those who refuse God's gift of grace find themselves in Dante's *Inferno*, a hell in which their own sins come back, amplified, to visit them for eternity.

In addition to exploring the connection between God and man, literature also links each person to his neighbor. Literature properly belongs to that branch of study called "the humanities," for in both poetry and prose one finds something that people of all cultures have in common, but something which none of them have in common with brute beasts. Cicero maintained that the human capacity for language marked mankind as unique. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides deployed that gift to write tragic plays for a specifically Athenian audience in the fifth century B.C., but the plumb line that their dramatic scripts stretched across human life measures true for all time. Modern psychology has penetrated no deeper, and often far less clearly, into the human psyche than they. A generation after Euripides, Aristotle attempted to codify the elements of drama—plot, character, hubris, and so forth. His categories provided the scaffolding for Renaissance playwrights, most notably William Shakespeare.

While Shakespeare at first reading seems quaintly out of date—replete with thees and thous—the patient twenty-first-century reader soon is rewarded with a re-discovery of the roots of modern English. "Love at first sight," "to thine own self be true," "uneasy lies the head that wears the crown," "all the world's a stage," and "off with his head!" come word for word from Shakespeare. Like all great literature, his writing exhibits an excellence of form in a manner accessible to the common man, such as those of the lower-middle class who paid a penny for admittance to the

yard at Globe Theatre.

In more recent times, the Russian novelists Tolstoy and Dostoevsky have continued to outshine social scientists and literary critics alike, in revealing the secret motivations of the human heart while demonstrating both the opportunities and the limitations of human achievement. "All happy families are alike," wrote Tolstoy, but "each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." To learn this difference, to practice through reading what one hopes to accomplish by living, one must keep turning the page. "Learning to love is hard and we pay dearly for it," writes Dostoevsky. "It takes hard work and a long apprenticeship, for it is not just for a moment that we must learn to love, but forever." This yearning for eternity recurs frequently in the great literary works, and why shouldn't it? After all, "[God] has put eternity into man's heart" (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

Philosophy

As recently as the early nineteenth century, nearly every subject was a branch of "philosophy." The college president customarily taught a capstone course to the graduating class called "moral philosophy" (now called ethics, taught relativistically rather than objectively, offered as a freshman elective rather than a senior requirement, and taught by an adjunct while the president is busy fundraising for athletics). Other courses included "mental philosophy" (later to be replaced by cognitive psychology). "Natural philosophers" studied the physical world and its varied kinds of living beings, while also reading Latin literature, memorizing English poetry, and contemplating beautiful paintings; after dropping those "arts and letters" pursuits in order to become specialized, they became known as "scientists." What, then, of philosophy? What formerly had been the common pursuit of inquiry became marginalized into the ghetto of general education electives. Overlooking what the "Ph" in "Ph.D." stands for, a person now may attain a doctoral diploma without taking a single philosophy course. Caricatures of Socrates conveniently dismiss philosophy as annoying at worst and irrelevant at best. But despite its superficial critics, philosophy remains the vital hub of collegiate conversation among those who continue the Great Conversation.

What is truth? Does God exist? What's the difference between right and wrong? Are human actions pre-determined, or do people have free will? What makes for a just society? What does such-and-such mean, and how can its definition be clarified for the sake of a more fruitful conversation? It is not so much, as Socrates suggested, that the "unexamined life is not worth living," but rather that the

unexamined life is no life at all; humans intuitively philosophize. Children ask “why?” and “how?” constantly. Adults also would be wiser if they continued rather than abandoned that quest. Philosophy is not merely fun but also productive. “Socratic questioning,” pursued as recorded in Plato’s dialogues, does not merely mean “teaching by asking questions” or “maximizing group participation,” but rather seeking to discover both whether something is true and also the reason why it is true. To answer neither question is to remain ignorant; to answer only the first question is to have knowledge but still lack understanding. Philosophy promotes both knowledge and understanding, which together lead to wisdom—something to be desired among all the other academic disciplines and to be applied in all of life’s pursuits.

In the realm of philosophy, Christians have a clear advantage, for they are keenly aware of human limitations, of the clouded understanding that results from original sin, of the conniving deceit animating a will turned away from

MATHEMATICS AND NATURAL SCIENCE

The church confesses in Luther’s Explanation to the First Article of the Apostle’s Creed that “God has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.” Therefore, Christians approach the study of God’s creation with optimism: their faculties of sight and thought have the potential to align with the world God has created. However, the church confesses in the Third Article that “I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him.” Therefore, Christians recognize that scientific endeavors have limits: our eyes may deceive us, our thoughts may stray from logic, and, in any case, God surpasses human reason even when it functions at its best. Strictly speaking, science neither proves God’s existence and attributes, nor persuades anyone to have saving faith in Him. At the same time, science remains useful for Christian apologetics because nature points to its Creator even while our gracious God remains hidden, as if behind

Philosophy promotes both knowledge and understanding, which together lead to wisdom—something to be desired among all the other academic disciplines and to be applied in all of life’s pursuits.

God, and yet they know the Truth Himself, Jesus Christ, God incarnate. Saint Paul cautions against “philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men,” even while encouraging “*philosophia kata Christon*” (“philosophy according to Christ,” Colossians 2:8). Christians, therefore, may fruitfully ask the big, perennial questions of philosophers, and in critiquing the answers offered in the past, they have opportunity to “cast down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). The resulting acclamation of truth and rejection of error is well modeled by the “affirmativa” and “negativa” of the Formula of Concord, even as the Formula’s caution not to press mysterious matters of the faith too far also models the humility appropriate for finite humans, creatures who inquire into the ways of their Creator with a spirit of awe rather than of arrogance. Who better than Lutherans, therefore, to be philosophers? Where better to study philosophy than at a college of the Lutheran church?

a mask. It is simultaneously true that those who deny the Creator are without excuse, since nature itself bears witness, and that apart from faith worked by the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament no one can believe in Christ. Science and faith are paradoxically related.

The Scientific Revolution and the Lutheran Reformation occurred nearly simultaneously—a chronological correspondence that resulted not from mere coincidence but from historical interactions. The *via moderna*, or “modern method,” of philosophy challenged the Scholastic reliance on Aristotle’s metaphysics and summoned empirical investigations of nature. Nominalism, the new philosophy that Luther learned as a university student, rejected received traditions of physical natures whose properties were deductively predictable, inviting instead a “look and see” approach to discover by observation and to confirm by experiment how nature in fact is. For Luther, nominalism became an encouragement to look at the text of Scripture and see what God’s Word really teaches, rather than just trusting church officials’ pronouncements. For others, it meant looking at the Book of Nature to discover what God

had created and how it worked.

The Lutheran doctrine concerning the real presence of Christ's body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper allowed for mysterious notions of space and time—how can Christ be eternal and omnipresent and yet also be found here and now to be eaten and drunk? The Lutheran insistence upon neither adding to nor subtracting from Scripture, and the corresponding willingness to leave paradoxes unresolved, prepared the Lutheran mind to ponder either an earth-centered or else a sun-centered universe. It was a Lutheran named Andreas Osiander who wrote the preface for Copernicus's work from which the Scientific Revolution got its name—*De revolutionibus*, or *Concerning the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies*. Although Luther himself ridiculed Copernicus in an off-handed comment during one of his Table Talk sessions, Philip Melancthon's more rehearsed response was to encourage the study of this new theory at the University of Wittenberg. In fact, no one took as much interest in Copernicus as the Lutherans. A Lutheran mathematics teacher named Johannes Kepler refined Copernicus's theory by substituting ellipses for circles. Lutherans took keen interest in other sciences, too. A century after Kepler, a Lutheran botanist named Carolus Linnaeus introduced scientific nomenclature for all that God had created. We have called ourselves *Homo sapiens* ever since.

If science is good, and Lutherans promoted science, then Lutherans must be good, too—but such reasoning is unsound in so many ways. First, science so easily can be turned for evil, whether to promote thoughts that war against the Creator (consider Darwinism) or actions that war against one's neighbors and their Creator (witness today's dilemmas in bioethics). Second, Lutherans themselves have struggled to find the proper relationship between faith and reason, with Kepler, for example, hesitating to affirm all that the Formula of Concord said about Christology because some of it did not conform to his mathematical ways of thinking. As to even more basic questions, such as whether and, if so, how nature can be known by man, the children of Lutherans have profoundly disagreed. Immanuel Kant, raised in a Lutheran home but shaped by the rationalism of the Enlightenment, concluded that the mind is structured in such a way that no rational person can experience the universe except in terms of space and time, cause and effect. Søren Kierkegaard, also raised in a Lutheran home, went the other direction, concluding that reason is too small of a box to contain either God's nature or our own. A leap of pure faith, not a necessity of pure reason, lays the founda-

tion for what we know about ourselves and the world around us.

