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The *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* is a continuation of the *Clergy Bulletin* (1941–1960). The purpose of the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, as was the purpose of the *Clergy Bulletin*, is to provide a testimony of the theological position of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and also to promote the academic growth of her clergy roster by providing scholarly articles, rooted in the inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

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Foreword

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WHAT IS A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION? THAT IS a question with which some Lutheran educators and institutions, like, Bethany Lutheran College, are wrestling. Though people have strong opinions on what liberal arts education is, there is considerable disagreement among the opinions. Dr. Erling Teigen, a retired professor of Bethany Lutheran College, brings what light can be to this topic in our first article.

He was called the "Golden Mouth" for a reason. John Chrysostom's sermons were engaging and encouraging, but he was not one to run from a fight. He addressed the evils of the day and those who promoted them, even when it would cost him his position. Pastor Brasich gives an overview of John's life and his sermons and provides a Lutheran evaluation of his sermon content in the second article.

As culture becomes more secular and less Christian, the battlelines between the church and state appear to be more necessary. But where should they be? Pastor Webber's article helps define the Lutheran understand of the Two Kingdoms.

On September 8, 2024 a new mission effort was launched in Eagle Lake, Minnesota. Pastor Matthew Moldstad preached on Ephesians 2:8–10, 19–22 with the theme "God Builds His Church." The sermon and the greeting of the Evangelism and Missions Counselor, Rev. Bradley Kerkow, are published to mark the occasion.

Also included in this issue are three additional sermons and two book reviews.

— TAH

Liberal Arts Education at Bethany Lutheran College

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LSQ Vol. 64, No. 4 (December 2024)

"What should be the character of this public education and how shall the young be educated? The existing practice is perplexing; no one knows on what principle we should proceed."
Aristotle, *Politics VIII, 2,* c. 340 B. C.

"Contemporary discussions of liberal arts education in America are incoherent, for they assume a single tradition of thought while using the terms of two traditions that were and are in conflict."
Robert Hariman, *Rhetorica, 1988.*

IN 1927, THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD bought a school—a failing ladies college, no less. As a leader of the association that purchased the school, the Rev. Dr. Sigurd Ylvisaker said, "The Synod needs just such a school to gather itself around." Over the years, Dr. Ylvisaker reiterated that frequently, explaining that the synod needed such a school for its future—for training clergy, teachers for its congregational schools, and for a well-educated laity.

After a one-year vacancy in the office of president, Dr. Ylvisaker became president and served from 1930 to 1950. No doubt, as he developed the co-educational college, he made use of what he had learned in his own education—Luther College of the Norwegian Synod, the University of Minnesota, Luther Seminary, and the University of Leipzig in Saxony, Germany.

While Ylvisaker, in his many articles in *The Bethany Lutheran College Bulletin,* never used the term *Liberal Arts* or *Liberal education*, probably fearing the baggage recently acquired by the word *liberal.* Nevertheless, the Bethany education he described was one that trained students for citizenship: citizenship in the kingdom of Christ and service to their fellow citizens in the earthly kingdom. It is the thesis of this paper that the form of education Ylvisaker advanced was that developed by the ancient Greek teacher of rhetoric, Isocrates, and the Roman orator-politician-philosopher, Marcus Tullius Cicero. The form was called "Liberal education" because it was for *freemen,* enabling Romans to live as virtuous citizens in a free society, like those of Athens and Rome, with an emphasis on rhetoric—clear communication of truth.

Since 1953, Bethany has referred to itself as a liberal arts college: "Christian Liberal Arts College"; "coeducational, liberal arts college"; "residential, liberal arts college."[1] While the term "liberal arts" is ancient and doesn't always signify something the modern mind can understand, it belongs to a form of education that reaches back at least twenty-five centuries.

The first record of an intensive discussion of the nature of liberal education took place after the college was fully accredited by the North Central Accreditation Association[2] in the 1970s through 1990s. In the 1980s, several faculty members attended conferences on Critical Thinking presented by Dr. Richard Paul in California. In various ways, those who attended Dr. Paul's workshops shared what they had learned with the faculty and aspects of it were incorporated into courses. A phrase brought back by those who attended the workshops on critical thinking was "Thinking about your thinking while you're thinking in order to make your thinking better"—not quite the stuff of liberal arts, but with some commonality.