What, then, is the proper Lutheran approach to science? The Lutheran Confessions have much to say about epistemology, that branch of philosophy dealing with fundamental questions of knowledge and certainty. Ultimately, however, the Confessions appeal to both reason and experience in a manner that also rises above those realms. For example, Article I of the Formula of Concord deploys Aristotelian notions of essential and accidental properties, while also insisting that orthodox theology cannot be reduced to the categories of human thought. The pursuit of science remains, then, forever a pursuit—one that the Christian is freed to engage within his vocation, even while taking care not to claim too much certainty in his conclusions. "This is most certainly true" never quite fits the natural sciences, but instead finds its triple "Amen" in the three articles of the Apostle's Creed.

The problematic quest for certainty in science does not diminish the utility of scientific knowledge, for even if facts are sometimes mistaken or older theories become replaced by newer ones, the provisional understanding that science affords often enough suffices for the needs of this body and life. Science thereby serves as one of God's many blessings in our midst, a blessing that the state rightly protects and even sponsors for the benefit of the family. When the state instead wields an ungodly adulteration of science as a tool of oppression against the unborn, the elderly, or the infirm, or when government schools deny the Creator, His gift of the two sexes, or the natural law of chastity, then the church rightly objects that Caesar has abused the realm God assigned him and the voices of Christian fathers must be heard again.

If education is to serve the whole person in preparation for a range of vocations within the home, the church, and the state, then scientific education, too, must be broad rather than narrow, and must include philosophical criticism of its own treasured assumptions, methods, and results. Rather than memorizing the latest menu of "facts" from "settled science" and accepting without question the prevailing theories of "scientific experts," a classically liberating education centers upon a return to the old enterprise of "natural philosophy," namely, a free inquiry into *physis*—the nature of the universe—an inquiry that in the Christian tradition also requires that one seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before his God (Micah 6:8).

FINE ARTS

Music

Within the liberal arts, music fills an important role among the “quadrivial,” or quantitative, disciplines: arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. “As the eyes are framed for astronomy,” wrote Plato, “so the ears are framed for the movements of harmony,” each of them manifesting geometrical relations in concrete ways (*Republic*, VII, 530d). For any two tones separated by one octave, the higher one vibrates at exactly twice the frequency of the lower one; for a musical fifth, the ratio is 3:2, and for a major third or major fourth, it is very close to 5:4 or 4:3, respectively. “To possess the art of recognizing the sounds that can or cannot be blended is to be a musician,” explains Plato. “If one doesn’t understand that, one is unmusical” (*Sophist*, 253b). Coming to grips with the “very close to” aspect of those ratios led to competing theories of how best to tune instruments; splitting the difference, Bach’s *Well-Tempered Clavier* presented fugues in all 24 major and minor keys without needing to re-tune between them.

However, the greatest resonance between music and other disciplines is not to be heard in mathematics, but in theology. “After the Word of God,” remarked Luther, “music deserves the highest praise.” Birds sing, but only man composes, arranges, and conducts—not to mention invents instruments that can be played well only after years of practice. To be created in God’s image meant, originally, to have true knowledge of God and live in righteousness, but even after the fall into sin, a vestige of God’s image remains in the creativity that humans alone among His creatures exhibit. Where is this more obvious than in music? And where is it more edifying than in church music?

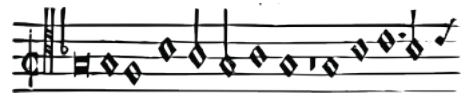
It was the hymnals of Lutheran homes that preserved the Reformation faith when the tumult of the Thirty Years’ War often prevented people from gathering for public worship. Luther’s chorales, because they were nothing other than the Gospel set to music, had “the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16), converting the people of Magdeburg in the weeks before Luther’s own arrival to preach his first sermon there.

What hymns offer for the proper occasions of the church year, the ordinaries of the liturgy provide for all time—not merely for the constant element common to each Sunday throughout the church year, but also for a constant testimony year after year, so long as the church militant endures. Through ancient words chanted to ancient melodies, members of the Body of Christ, here and now, join the song of the saints that went before them, there and then,

as they sing of the great and gracious deeds of the eternal God, world without end. With good reason, Johann Sebastian Bach is often ranked as world history’s best composer. His *Saint Matthew Passion* and *Mass in B Minor*, plus over 400 chorales, carry into the ears and the heart the words and promises of Christ: the greatest words set to the greatest music afford the greatest benefit to all who hear.

No appreciation of the Lutheran Reformation would be complete without music history, and music history requires familiarity with music performance—both on man-made instruments and with the God-made human voice—as well as music theory. While future parish musicians derive obvious practical benefits from such pursuits, everyone else benefits, too. Congregational singing has always been the hallmark of the Lutheran church, and family singing of Lutheran homes. Both of these life-preserving activities flourish best in a culture of a memorized core of classical chorales: the Lutheran *Kernlieder* tradition.

Music, argued Aristotle, requires hard work but also brings virtuous pleasure—an ennobled rather than reckless leisure—that is necessary for any community to prosper (*Politics*, VIII). As Christians know best, the truest and most lasting pleasure is to be found not in human leisure for this life, but in divine salvation for the life to come, wherefore Bach signed his manuscripts “SDG” for *solī Deo gloria* (“to God alone be the glory”).



Visual Arts

To the radical reformer Andreas Karlstadt, church art was idolatrous; while Luther was secluded in Wartburg, Karlstadt persuaded the Wittenberg City Council to decree that images should be removed from local church buildings. Violent mobs soon saw to it that statues and paintings were demolished. Luther responded with a series of sermons and pamphlets, calling for the preservation of church art for its pedagogical value. By this, Luther did not simply mean that art helps people to learn, but more specifically that Christian art points to Christ the Savior.

Woodcuts illustrated Luther’s catechism and provided means to mass produce clever depictions of the Pope’s deviations from Scripture as the clumsy work of a spiritual jackass. Like music, the visual arts served as a carriage for the Gospel, as altar painting portrayed the Means of Grace. What Luther’s German translation of the Bible accomplished for the literate, church art made accessible also for the illiterate.

Just as the study of Scripture became more careful and fruitful in the wake of the renewed attention to primary texts and original languages fostered by Northern Renaissance Humanism, so also the Italian Renaissance brought Christian art to new heights by first rediscovering and then extending the pursuit of beauty from classical antiquity. Greek sculpture and architecture depicted man at his best, indeed, even better than life, by mathematically calculating ideal proportions. Renaissance realism, too, brought vivid paintings of Bible history to the eyes of the beholders. Still today, eyes, minds, and hearts marvel at the works of Fra Angelico, Botticelli, Raphael, Titian, Michelangelo, Caravaggio, Rembrandt, ... and the list goes on.

Art history serves both as a canvas and as a mirror, revealing the *mentalité* of each succeeding age. While beginning as a mild abstraction that softened without erasing realism, impressionism soon gave way to post-impressionism and, before much longer, to post-artistic attempts at securing government art funding for non-art. The medium itself became the message, when neither the artist's intention nor his technique mattered as much as the audience's self-oblivion. Man, who began by turning away from God, soon discovered that he had turned away also from himself, a creature made in the image of God. To forsake the Beautiful leads also to an abandonment of the True and the Good, but even in the nadir of postmodern despair, God's arm remains long enough to reach down and save. A return to classical models may provide artists both in and beyond the church with a rebirth—another Renaissance—yet to be appreciated.

Rhetoric

If the aim of education is to empower graduates to get a job, and the purpose of a job is to make money, then rhetoric must be reduced to the art of persuasive communication, for persuasion leads to both employment and profitability. People who thought this way in Socrates's day were called "sophists," appearing to be wise while underneath their words lurked an embarrassing combination of charlatanism, ignorance, and ugliness—quite the opposite of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful.

While Plato's dialogues tore sophistry apart, it fell to Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian in successive generations to build up a genuine rhetoric, the object of which was to "speak well" in the fullest sense. The ideal speaker could address any audience, concerning any topic, on any occasion, in a manner that served rather than sidestepped truth, justice, and (although it was not yet called so) the American

way. Form served not the speaker but the content, which means that the rhetorician required a well-rounded education in all subjects.

In the "trivial" arts, grammar came first while logic and rhetoric sometimes rotated between second and third. Regardless of the sequence in which these arts were listed, the relative emphasis between logic and rhetoric shifted at Wittenberg under the leadership of Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon. While the medieval scholastics had perfected the art of logical discourse, the Lutheran reformers restored an appreciation for the nuances of language: figures of speech, rhetorical tropes, and also the broader outline of how a discourse flows. To read Scripture not primarily as a source book for propositions that could be injected into syllogisms, but rather as a divine literary masterpiece now drew renewed attention to the Holy Spirit's own leitmotifs. Melancthon's *Loci* and *Commentary on Romans*, and Luther's catechisms, sermons, and treatises, accordingly brought to the forefront of theological discourse the interplay between Law and Gospel. Rhetoric expressed what grammar and logic had discovered in Holy Writ: the literally *crucial*, cross-centered, difference between Law and Gospel that, when properly distinguished, reveal God's salvation of man apart from man's own works, as well as the distinctions between the Two Kingdoms and the Three Estates that reveal where and how man's good works fit within God's plan.

Students at Wittenberg progressed to the master's degree by learning the art of disputation, crafting arguments that properly accounted for opposing viewpoints while not surrendering to indecision or relativism. Wittenberg, Leipzig, Magdeburg, and Jena became centers for publishing the rhetoric of Lutheran theologians: Bibles, hymnals, catechisms, commentaries, sermons, and treatises. Breaking from hagiographic traditions, Lutheran scholars invented a new genre of literature known as church history, even as Lutheran pastors reclaimed pre-scholastic models that restored the sermon to a proclamation of forgiveness in Christ. Good writing, beautiful writing, true writing edified God's people once again. The church and state require nothing less today, best to be provided by colleges that read Cicero's clever turns of phrase in Latin, sing Luther's hymnological masterpieces in German, and practice the art of public disputation so that the light of truth may expose the folly of error for the health of hearts, minds, and souls everywhere. ☛

Dr. Ryan MacPherson is the Academic Dean of Luther Classical College.



American Christianity: Origins and Introductions

September 1740. Charleston, South Carolina

A cross-eyed minister in a black gown stands in a field. Thousands flock to hear the famous preacher. He preaches with fire and zeal. Has his equal been seen in the Church of England? He urges, pleads, and calls “come poor, lost, undone sinner, come just as you are to Christ.”

August 1801. Cane Ridge, Kentucky

With a whoop and roar a man ascends a tree. Several others fall on their bellies. Another writhes on the floor like a snake and barks like a dog. The largest camp meeting of the Second Great Awakening is underway. Two men of Presbyterian background have gathered to unite the denominations of America and usher in the Millennium.

September 1823. Palmyra, New York

A young farm boy, after much struggle, is pointed to the place where he will find a “golden bible.” He claims the angel Moroni has visited him and revealed the location. A restored Christianity will be proclaimed, a new church founded, one that could only be made in America.



These three seemingly unrelated events hold the key to understanding American Christianity in her current form. While the thread of history may at once seem unwound and broken, we will see through this series of articles how the fever that sweeps America through two Awakenings and beyond is but a common symptom of the kind of Christianity fostered in the colonies and in the original west.

Why have we decided to take up this task of chronicling and introducing the various movements in American Christianity? The answer is very simple. We must know from where we have come to see where we are.

While most readers of this publication find themselves either ethnically or contextually among North American

Lutherans, they still live in an environment colored and shaped by the broader religious context of America. Indeed, the very language they speak is a result of the most significant settlers of the New World.

As a nation, we are shaped by English speakers. As a culture we are formed by Presbyterians, Anglicans, and later Baptists. Many are sons of the Great Awakenings. More still are influenced by them whether they realize that or not. We find ourselves amidst the heirs of those who were drunk on the Millennium, which is a phrase that will make more sense as the series continues.

America before and after the Revolution was rural and isolated. She found herself hungry for religion, but with scant men to preach it. The hunger for preachers was satiated by the Methodist circuit rider, the open-air evangelist, and the self-called independent preachers of a new religious fervor. In the decades prior to the Revolution, we would see men seeking to work within established denominational frameworks, forever changing the tenor of those groups. As the nineteenth century dawned, new denominations rapidly developed—unique movements, nearly all of which claimed to have a restored version of the Gospel. We will quickly move from men earnestly affirming at least some form of historic creedal Christianity to those who would cast aside all creedal fences and blaze their own trail.

We see in the nineteenth century the beginnings of a fire that would sweep even beyond America’s borders in the twentieth. For even a movement like that of Azusa Street in the 1900s, where Pentecostalism was born, is an extension of what was observed at Cane Ridge and countless other camp meetings before it.

American Christianity was birthed by Calvinists: theologians who understood that man is by nature born in sin and bound by it. Man is not free to choose Christ. Man

must hear the Word and be changed by the monergistic work of God in accordance with His inscrutable will. Yet even the Reformed would find themselves in a vicious, intramural debate over just how to preach among such hardened sinners. While a preacher in the 1740s might have understood that the Spirit worked as the Word was preached, one in the 19th century might believe that man's oratorical ability played a part in the conversion of the lost soul. The struggle between old and new Calvinists would be fought on American soil.

As Methodism found a home in America, Arminianism—hallmarked by its belief in man's free will—would soon become the dominant view among Americans concerning the doctrine of salvation. Arminianism would be a natural fit for the revivalist preaching that would so enrapture the new nation. Even the once-Calvinistic Baptists would within two generations be transformed into something resembling the largely Arminian body we know today.

As the historic Protestant denominations were changing, new denominations were forming. Some of them would be begrudgingly accepted among the general American Christian landscape. Groups like the Church of Christ, Christian Churches, Churches of God, and others would find their genesis in this period. These movements would have a profound effect on how Americans viewed not only theology but church history.

Cheap printing would serve the purposes of these new groups. Each one would have its own publishing house, sometimes belonging to individual prophets, who would, from the Scriptures, show how their church was the one found in the Acts of the Apostles and how all other churches were, to greater or lesser degrees, apostate.

At this point it may seem as if early American Christianity was an exercise in sectarianism and debate. In many ways it was. However, these disparate movements were all orbiting around a few similar themes.

A return to primitive Christianity was one such theme. What was the church of the Apostles? Does it exist? Has it been found? Can it be restored? How did the early church worship? New movements would unite and divide around these questions, some eschewing instruments altogether, while others co-opted the popular sounds of the day to bring in their crowds and form new flocks.

The drum beat of revivalism is another theme that runs through most of these movements. Can a man be born again if he does not feel it? How can we give these men the religious feeling necessary for true regeneration? Do the ends justify the means?

Several significant holdouts from the old Calvinism, and even old Methodism, would debate these questions. This would lead to even more new denominations in America, many of which still survive today.

Nothing has been mentioned of the Catholics and Lutherans so far. The Roman Catholic Church existed in early America; however, they develop in a very different way and do not arrive in large numbers until later in the narrative, usually along bodies of water. They are not well represented in the prairies and hamlets where the new American Christianity spreads.

The Lutherans were present during the colonial period, in what would eventually become New York, but do not have significant numbers until the nineteenth century. Their language and liturgy would separate them from the larger American landscape, yet they were by no means completely insulated from the culture in which they chose to settle. It would take several generations before the Americanization of the Lutheran church. Even with a change of language and a diversity of worship styles, the American Lutheran church is still seen in many parts of America as foreign. This is a direct result of the movements referenced above.

All these topics will be detailed in future articles.

I hope this brief introduction to the series has given you an appetite for the history of your nation. Perhaps it will make sense of why your neighbor is closing the blinds and shuttering the windows as you bundle your infant in white and enter the family van on the way to his Baptism, eager to sing a chorale and settle into the familiar rhythms of the Common Service.

It is my hope that by shining a light on the mind of your typical American Christian (or Latter-day Saint, or Jehovah's Witness) you might better be able to communicate the truth of your faith to them, to understand that they are products of something unique in Christian history, and to understand that, while new, they have their traditions, their presuppositions, and an earnest zeal in what was handed down to them from the last several generations.

It is my greater hope in discussing these movements on the American continent that we may find a hunger for the Faith once delivered to the saints, find hope in the pure well of Scripture, rest in the strength of the historic Creeds, find the zeal of the early fathers, both Apostolic and Lutheran, and guard and maintain our way as we travel the path to glory. 🙏

Rev. Willie Grills is the Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church of Avilla in Alexander, AR.