Study of the liberal arts intensified when the college began preparing four-year baccalaureate programs. That entailed a study of liberal arts higher education which resulted in a document that became a part of the faculty handbook and remains so today, but probably needs to be updated.

While preparing the centennial history of Bethany Lutheran College in anticipation of the 2027 anniversary, I have reviewed documents and studies of curricula over the last hundred years and examined source materials that guided the faculty and administration in

[1] BLC Catalogs.

[2] Later renamed the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

developing the baccalaureate curriculum. In recent years and months, many new challenges have faced education, especially private church colleges. I was a member of the committees responsible for preparing the baccalaureate programs and was the director of the Liberal Arts major, out of which the earliest majors developed. Aside from a certain amount of financial angst, discussions and concerns about the nature of liberal arts education have been taking place on the Bethany campus and in the wider circle of alumni and members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

This essay will survey the history of liberal arts to help the Bethany community see in its larger context what is meant by liberal education and how it is relevant to Bethany Lutheran College of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The concept of the liberal arts is much more complex than can be dealt with in a single essay, but we hope this survey will help the institution and those who support it to navigate some of the questions confronting higher education today. To that end, an annotated list of sources is included to help those interested in further study of the liberal arts on their own.

Aside from the classical Greek and Roman sources which have survived the centuries, a large body of scholarship on the liberal arts has been produced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. During that time, the education systems in Europe and America were in ferment, seeing a need for change in educational methods and forms. A great deal of literature has been written on the subject during the past one-hundred years, but a few books published in Europe and America have given important guidance for understanding of the liberal education through history. They are listed in the *Notes on Sources*: Bruce Kimball, who wrote *Orators and Philosophers;* Werner Jaeger's *Paidea* in three volumes; M. L. Clarke in a small monograph *Higher Education in the Ancient World*; Henri I. Marrou's *A History of Education in Antiquity* (translated from French); David L. Wagner's *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages,* which has an article by a scholar on each of the seven traditional liberal arts, in addition to three articles highlighting some general issues. Most helpful to me has been Bruce Kimball's *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education,* in a 1995 expanded edition published by the College Entrance Examination Board. The aim of Kimball's study was to trace the history of terms liberal education and liberal arts.

The Origin and History of Liberal Education

If we want to examine the history of liberal education on its own terms, we should avoid as much as possible using the contemporary terminology and understandings of the *liberal arts* to guide our interpretations of liberal education in the ancient world. In this essay, we will generally favor the term *liberal education,* the Latin term *artes liberales* and the Greek *Enkyklios Paideia.* In order to see liberal education on its home turf, we will be using some Greek words and will use Greek type the first time the term is used and thereafter transliteration into the Roman type we are more familiar with. For the most part, the terms liberal learning, liberal education, and liberal studies will all refer to the same idea of education discussed in the historic Greek and Latin writings on our subject.

The terms associated with education in the ancient cultures of Greece and Rome have a history extending back as far as twenty-five centuries. They can be pushed back even further, but for our purposes, the beginnings of the idea of liberal education are in the fifth century before Christ (the four hundreds B.C.).

The first word that needs careful definition is *liberales–liberal.* Attempts to explain the term "liberal" or related words like "illiberal" without understanding how they were originally used lead to serious misunderstandings. First, it is not a matter of distinguishing political or cultural views (liberal–conservative). In "liberal education," the misunderstanding has to do with the Latin, *liberales,* which simply means "free." It was used of "free men"—those who were not slaves, or who were bound to their manual labor, crafts, or business. Since the age of Enlightenment and Rationalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, *liberales* has been taken to refer to being free from prejudice, misunderstanding, or having an open mind. Bruce Kimball explains that to understand *liberales*[3] *as "freeing from…"* is contrary to the clear sense in which it was used by the ancient writers, from Isocrates to the

[3] *Liberales* is equivalent to the Greek ἐλευθερος, *(free); eleutheros* is used by St. Paul in Galatians 3:28 in a similar sense to that intended in *artes liberales* when he writes "neither slave nor free." Note that Paul is writing in Greek society which knows the difference between a person who is a slave and one who is free: "bound" as opposed to "not bound." Martin Luther, in 1517, imitated the custom of Latinizing or Hellenizing ones name, changed his name from *Luder* to *Luther* and began signing his name *Eleutherius, a free man*— similarly, Philip Schwartzerdt, whose German name meant black earth changed his name to Melanchthon, the Greek word for black earth.

Romans.[4] In the ancient world, being a free man designated those of the aristocracy. While we today are not members of an aristocracy, we are still free because we do not live under political bondage.

In Greek and Roman society, the idea of this kind of education was that it was for "*free* men," that is, for a gentry or an aristocracy. The aristocrats—the best or most noble—were those who had the leisure to spend their time studying and exercising the mind since they were not bound as slaves, to a trade, craft, or manual labor. Western society no longer is controlled by aristocracy, at least not in name—though there is certainly a "meritocracy" based on education, artistic accomplishment, and such. Today, nearly everyone in the free world has access to education through age eighteen and because of modern conveniences, one can suppose that-free time or leisure is not limited to a nobility. But we ought not make too much of that since both young and old have given over their free time to a slavery of sorts to electronic media and a multitude of other masters. Even so, it may be *more* interesting that the Greek word used for the *leisure* available to *free*men is σχολή (scholē). Since a use of *free time* in ancient Greece and Rome was to attend lectures or discussions at the Lyceum or the Agora or the other places where teachers held forth.

The Latin word *ars, artes* (singular and plural) corresponds to the Greek word τέχνη, τέχνες *(technē, technes),* but technē in *artes liberales* does not refer to sensory arts, crafts, or mechanical skills but to skills of the intellect. The various *technes* that were used in liberal education, both Greek and Roman, were not selected for their subject matter—that these would be good for a gentleman to know—but were chosen for their ability to develop the intellect, the ability to think. The rhetorician Isocrates, who we will meet later, called these arts "gymnastics for the mind." This touches on the most basic understanding of liberal education—that its goal is to enable the student to think, to promote the development of the intellect—*not* to fill the student's mind with useful and useless knowledge. I had a professor in an education course sixty years, who was not prone to profound statements—but when he announced one day, dramatically, "The mind is a lamp to be lit, not a jug to be filled." I left the classroom that day not feeling quite so dulled as usual. Ian Ker, biographer of John Henry Newman wrote "The fact is that at the heart of his philosophy of education is simply *the capacity*

[4] Bruce A. Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Ideal of Liberal Education, Expanded edition* (New York: College Board Publications, 1995), 115f.

to think."[5] A contemporary writer, Wayne Willis, comments, "Liberal education is a process defined *not by its content, not by its method, but by its aims.*"[6] Of course, none of that means that there can be no knowledge gained from any of the liberal *subjects* (technes) or a good liberal education. But nonetheless Willis is right that the real issue is the aim, not the content or method that makes it liberal education. Of course, the aim had better be pursued earnestly, effectively, and competently.

The *technes* mentioned by the Greeks—especially by Isocrates and Plato, were grammar, drawing, numbers, dialectics, logic, rhetoric, mousikē, gymnastikē, mathematics, geometry (plane and solid) and astronomy (the dialectics, rhetoric, and logic have inaccurately been considered the same). The Greek *rhetoric* is translated into Latin as *oratore* (oratory). Mousikē and gymnastikē probably represent the most ancient form of education among the Greeks. *Mousikē*, is not to be understood as a general course in music appreciation but was a study all the gifts of the nine Muses (μούσες), each one named, and each with several gifts, from poetry, dance, eloquence, history, lyric song, even tragedy. Gymnastikē, not in the modern sense, but in the sense of all physical exercise and games. If you don't already know, you might be interested in knowing that γυμνός (gymnos) means unclad, naked, defenseless. Who said the classics were no fun?