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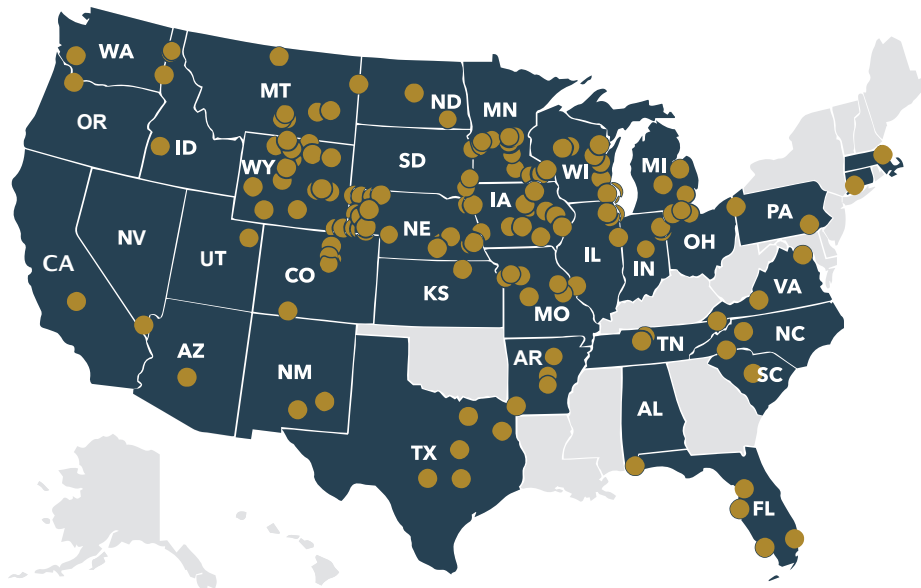


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A Word from the President

Greetings to you all from Luther Classical College (LCC),

I consider it a great honor to have been called as president of LCC, and after prayerful consideration, I accepted the divine call with great joy. Even though the school has not yet launched its first semester, it has already proven itself to be a highly successful organization, under remarkable leadership and faithful staff. We want to thank our faithful readers for already joining us in our vision, as we prepare our institution to form Lutheran young people with the best that education has to offer and by cultivating Biblical virtues and Christian faith in each of their lives. The interest in our school and her bold and transparent mission—one that involves uniting Christian living, Christian thinking, and Christian worship in an educational context—is inspiring as we begin to make our mark on the American landscape.

Rev. Dr. Harold Ristau
President, Luther Classical College

PRESIDENTIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

On December 23rd, 2023, supporters of Luther Classical College received an announcement that Rev. Dr. Ristau accepted the call to serve as the first President of LCC. The following brief bio is an excerpt from that announcement:

Dr. Ristau has served the Church faithfully for over 20 years. A native Canadian, Dr. Ristau earned his MDiv. at Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary (CLTS) in St.

Catharines, ON in 2000. He holds an MA in Political Science from the University of Waterloo (1996) and a PhD in Religious Studies from McGill University (2007).

From serving as a parish pastor at an inner-city, multi-ethnic LCMS congregation in Montreal, including prison chaplaincy and ministry to refugees, and from the mission field with Chinese and Muslims in Canada to the mission field with Lutherans in Africa, Dr. Ristau has committed his life to proclaiming the gospel to the lost and using his unique gifts to serve the Church in challenging positions all over the globe.

In addition to his extensive service for Lutheran Church Canada (LC-C) and LC-MS ministries, Dr. Ristau also served honorably as a chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces in both English and French Canada for eleven years with the Air Force, Infantry, and paratroopers. Deployed to the Middle East on several occasions, soldiering alongside the U.S. Army and functioning as a first responder and crisis intervener, Dr. Ristau has been honored by the Canadian government and Chief of National Defense with one of their highest commendations for his work in Afghanistan.

Called as a professor at CLTS in 2017, Dr. Ristau led accreditation and recruitment efforts for the seminary. Two years ago, CLTS temporarily deployed Dr. Ristau to Lutherans in Africa in Kenya as missionary and Academic Dean at the Lutheran School of Theology.

Dr. Ristau will begin his official duties at Luther Classical College in April 2024.

PRESIDENTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Each candidate for the presidency of Luther Classical College filled out a presidential questionnaire. The LCC Board of Regents was so impressed with Dr. Ristau's answers that we wanted to share with supporters and future students some portions which show the character and convictions of the man who will be leading this College:

My deep Confessional Lutheran convictions and principles, love of traditional liturgy and the Holy Sacraments, and my sincere desire to help instill this same love and Lutheran ethos in young people through classical education at a level of higher education, are passions that, if I were a parent sending my children to LCC, I would hope were shared by the president. I believe that LCC will become a lighthouse to the darkened Lutheran international landscape, but can only effectively be advanced by a president that has bold and solid beliefs. Accordingly, I find LCC's Confession of Faith refreshing and inspiring in light of the state of Lutheran higher education in the USA and elsewhere today.

A lukewarm spiritual health is contagious, and so a president needs to be attentive to the preservation of a Christian life that is harmonized with true doctrine.

I believe that confessional Lutheranism is the best expression of Christianity on earth, evidenced by our soteriology and sacramentology. It is the true Church as established in the inerrant Holy Scripture. I often ask students in my Religious Bodies class to discuss the following statement: "Abraham and St. Paul were 'Lutheran.'" Admittedly it is a strange question, but it prompts discussion on the meaning of the continuity of the Lutheran Church with the ancient one. Orthodox Lutheranism is not a new denomination, but belongs to the true Catholic and Apostolic Church.

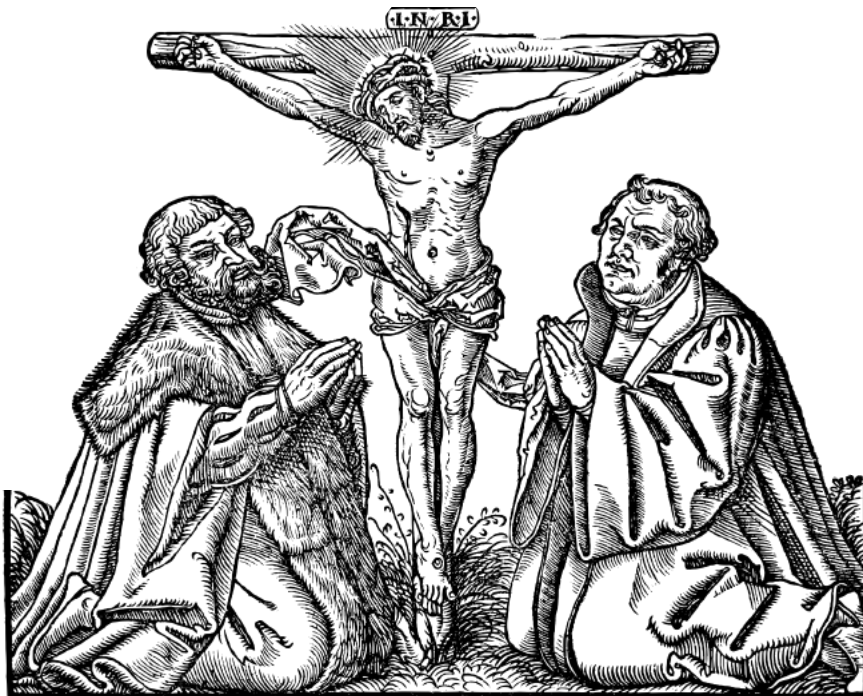
Parents are living breathing examples of the faith, and the kinds of activities they participate in, games they play, movies they watch, music they listen to, are all part and parcel of that modeling of a God-pleasing and Christ-centered household. Only by instilling true doctrine and fostering an environment in which that is supported and enriched, can true love for the neighbor reign and Biblical virtues increase, fruits of the Spirit grow, and the ability to battle vices improve.

Classical education is increasingly important in this age of information as our children wrestle with how to navigate through digital minefields, forcing them to critically evaluate data and prodding them to decipher which questions are worth asking. Socialism is an increasing threat that ultimately uses Marxism as a weapon against children and young people. Classical education offers a powerful defense against these trends.

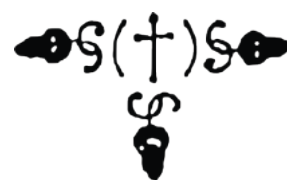
Classical education ought to be embraced by all Lutherans due to its longstanding tradition and the fact that Luther himself was a proponent. Respect for this heritage and for the Church Fathers should suffice in arguing that classical education is the ideal form of education (and ought not simply be treated as one "learning style" amongst a plethora of other equally valid ones) in the midst of the non-traditional and experimental educational methods and ideas that have poisoned the minds of our children and penetrated our schools today, even many parochial ones, sadly. Yet we need to restore this form of education at all levels. We Lutherans have failed in our compromises as clergy, citizens, and parents, however inadvertently, by allowing Christ's precious redeemed children to be influenced by the subjectivist and humanist spirit of modernity. It is no surprise that the secular world despises classical education.

In terms of my role in the spiritual formation of students: the president acts as one of several mentors to the students and helps steer them in the correct direction as a spiritual guide, helping them in discerning and clarifying their vocation, while maintaining a professional relationship. The president is, after all, ultimately responsible for the academic and spiritual formation of students and the overall shape of the school. In addition, he should be praying for the students regularly and ensuring that the students are the *raison d'être* of the school. After all, their parents have entrusted them into our care and would expect nothing less than excellence in education and care. 🙏





Toward a Lutheran Theology of Beauty



Like her sisters Truth and Goodness, Beauty has also been mistreated and shunned by this materialistic, secular age. With few exceptions, artists openly defy her while architects no longer strive to please her. Others strive for fame and originality while openly embracing ugliness and nihilism. But even though society tries to turn away from Beauty as it plunges deeper and deeper into barbarism, ordinary people still thirst for her: the world's great cathedrals are filled with tourists, massive crowds flock to art museums filled with religious paintings, and there is perpetual demand for the music of Bach and Beethoven. It seems that as our age becomes uglier, so that Beauty is more openly marginalized, she becomes more important, more necessary than ever.