But even the subjects enumerated above had variations. Kimball concludes that "It is probably true to say that all seven arts…were known or *invented* by the Greeks."[7] However, the Greeks had more than those listed, and they appear in more than a few different combinations. The idea that there were only seven *real* arts and just those seven, cannot be drawn from the Greek or Roman writers. Even where seven *technes* are listed, no complete, normative, or required canon[8] of the liberal arts existed until the Middle Ages, and even then, uniformity was not the highest virtue. It doesn't follow from the dominance of a few *technes* that only those arts could be effective, or that without those particular subjects there was no liberal education. In the Middle Ages, the "seven

[5] Ian Ker, "Newman on Education," *The Center for the Study of Catholic Higher Education,* emphasis added.

[6] Wayne Willis, "Liberating the Liberal Arts: an interpretation of Aristotle," *The Journal of General Education* 39, no. 4e: 201, emphasis added.

[7] Kimball, 23.

[8] In this essay Canon refers to a list of subjects. A canon (from a cane or reed used as to measure) is a measure by which other things are judged. For example, we speak of the biblical canon which is the list of thirty-nine books in the Old Testament or the twenty-seven in the New Testament. "Closed canon" means that additions or alterations may not be added to it.

liberal arts" was given some divine sanction when a fanciful application of Proverbs 9:1, attributed to Pope Albert the Great (1206–1280 A. D.), was applied to the liberal arts: "Wisdom has built her house; She has hewn out her *seven* pillars."[9]

Enkyklios Paideia

Most writings on the idea of liberal education focus on the Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, but there were certainly others who wrote along the same lines as Plato and Aristotle. Bruce Kimball sketched the foundation of Greek thinking about education:

> Until the early fifth century [B. C.], the Hellenic[10] tradition of education included two major aspects: 'gymnastics,' the physical training associated with the ancient obligation of military service, and 'music,' the study of the arts of the Muses, which were fundamental to the cultural tradition and to the rituals of the state cultus. Service to the military, to the cultural tradition, and to the state cultus were the normal obligations of citizenship, and preparation for these responsibilities thus constituted the purpose of the education that was associated with the antecedents of the later term *enkukulios*.[11]

Plato and Aristotle are not the ultimate source of liberal education. That source is rather to be found in another Greek tradition. A name not so widely known is Isocrates, a Greek teacher of rhetoric (oratory). Not to be confused with Socrates, Isocrates advocated an educational idea that was in some ways at odds with the others, though it shared some characteristics. Socrates lived from about 470–399 B. C.—he left no writings of his own, but we know him chiefly through Plato and Xenophon. Isocrates, (436–338) and Plato (427–348) studied with Socrates in Athens. Aristotle (384-322) was Plato's student and also tutored Alexander the Great. Since Isocrates lived to be ninety-eight years old, Aristotle was acquainted with him. All four of them lived at a time when education was one of the most widely discussed issues in Greek society.

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[9] Prov. 9:1 (NKJV), emphasis added.

[10] The Greek name of the country called Greece is *Hellas* (Ἑλλας); Greeks are Hellenes and the adjective is Hellenic. In this paper they are used interchangeably. Latin for Greek is *graecus*

[11] Kimball, 21.

During the Hellenistic age (323–30 B. C., from the death of Alexander the Great to the death of Cleopatra), the Romans were replacing the Greeks as masters of the Mediterranean world. The Romans had lived under Greek rule and culture so that much of what was brought the Greeks was assimilated into Roman culture, though not uncritically or without adaptation. During the first century B. C., the ideas on education developed in Greece were taken up by the Romans, partly through the famous orator-politician-philosopher-statesman Marcus Tullius Cicero.

The form of education promoted by the Greeks was called in Greek ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία (*enkyklios paideia)*. Some claim that the term dates to the beginning of the fifth century B. C. and others to the first century B. C. While the translation of *enkyklios paideia* has been widely discussed, several twentieth century classical Greek scholars have demonstrated that when *paideía* (education) is accompanied by the Greek *enkyklios, enkyklios paidea* means "general or well-rounded education." *Paideia* was also translated by *humanitas* in Latin. In that case, *paideia* meant "learning and instruction in the good arts." If *artes liberales* were translated into Greek, it would be ἐλευθέριοι τέχναι): (*eleutherioi techȠai*), but that terminology doesn't appear in the ancient, classical discussions of education. Rather, it is *enkyklios paideia*. Other terms that are used are *enkyklios mathemata,* "the circle of subjects."[12] Isocrates uses *paideia enginómenos*, which George Norlin translates "liberal education," and πρός τήν τῶν λόγων παιδείαν as "for the education of the orator" (*Antidosis,* 263, 290, 296, Norlin).