Yet, why should Lutherans consider beauty in the first place, and how is it to be defined? Is it a subjective experience, with people free to define it differently? Or is it objective, rooted in laws, formulas, and ratios? In what follows, I will first give a classical answer to these questions, rooted in Greek philosophical presuppositions (which, for the most part, early Christians accepted, but also transformed). Next, I will compare this philosophical approach with a scriptural approach to beauty, noting that if God's "glory" is His Divine beauty, then the Bible has much to say about it. From the interplay between the classical and

scriptural approaches to beauty, we will then see how God graciously makes us beautiful through the work of Christ, and how the Holy Spirit leads us to do beautiful works. Therefore, as I will argue, the Father calls us through beauty, the Son makes us beautiful, and the Spirit enables our beautiful acts.

Plato deals with beauty frequently in both early and late dialogues.¹ Towards the beginning of the philosopher's career, he falls into a typically Greek definition of beauty as that which leads to virtue or is "fitting." However, in later dialogues, as Plato begins to develop the theory of forms, beauty increasingly is seen as a pathway to "the Good," and it is defined most typically as something like "the harmony of the parts in the whole," or the "participation of the multiple in the One."² For the most part, Aristotle follows his teacher's views on beauty while avoiding much of the speculation of the later dialogues. In a typical passage, the philosopher writes, "Again, to be beautiful, a living creature, and every whole made up of parts, must not only present a certain order in its arrangement of parts, but also be of a certain definite magnitude. Beauty is a matter of size and order..."³ In all this we come upon ideas such as unity, proportion, order, and harmony. The later philosopher, Plotinus, as well as Pseudo Dionysius the Areopagite, emphasize *clarity* above all else as characteristic of beauty.⁴ Clarity is the power by which something discloses reality, presenting to the senses what is good and true.

Considering the Greek philosophical ideas of beauty, we could say that the classical, Western approach to beauty is that it is a transcendent, objective property that involves harmony, clarity, and unity.

One will not find abstract ruminations on beauty in the Christian Scriptures, but one will find plenty of passages where God, creation, and people are described as “beautiful.” Various words in Hebrew can be translated as “beautiful,” including נָאֵוֶה (*na’veh*, “comely”) and יָפֵה (*yapeh*, “fair”). In the Septuagint and New Testament, the most typical Greek word for “beautiful” also means “good.” This is the adjective καλός (*kalos*). Another word appearing four times in the New Testament is ὥραϊος (*horaios*, “fair”). But when the Scriptures describe the splendor of God, the holiness of His people, and the wonders of creation, the word “glory” (כְּבוֹד, *kavod*, δόξα, *doxa*) rather than “beauty” is most often used. Typical examples are Psalm 27:4, Psalm 96:9, and 1 Corinthians 15:41. The theologian Hans Urs Von Balthasar has argued persuasively that the scriptural notion of God’s “glory” is Divine beauty, meaning that in relation to God, beauty and glory are interchangeable.⁵ Following the Bible, Von Balthasar, and other Christian theologians, we might say that something is beautiful *if* it has fellowship with the splendor and majesty of God, and thus reveals Him (see Ps. 19:1 and Rom. 1:19). In a First Article sense, then, the creational beauty we see in everything from flowers to human faces is part of God’s address to us as His creatures.

Yet, the surprising aspect of beauty in the Scriptures is that while authors may not exhaustively philosophize about the property of beauty, there are numerous passages where God is shown to *give* beauty to His people. Creational beauty is God’s *address* to us, but God also addresses us through the Son, for as the Lover says to His beloved in Song of Songs, “Behold, you are beautiful, my love; behold, you are beautiful; your eyes are doves” (Song 1:15). Such language in the Song of Songs should be taken seriously and connected to the redemptive love of Christ. Indeed, we find again and again in the Bible that God pursues His bride and gives to her His beauty (e.g., Eze. 16:12; Rev. 19:7). The Bridegroom glories in His Bride; Christ loves and beautifies His Church. In a wondrous way, it is Christ who says, “You are beautiful as Tirzah, my love, lovely as Jerusalem” (Song 6:4).

The depth of God’s love for us is seen in the work of the Suffering Servant, Christ. God sends the One who shall become disfigured and who shall be marred (Is. 52:14) in order to restore His people to glory and beauty. The Son becomes horribly *un*-beautiful, because this is the price God pays to

make us beautiful. In this we understand beauty not to be merely attractiveness, but the light of divine glory which fills the righteous ones. And for us the Cross is glory, though to the world it is foolishness and ugliness. No Greek philosopher would be able to account for this paradox of beauty in Christian theology. The classical ideal of beauty is helpful up to a point, but until one loves the crucified Son of God, all attempts at making definitions are fruitless; we must patiently wait until God reveals Himself to us as the Bridegroom.

In our Lutheran churches today, we have a unique opportunity to re-anchor beauty in God in a three-fold sense (which corresponds to our Creed). The first is that we must remember that beauty is objective in the sense that all truly beautiful things participate in God’s beauty. So things are only beautiful insofar as they reflect the splendor of God’s truth and goodness. This may be a radical belief in our world today, but we must continue to insist that the wonders of the universe are God’s words to us (Ps. 19:1-4). The second thing to remember is that beauty is not merely in the eye of the beholder, but that we are in the eye of the Beholder: He who sees all things also makes them beautiful in their time (Eccl. 3:11). God looks upon us as His beautiful Bride, though we deserve nothing at all. Finally, and to connect all this to the Third Article, the Holy Spirit makes all our vocational works to be beautiful, though they are often ugly in the eyes of the world. In our churches and homes, all that we do and say can be beautiful, for the Bride’s behavior reflects the love that the Bridegroom has for her. The Bride has all that the Bridegroom has given her: righteousness, holiness, peace, and joy. As we contemplate the beauty of God’s creation and embrace the beauty that God gives to us, we also bear the beauty of the Lord in our work and duties. We are precious in His eyes (Is. 43:4), and He makes us into a crown of beauty, a royal diadem before all the nations (Is. 62:3). ☞

Rev. Adam Edward Carnehl is pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Randolph, NJ, and is currently a PhD student in theology at the University of Nottingham. He is the author of *The Artist as Divine Symbol: Chesterton’s Theological Aesthetic* (Cascade, forthcoming).

End Notes

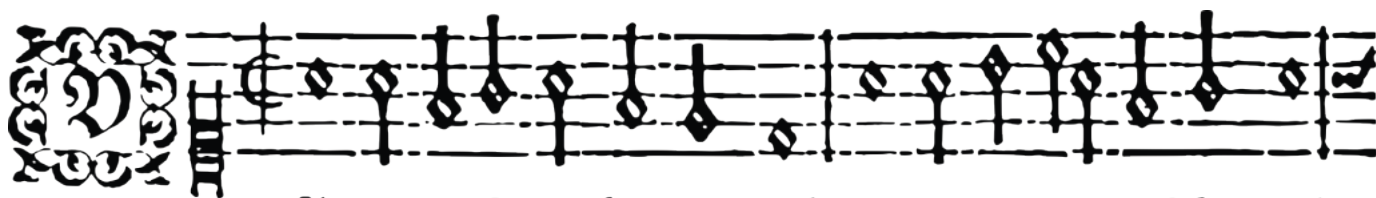
¹ In this brief explanation of Plato on beauty, I follow G. M. A. Grube, “Plato’s Theory of Beauty,” *The Monist*, April 1927, Vol. 37, No. 2 (April, 1927), 269-288.

² See especially the *Philebus*.

³ Aristotle, *Poetics* §7, *The Complete Works of Aristotle, Revised Oxford Translation Vol. II*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University. 1995. 2322.

⁴ Sixto J. Castro, “On Surprising Beauty: Aquinas’s Gift to Aesthetics,” *Religions*. 2021, 12. 779.

⁵ Hans Urs Von Balthasar. *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics. I: Seeing the Form*. Ignatius and Crossroad: San Francisco and New York. 1982.



Ar- ter vn-ser im Him-mel-reich/ der du ons alle heif- sest gleich/

Te Laudamus Hymnal Supplement



Te Laudamus—a hymnal supplement made up of predominantly Reformation chorales (most not included in current hymnals) with some other older and newer hymns (also not included in current hymnals), the Willan setting of the Divine Service, Reformation settings of Matins and Vespers, and all 150 Psalms and the Propers pointed to the Gregorian Psalm Tones—will be published this summer, 2024.

About a decade ago conversations were numerous among colleagues and friends about how many Reformation chorales, core Lutheran hymns, were missing in current hymnals, like Luther's *O Lord, Look Down from Heaven, Behold* and Paul Gerhardt's *I Will Sing My Maker's Praises*, just to mention only two of the many. Because the church was being deprived of so many of its historic hymnic gems, it seemed evident to us that our current repertory needed to be supplemented. We also observed we were being deprived of some of the original hymn stanzas written for these gems, which were identified for us in the 2012 publication of *Walther's Hymnal*, edited by Matthew Carver. With the aid of this new reference and with the assistance of older hymnals, the idea of producing a hymnal supplement to remedy the above was conceived.

A pastor from Michigan, the Rev. Joel Hensel, approached me, seeking his help to revise and expand the hymnal of the Protestant (accent on "tes") Conference, *A New Song*, 1975. Rev. Hensel knew me well, ever since we were schoolmates and friends at Concordia, Bronxville and at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Joel served as pastor of an independent Lutheran congregation in the Protestant Conference. For a history of that Conference, one may refer to its magazine, *Faith-Life*.

Long story short, I agreed to help, the Protestant Con-

ference supported the project, and work on what evolved into the production of the hymnal supplement, *Te Laudamus*, began. Rev. Hensel became the chief-editor. I was his assistant. Rev. Michael Frese agreed to publish the book, and until recently served as project manager and layout editor, which task Matthew Carver has now. Also on the editorial board are Pastor Jesse Krusemark, a graduate of the Fort Wayne Seminary and our music engraver, the Rev. Dr. Michael Albrecht, a retired Protestant pastor, and Dr. Carl Springer, a Humanities professor at the University of Tennessee.

During the last eight years at Protestant conferences that meet three weekends a year (in February, June, and October) I have been given time to present each stage of the hymnal's work-in-progress, at which presentations every attendee has had the opportunity to sing through and proof the work, identify mistakes, and offer suggestions. Extensive efforts proofing the work have been made by Pastor Michael Albrecht, Mrs. Margaret Hinz, and Mr. Mel Koss. Indeed, many hands have contributed to this enterprise, and we editors are delighted that the Conference has liked our work and encouraged us every step of the way. We are especially indebted to our chief-editor, Rev. Joel Hensel, whose influence and contributions permeate this book, and who, fortunately, was able to complete most of his editorial responsibilities before our Lord called him to his eternal home in 2018.

Work on *Te Laudamus* since its genesis has been guided primarily by the Gottesdienst theology of worship, practiced and taught by the fathers of the Reformation. That theology is stated so clearly in the Introduction to *Lutheran Worship*, 1982, where it enunciates the basic truth that worship begins with God [Gottesdienst]:

"Our Lord speaks and we listen. His Word bestows what it says. Faith that is born from what is heard

acknowledges the gifts received with eager thankfulness and praise. Music is drawn into this thankfulness and praise, enlarging and elevating the adoration of our gracious giver God.”

It is noteworthy that the very first words on the cover of *Te Laudamus*, its title, reflect this divine direction. *Te*, the divine pronoun “Thee,” is purposely placed first, and *laudamus* (our praise of Him) second. For in worship God first creates, revives, and sustains faith in us, and then in response we thank Him in joyful praise.

In this spirit the editors of *Te Laudamus* proceeded. Determined to listen to God first [*Gottesdienst*] as the title projects, we placed God’s “hymns” first. All 150 Psalms are included—we did not presume to pick and choose, as editors have done elsewhere, reducing the number of what God perceives we need! All 150 are pointed for congregational singing to the ancient Gregorian Psalm Tones, all nine. These were used by the early church and by the church in the Reformation era, preserved in 16th century Lutheran resources (e.g., Mattheus Ludecus and Lucas Lossius), and, perhaps, were patterned after those used in Old Testament Synagogue and Temple worship.

After God speaks in His 150 Psalter “hymns,” we are given opportunity to respond with hymns written by human poets, some old (with Reformation contributions well represented) and some new (yet reflecting the theology of the Reformation)—a total of 172, numbered 151 to 322. These are organized by Church Year seasons and principal feast days and by topical categories.

Unique to *Te Laudamus* is that it includes more of the following than any other current hymnal:

- all 36 hymns associated with Luther as composer, and/or as poet or translator, and/or as editor (plus his *Te Deum* and Great Litany),
- 29 Paul Gerhardt hymns,
- 13 hymns by Martin Franzmann, and
- 24 early church Latin hymns (e.g., Ambrose, Sedulius, Prudentius), several of which have been paired with the chorales that evolved from them.

Color images of sacred art pieces precede each major section and stand within the Hymn section before each seasonal and topical division. Black and white images of woodcuts and paintings are used within sections. Included are works by Albrecht Dürer and Lucas Cranach, and engravings from *Das Babstsche Gesangbuch*, 1545, the last hymnal for which Luther wrote the Preface.

In recognition of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, the entire corpus of Luther’s hymn and liturgical contributions are included in *Te Laudamus*. Since other current hymnals also include some of those Luther hymns, there are a few duplications here. However, wherever there is a duplication, *TL* offers the duplication in a unique musical setting and/or with a unique translation. Also, in recognition of this Anniversary, 43 other Reformation era chorales (not found in other current hymnals) are included.

As it set out to do, *Te Laudamus* has restored many fine stanzas of historic Reformation chorales, stanzas not included in other current hymnals. If stanzas need to be reduced, pastors now have the opportunity to make their own choices of which stanzas to omit. If reduction is not needed, pastors may wish to divide the hymn into sections, singing some stanzas perhaps before the sermon and others afterwards. Furthermore, multiple stanzas provide opportunities to use a variety of forms of alternation (e.g., congregation with choir, and/or with soloists, and/or with organ, and/or men with women, etc.). Finally, *TL* provides historic settings (harmonizations) by Praetorius, Scheidt, Schein, Vulpus, Hassler, and Bach (settings also not found in other current hymnals).

After God’s 150 Psalms, and our 172 hymns, the Liturgical section begins with more entries not found in any other current hymnals. First is a sturdy, churchly setting of the Divine Service, composed by the mid-20th century composer Healey Willan, arguably the finest modern setting available to the church today. It was commissioned by the LCMS Commission on Worship and published as a pamphlet folder by CPH in 1958. *TL* editors, however, have provided some useful additions.

For whatever reason, Willan did not compose for the congregation a setting of the Introit’s Gloria Patri nor an Alleluia (triple, double, or single). This “oversight” the editors have addressed. They have provided a section titled “Propers,” in which Propers for all Sundays and major Feast Days are set to historically appropriate music. The Introit, Gradual, and Alleluia Verse are pointed to five Gregorian Psalm Tones (Tones II, IV, V, VI, and VIII). So that the congregation can sing the Gloria Patri in coordination with the Introit’s verses that precede it, and the Alleluia with its Verse(s), *TL* has provided settings of these, set to the same five Tones used for the verses associated with them. No other current hymnal provides such an accessible coordination between Propers and the Service itself.

Also, in the Willan Setting, he did not compose for the congregation a setting of the Nine-fold Kyrie, appropriate

for High Feasts and special occasions. This “oversight” the editors of *TL* have also addressed. After Willan’s Three-fold Kyrie, *Te Laudamus* includes a very fitting Nine-fold Kyrie, which Willan composed originally for *The Hymnal 1940*.

This Divine Service is followed by two ancient morning and evening Offices, Matins and Vespers, with Versicles and Responses, the Venite, and eight seasonal Responses set to a 16th century Lutheran adaptation of the original Gregorian notes. Included also with Matins are choices of two *Te Deum* settings, one by Luther and the other by Willan, and a setting of the Benedictus, pointed to Psalm Tone II. In Vespers there is a setting of the Magnificat, pointed to Psalm Tone IX (*Tonus Peregrinus*), and a setting of the Nunc Dimittis, pointed to Psalm Tone III. Finally, also available is Luther’s Great Litany, pointed for chanting by pastor and congregation, using a melody Luther himself adapted for his German Litany.

Following the *Te Laudamus* liturgical section is the Appendix. As mentioned above, in it are the historic Church Year Propers (Introit, Gradual, and Alleluia/Tract Verse), as well as the Collects, pointed for chanting to the ancient Tones as preserved in Reformation sources. Listed with these are the Old Testament, Epistle, and Gospel readings associated with each observation, and a historic Hymn of the Day, along with three Auxiliary Hymns. Inserted into the Temporal Cycle are key Sanctoral observances, such as St. Stephen, St. John, and Holy Innocents, the Marian Feasts (Presentation of our Lord and the Purification of Mary, Annunciation, and Visitation), Nativity of St. John the Baptist, St. Peter and St. Paul, and St. Michael and All Angels. Also in the Appendix is an index of topics covered in 53 historic Collects for Special Needs that are placed throughout the Hymn section where there were open spaces. Finally, the Appendix includes the Proper Prefaces pointed to the Proper Tones for the pastor, a sample of the Prayer of the Church, and Instructions for the Use of Playing Handbells with the Introits, Graduals, and Alleluia Verses, with notation for the Five Gregorian Psalm Tones these Propers use.