Various terms could be used to modify the Greek word for education παιδεία (*paidea)*. The Greek term used in the centuries B. C. for the form of education advanced by Plato and Aristotle is *enkyklios paideía*. It has been the basis for some spirited debate among students of Greek education. *Kyklos* means round or circle but when the word *enkyklios* is used with *paideia* (education); it means well-rounded, or general education. The issue that this raises for liberal education will be discussed later in this paper.

While there were many Greeks writing on education, much of which is no longer extant, there are three major sources for the development of liberal education, Plato, Aristotle, and Isocrates.

[12] The earliest usage of μαθήματα, *(mathēmata)* refers not to mathematics as we know it, but in general to subjects, "studies, that which is learned"—Liddell and Scott, Abridged, online. Only later was it applied to the study of numbers.

Plato

Plato's contribution to the discussion of education is found primarily in his book *The Republic*. Some of Plato's writings are in the form of dialog between Socrates and other individuals, with Socrates usually expressing Plato's ideas. The dialog participants discuss the possibility of a perfect form of a state and its governance. In order that the leaders not become tyrants, there must be a class of rulers or guardians (soldiers or police), who would be people of virtue; they would have the power to wage wars, make laws, and enforce peace. That leads to a discussion of the education of these guardians. They must be just and able to tell right from wrong. They would not own property and thus their only goal would be for the good of the city, not for themselves. The highest guardian or ruler will be a philosopher-king who will be chosen from among the guardians.

The dialog establishes that the basic elements of the guardians' education are μουσική (music) and γυμναστική (gymnastikē). A discussion of the value of musical training concludes that it gives "good words, good harmony, good grace, good rhythm" leading to a person "in which reason has been educated to govern in goodness and truth" (*Republic* III, 400e). That expression will also serve to distinguish the philosophical from the rhetorical type of liberal education. Socrates concludes about this education, "the one who achieves the fairest blend of music and gymnastic instruction of his soul will be a greater musician by far than one who simply tunes the strings of an instrument" (412a).

A second stage of education begins when the student is twenty years old. Disciplines introduced in Book VII, (525a8-527d) are: 1) Mathematics (i.e. numbers and calculations), 2 & 3) Geometry (plane and solid) and 4) Astronomy. The study of these subjects takes ten years.

A final discussion leads to a five-year study of dialectics.[13] Socrates adds: "it remains the only intellectual process whose method is that of dissecting hypotheses and ascending to first principles in order to obtain valid knowledge" (533c). This definition is an important aspect of the philosophical model. The inclusion of dialectics at that point

[13] "Dialectics," from Greek, in its basic sense is a conversation, but more commonly discussion of a subject on which there is disagreement. In philosophy it has to do with discovering truth by investigation, and especially describes Socrates method of discovering truth or falsehood by means of questioning. In the Middle Ages, dialectics taught the process of disputation. One approach to disputation appears in the Leipzig debate between Luther and Eck, where each defended his own theses and and attacked the theses of the opponent. Luther wrote theses for disputation (95 theses), and other times a professor wrote theses for his student to defend or attack, used also by Luther.

emphasizes that the objective of this liberal education is development of the intellect.

Plato's education plan, if viewed in its totality, was a life-long plan of study which, if one persevered, would achieve the level of philosopher king. The elementary level occupied a few years of training in writing, music, drawing, poetry, gymnastics, and finally a period of compulsory military service. The more advanced training after the military period was ten years of mathematical sciences and five years of dialectical training, and finally a longer period of political training. If one persevered that far, and probably few did, he had achieved the level of the philosopher-king, equipping one to be a truth-seeking, theoretical philosopher.