Before hard-bound copies of *Te Laudamus* are published next summer, spiral-bound proofing copies will be available for sale this winter for individuals or groups that wish to use it for that purpose. Orders for proofing copies may be placed with me by sending requests to dbreuning@frontier.com. After we receive feedback from proofers and corrections are made, the hard-bound copies of *Te Laudamus* will be published by and purchased through Emmanuel Press.

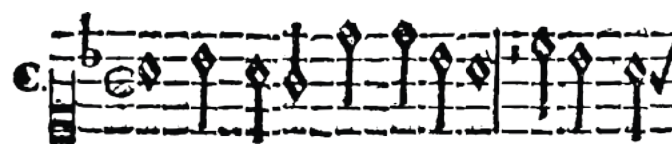
In conclusion, as we continue listening to God’s whole-

some Word and receiving Him in His Sacraments, we pray *Te Laudamus* will be a blessing to His Church, providing for Her an edifying, living supplement through which we will hear God’s forgiveness, mercy, and salvation, and respond to Him with thankful praise.

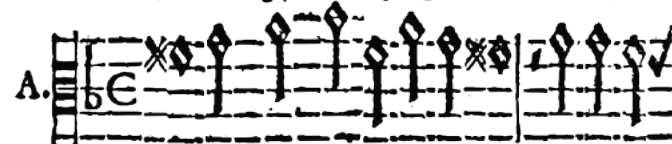
To God alone be the glory, *solī Deo gloria!*



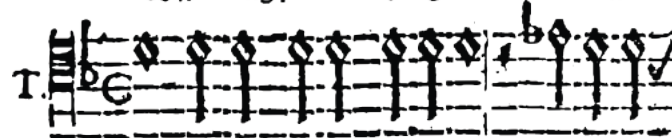
Rev. Dr. Daniel Reuning is the Kantor at Redeemer Lutheran in Ft. Wayne, IN. He is the founder of The Bach Collegium—Fort Wayne and has served as its artistic director since 2002.



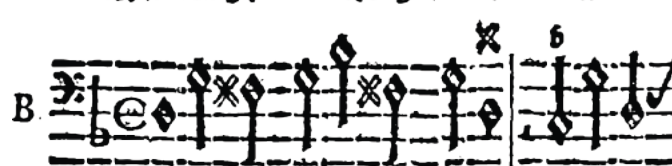
Ach Gott vom Himmel ſieh darein/Und laß dich
Wie wenig ſind der Heiligen dein/Verlaſſen



Ach Gott vom Himmel ſieh darein/Und laß dich
Wie wenig ſind der Heiligen dein/Verlaſſen



Ach Gott vom Himmel ſieh darein/Und laß dich
Wie wenig ſind der Heiligen dein/Verlaſſen



Ach Gott vom Himmel ſieh darein/Und laß dich
Wie wenig ſind der Heiligen dein/ Verlaſſen



No Greater Love



WHAT LOVE, that formed the heavens and the earth
And shaped His precious man from dust and clay;
What love, that knows each soul before his birth
And guides and guards his every step and way.

What love, that placed the turning, flaming sword
To guard the Tree of Life from fallen man;
What love, that vowed a new abode, restored
By Promised Seed, that we should live again.

What love, O God, that brought Thee down to earth
To share man's mortal flesh and lowly race;
What love, O Christ, that spurred Thy humble birth
And entrance to this world—what boundless grace!

What love, dear Lamb, that led Thee to the tree
To humbly suffer much and then to die;
What love, my God, that fixed Thine eyes on me
To lift my fallen soul to heav'n on high.

What love, that for the sake of Christ, who saves,
Restores my soul to life from sin and death;
What love, that leads me from my self-made grave
Towards heav'nly life upon the narrow path.

What love! I say with joyous, grateful soul
That owes my all to Thee, and only Thee.
My God is love! And since I am made whole,
I'll sing His praise in heav'n eternally!

The editors of Christian Culture received ten entries for our first poetry contest, representing 6 states and 5 graduating classes of prospective LCC students. Thank you to all who entered, and congratulations to Julia on winning the contest!

The Editors

This poem roughly follows a chiasmic structure by groupings of two lines. It mirrors God's saving plan of His descent to us with His salvation of each individual soul, working towards raising us to perfection again. ❧

Julia Koester is a member of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Walnut, IL and is set to graduate high school in 2026.



Jesus, Lord of Day and Night

Anna Hahn, 2023

8.7.8.7.8.8

Jesu Christ, mein Abendherr

Nathanael Hahn, 2023

1. Je - sus, Lord of day and night, Thou Who call - est
2. As Thou cam'st to sin - ful man In the eve - ning
3. As Thou didst at day - light's end Show the wa - ters
4. As Thou didst in Ja - cob's flight Pledge that Thou wouldst

all to be - ing, Word by Whom cre - at - ed light
in the gar - den When Thy judg - ment's curse be - gan,
had a - bat - ed, And didst life and com - fort send
ne'er for - sake him, Show - ing him Thy heav - en's height

First was ga - thered in - to eve - ning— Be my prayer, as
Yet didst pro - mise grace and par - don— Je - sus, come and
By the dove Thy saints a - wait - ed— Lord, send com - fort
Where his Seed at last would take him— Gate of Heav'n, as

day is end - ing, In - cense un - to Thee as - cend - ing.
show my er - rors, Clothe my shame, and end my ter - rors.
by Thy Spir - it Till I shall Thy life in - her - it.
sleep comes o'er me, Ev - er set Thy - self be - fore me.

5. As Thou didst Thine Israel seal
On the eve of their salvation
By the blood and paschal meal,
Safe from death and condemnation—
Lamb of God, be my defender;
Let no harm my dwelling enter.

6. As from David's wicked foes
Ev'ry evening Thou didst shield him—
Though their lies would round him close,
Thy protection still concealed him—
Savior, when the Foe pursues me,
Never let his lies accuse me.

7. As upon that evening blest
When Thou borest our transgression,
Thou wast laid awhile to rest
Till the morn of resurrection—
Son of God, do not forsake me;
In the morning come and wake me.

8. Blessed Jesus, here abide,
For the hour of night is nearing!
Stay and never turn aside;
Haste the day of Thine appearing
When Thy light shall leave me never,
And I'll dwell with Thee forever!

Free recording and sheet music available at cc.lutherclassical.org/evening-hymn





Review: Romeo and Juliet



any find it irritating that, today, *Romeo and Juliet* is received as the quintessence of Shakespeare, and therefore of all literature in English. At least for the moment, everyone who reads books will know something of the story. Two young people from feuding families fall in love at first sight. Romeo (of house Montague) and Juliet (of house Capulet) profess love on a balcony at night. They are secretly married. There is violence in the streets and a plot to elope. Juliet fakes her own death so she can have Romeo forever. Romeo thinks she's really dead, and so kills himself. Juliet awakens from feigned death, finds Romeo dead, and so naturally kills herself as well. In the wake of love and death, Montague and Capulet resolve for a chastened peace.

No other story from literature has so successfully made the crossover from “high art” to “pop culture.” In film, Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 production is considered the most successful film adaptation of any Shakespeare, and Baz Luhrmann's 1996 *Romeo + Juliet* the most influential. The story became a 1957 Broadway musical as *West Side Story*, also adapted into Academy Award winning movies in 1961 and 2021. As I write in ambivalent expectation of the 2024 Super Bowl, I recall that Taylor Swift's 2008 song “Love Story,” which was the first country song to reach number one on the mainstream Top 40 charts, is an extended allusion to Shakespeare's story: “...You were Romeo... and my daddy said, ‘Stay away from Juliet.’”

And, again, many find all of this irritating. Some irritation may be due to just this current over-exposure to the “star-crossed lovers” trope, but some certainly has to do with Shakespeare's story itself, at least as we understand it. I write for traditional Christians, but for such as have been touched by modern sensibilities. I concede that some

things may irritate modern people, some things may irritate traditional Christians, and, to the degree that our readers may be both, the same things may irritate us for more than one reason.