Aristotle

The second major classical source for liberal education is found in Book VIII of Aristotle's *Politics*. After enunciating the main question, "how shall the young be educated?" he answers: "The existing practice is perplexing; no one knows on what principle we should proceed" (1336a39).[14] He might be including disputes between Plato and Isocrates, but certainly this debate is much wider. "It is evident, then, that there is a sort of education in which parents should train their sons, not as being useful or necessary, but because it is liberal or noble." "Liberal or noble" describes the kind of "learning which we must study merely with a view to leisure spent *in intellectual activity* and these are to be valued for their own sake." "Intellectual activity for its own sake" points to another principle unique to the philosophical mode. The intellectual activity does not have utility, a useful function, It is good because it is good.

The form as it is given in Aristotle's *Politics* is simple and straightforward, "The customary branches of education are in number four: they are (1) reading and writing, (2) gymnastic exercises, (3) music mousikē, to which is sometimes added (4) drawing" (*Politics,* Book VIII, chapter 3, 1337b, 23-25). The purpose of this education is "to use leisure well…. The first principle of all action is leisure. Both are required, but leisure is better than occupation." He goes on to stress that leisure is not the same as amusement. Leisure is the time which the free man spends

[14] Aristotle addresses a distinction between public and private education. His distinction is different from ours. "Private education," he explains, is when everybody does their own thing. Rather, he holds that it is public when there is a system which is the same for all.

in intellectual activity. Activity for amusement can be mindless. Were Aristotle able to pay a visit to modern times, it would occur to him that the majority of people are free men with much leisure, though much of it wasted on amusement.

However, it is not clear that this is the whole of the *enkyklios paideia* for Aristotle. In chapter 4 (1339a5) Aristotle writes, "When boyhood is over, three years should be spent in other studies." Aristotle believed that a man's development occurred at ages seven (end of childhood), fourteen (end of boyhood, when he could put on a man's toga) and twenty-one (adulthood). Thus, Aristotle's "three years" refers to the age of fourteen to seventeen. But what these "other studies" would be we are not told and don't have enough information to fill in the blanks. Because Plato had been Aristotle's teacher, we might guess that they are the studies mentioned by Plato (see above)—mathematics, geometry, astronomy, and dialectics, but there is no evidence for that assumption. On the other hand, it could be the three-year compulsory military training included in Plato's curriculum, which might be a little more likely but still uncertain. One writer, Felix C. Robb, writing in 1943, proposes, "When boyhood is over, young men devote themselves for three years to the study of letters, music, and drawing, unhampered by the physical exertions of gymnastics."[15] However, no evidence is cited to verify that suggestion.

Plato's and Aristotle's narrative concerning the *technes* is that no definitive list or prescriptive canon of studies for liberal education is proposed by either. Their descriptions differ from each other. From the writings of Plato and Aristotle one can assemble a list of *technes*: grammar (reading and writing), mathematics, geometry, music (later, harmony is sometimes substituted, but harmony is not at all the same as *mousekē*), dialectics (argument possibly including logic), gymnastics. Rhetoric could perhaps be deduced from reading and writing. But whatever the details of each subject, there is no indication that Plato's and Aristotle's systems were intended to be conjoined so as to be the future Roman or medieval *artes liberales.*

Three points emerge from Plato's and Aristotle's accounts of education: 1) the *techne* or subjects of the studies are ends in themselves, i.e. they are not in themselves useful for livelihood, or other necessary tasks. The distinction, however, is fuzzy. 2) The liberal studies are intended for specific upper classes or the aristocracy: for Plato, the class

[15] Felix C. Robb, "Aristotle and Education," *Journal of Education* 20, no. 4 (1943): 212.

from which the guardians are to come; for Aristotle the freemen, that is, the class which does not include laborers, craftsmen, and slaves. The free man alone has leisure for the study which expands the mind. 3) Through the liberal studies, one attains wisdom, virtue, and character, enabling a student to distinguish truth from falsehood; that is, to have become a philosopher is to pursue speculative, theoretical philosophy. This last is the sharpest point separating the philosophical and rhetorical models. In *Nichomachian Ethics*, Aristotle gives an unmistakable priority: "[highest happiness is achieved in] the pursuit of theoretical knowledge… for intelligence is the highest possession we have in us."[16] Again, this captures the distinction between the philosophical model and the oratorical model of Isocrates to Cicero.