Here, then, is a list of things about Romeo and Juliet that might irritate *modern people*. First, we're cynical of love at first sight, skeptical about people in its grip. There is not enough distance, enough emotional intelligence, between Romeo and his own feelings. Second, we're rather too self-centered to take seriously Juliet's conviction that this one, this Romeo, does and shall always provide such meaning and happiness to life that without this Romeo life itself is not worth having. Finally, we're too jaded to believe, as do Romeo and Juliet, that permanent, monogamous matrimony is an advisable consummation of teenage infatuation (Juliet is not yet fourteen; Romeo is older, but not the more mature).

To encourage such world-weary moderns to read the play anyway, I would say this: None of these issues are really modern, nor are our anxieties and doubts more evolved or sophisticated than Romeo and Juliet's earnest passion. Shakespeare understood all the reasonable caveats, and you will understand them better when you read about them in his play.

Likewise, a list of things that might irritate *traditional Christians*. First, Romeo and Juliet defy parents and other authorities to pursue their adolescent drives along destructive paths. They do not obey their fathers, and so do not live long in the land (Ex. 20:12). Second, such youthful drives, romantic or otherwise, never conduce to wisdom. These kids need more Proverbs, less passion. “Flee youthful lusts,” says St. Paul (2 Tim. 2:22). Finally, since Shakespeare's story is supposed to romanticize and glamorize such foolish, disobedient, risky ways, it has little to offer

the discerning, Christian consumer of classical literature.

Fair enough. But, again, the expression of such concerns is part of the purpose of the story. Shakespeare himself held to an objective, traditional morality, but his play is not a parable about the dangers of passion or the evils of patriarchy any more than it is a celebration of adolescence or a valorization of maturity. People are overwhelmed unto death by forces larger than their own lives, but which also include their own virtues and vices. That's the classical meaning of tragedy, it happens in real life all the time, and Christians should meditate deeply upon it.

Romeo and Juliet are robbed of life, love, and marriage; Capulet and Montague are robbed of their children. Shakespeare does not expect you to decide who are the he-

roes and who are the villains. Rather, as you read, you should try to sympathize with the characters at the same time that you think about the virtue and vice, wisdom and folly of their actions. In life and literature, hate mixes with honor, love with vice, shame with peace, and virtue with violence and death.

The play you remember, the one that irritates you, is probably not the one you'll find in Shakespeare. Read it to soften your cynical modern soul, and sharpen your moral wits. ♡

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“It is not the earth
that is eternal,
but Christ.”





“Ruth in the Field of Boaz”

by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld

See the images on the next page and on the inside back cover



Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1794–1872) was a Lutheran painter and illustrator. He was born in Leipzig and received his first art lessons from his father, who was a painter. Carolsfeld went to the Vienna Academy, spent several years in Rome, moved to Munich, and finally ended up as a professor of the academy in Dresden and the director of an art museum. During his time at the Vienna Academy and in Rome, he associated with the Nazarene movement, which was a reaction against modern artistic styles. The Nazarenes desired to bring back religious painting, as idealized in the works of the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance. They took up residence in an empty monastery in Rome. They lived simply, saw to their daily duties, and worked on their paintings; their life was reminiscent of the guilds of the Middle Ages. The Nazarenes had intended to illustrate the entire Bible, but ended up going their separate ways before it was accomplished. Most of the artists went back to Germany and taught at academies or oversaw art museums. Carolsfeld didn’t forget the project, and he single-handedly completed 240 Bible illustrations over the course of several decades. Though he lived during the Romantic Period, his association with the Nazarenes gave him a Renaissance ideal, and he reacted against the spirit of the age.

In 1828, during his time in Munich, Carolsfeld painted “Ruth in the Field of Boaz.” Later, when working on the illustrations for his *Picture Bible* (published 1852–1860), Carolsfeld based his illustration for Ruth on his previous painting. Both images depict many parts of Ruth 2 simultaneously: Ruth gleaning (2:3), Boaz’s conversation with the servant who was in charge of the reapers (2:5–7), Boaz’s address to Ruth (2:8–9, 11–12), Ruth’s thankful response (2:10, 13), the water and bread that Boaz offers (2:9, 14), the sack of grain that Ruth brings back to Naomi (2:17–

18). Renaissance-era paintings often included a whole event, sometimes to the point of including the same character in the painting multiple times. For example, Jesus appears more than once in *Calling of the Apostles* by Domenico Ghirlandaio (1481), *Scenes from the Passion of Christ* by Hans Memling (c. 1471), and *The Temptations of Christ* by Sandro Botticelli (c. 1480). Modern artworks, perhaps influenced by the camera, often capture a snapshot from a scene rather than the entire event. While he didn’t include characters multiple times in the same illustration, Carolsfeld maintained the skill of capturing a whole event in a single image.

Comparing Carolsfeld’s two works makes for an interesting study in how the artistic medium shapes decisions about content. Notice how Carolsfeld has background foliage, including a large central tree, in the painting. The muted greens do not overpower the focal point of the painting, which is Ruth’s face. In the drawing, however, there is no background foliage. Since the drawing only involves black lines on a white background, the complexity of leaves and branches behind the characters would have drawn the focus away from where Carolsfeld wanted it. So that there wouldn’t be a void in the middle of the drawing after removing the trees, he leaned the servant’s staff forward instead of backward, thus filling the gap between the characters and keeping the illustration balanced. Note also that in the painting Carolsfeld makes the grain texture rather muted and gives the main characters prominence by their colored garments. In the woodcut he takes advantage of the lines in the grain to give it an averaged light gray tone. He then makes the servant contrast the background by shading him more, and Boaz and Ruth contrast the background (and have symmetry with each other) by making their garments lighter. Medium and content are inseparable. That truth applies to art, literature, the architecture of our homes, and the worship of God.

Carolsfeld's complete Bible illustrations are available online for free. Visit dia.pitts.emory.edu/advanced-search.cfm and search for call number 1853BibID. In 1999 Dover published Carolsfeld's Bible illustrations under the title *Treasury of Bible Illustrations: Old and New Testaments* (ISBN 978-0486407036). While the book is out of print, searching the ISBN on bookfinder.com shows quite a few used options. Carolsfeld's Bible illustrations make for excellent devotional material, especially when paired with the corresponding Scripture reading. Children love to compare what they hear from Scripture with what they see in Carolsfeld's pictures, and because he seeks to represent a whole event rather than just a moment, there are many

details in each picture that tie in with the reading. Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld has given a gift to the Church in his Bible illustrations. May they serve you well in a life of piety and devotion to Christ! 🙏

Rev. Andrew Richard is Assistant Pastor, Headmaster, and an Upper Level Teacher at Mount Hope Lutheran Church and School in Casper, WY.

Sources

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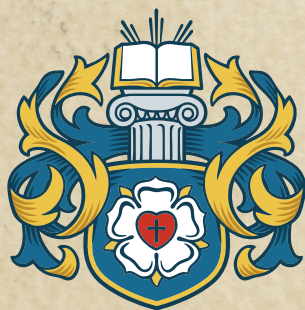
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LUTHER CLASSICAL COLLEGE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Dr. Harold Ristau has accepted the call to serve as President of Luther Classical College. See page 18 of this issue for a word from the President, a summary of the presidential announcement, and excerpts from Rev. Dr. Ristau's presidential questionnaire.

The Academic Catalog of Luther Classical College is now available online at lutherclassical.org/academic-catalog. Paper copies are being mailed to all prospective students for the first cohort (August 2025 enrollment) who have completed the Pre-Admission Form at lutherclassical.org/pre-admission.

The catalog includes a description of all core courses for the B.A. and A.A. degrees in Classical Liberal Arts, plus program-specific requirements for the general, pre-seminary, teacher certification, parish musician, and trade partnership tracks. The catalog also lists information concerning tuition and fees, financial aid, and student housing plans. Additionally, the catalog includes a treatise concerning the unique educational philosophy of the college. For an excerpt from the "Educational Philosophy" section of the Academic Catalog, please see the article on page 2 of this issue.

Registration is now open for LCC's second annual **Christian Culture Conference**. This year's theme is Lutheranism in a Post-Christian America. The dates for the conference are Tuesday and Wednesday, June 4 and 5. For more information and to register, visit lutherclassical.org/cc2024/.

Mr. Walter C. Dissen fell asleep in the Lord on August 2, 2023 at the blessed age of 91 years. Mr. Dissen's name is well known within the LCMS. He served faithfully on boards and committees of our Synod and seminaries, where he staunchly defended biblical inerrancy during the Battle for the Bible. The Board of Regents of Luther Classical College is honored to announce a generous gift Mr. Dissen bequeathed upon his death: a \$2 million endowment to fund an academic chair at Luther Classical College. With this gift, the Board of LCC has established the **Walter C. Dissen Chair in Confessional Lutheranism**, and we are pleased to announce the appointment of President Ristau to this chair. Dr. Ristau will be invested with the honors of holding this Chair at our Christian Culture Conference this June.