The first point above (that the *techne*s are not to be in themselves useful) needs further examination. If a *technē* turns out to be useful, it is said to be servile (illiberal or has utility). The distinction however is fuzzy because one's intention is involved. Geometry contributes to orderliness of thought and it has not really contributed to my profession. However, it is immensely useful, even if about the only thing I remember is how to make a square corner by using the Pythagorean theorem. A principle sometimes applied is that once the *technē* has been studied, it has accomplished its good in developing the mind and is no longer useful. Grammar, logic, and rhetoric (language and literature) may be studied without regard to usefulness in vocation and are studied as goods in themselves. But no one can suppose that they are useless in one's life otherwise. If one tests the principle of non-utility against the various *techne*s, the validity of the principle fails miserably. However, 2,378 years ago, Isocrates had a pretty good answer to the question:

> It seems to me both that those who hold that this (liberal) training is of no use in practical life are right and that those who speak in praise of it have truth on their side. If there is a contradiction in this statement it is because these disciplines are different in their nature from the other studies which make up our education: for the other branches avail us only after we have gained a knowledge of them, whereas these studies can be of no benefit to us after we have mastered them—unless we have elected to make our living from this source [by teaching the disciplines] (*Antidosis*, 263).

Isocrates is quite right and understood that way of speaking. However, as the discussion stands today concerning the usefulness or

[16] Kimball, 17, citing Aristotle's *Nichomachian Ethics* 1177a11–1179a33.

servility of a liberal art, the distinction comes close to being meaningless. As has been said before by Wayne Willis, it is neither the method nor the content of one of the arts but the aim of the study—not to impart knowledge, but to cultivate the intellect, to teach the student to think. However, since students aren't logs, it is inevitable that more or less knowledge will be retained. Discussions of the liberal arts today may be bogged down when the kind of knowledge imparted overshadows the aim of the *paideia*—cultivation of the mind, about which Isocrates has more to say.

Isocrates

Isocrates (436–338 B. C.), a contemporary of Socrates, and Plato, held a significantly different view of education from his contemporaries, and by some accounts had a larger influence on Roman and later European and American education. Isocrates, from whom a number of writings have survived, was a teacher of oratory/rhetoric.[17] He belonged to a class of teachers of rhetoric in Greece called "sophists," from the word *sophos* (*wise*). In Athens, *sophist* took on the meaning "one who professes to make one wise." But when some of the teachers of rhetoric tended to promote their services less than honestly, "sophist" became a derogatory term, particularly from the pen of Plato. As itinerant teachers, their fees were in some cases exorbitant for the instruction they promised, and they developed a negative reputation for making outlandish, impossible promises as to what studying with them could accomplish. Plato had barbed criticisms of the sophists in some of his dialogs, but it was one of their own sophists, Isocrates, who delivered an especially blistering critique in his essay *Against the Sophists,* accusing them of lies and deception, and did so in pointed detail. A sample:

> But these professors have gone so far in their lack of scruple that they attempt to persuade our young men that, if only they will study under them, they will know what to do in life and through this knowledge will become happy and prosperous… Furthermore, although they say that they do not want money and speak contemptuously of wealth as "filthy lucre," they hold their hands out for a trifling gain and promise to make their disciples all but immortal (Isocrates, *Against the Sophists*, 165).

Isocrates was not a practicing orator—he explained that his voice was too weak and that he lacked self-confidence. But he had rhetorical

[17] The Greek *rhetoric* is equivalent to the Latin *oratoria* (oratory).

training and had also written speeches for citizens who had to defend themselves in court, some of which have survived.[18] However, Isocrates has been the forgotten man of classical literature. Until the last fifty years, Isocrates was conspicuous by his absence in most treatments of liberal education. I don't recall any mention of the name Isocrates in a university philosophy classroom in the 1960s and 70s. A number of scholars have attempted to rectify the neglect of Isocrates. One of the earlier champions of Isocrates was classical scholar Werner Jaeger in his three volume *Paideia,* who wrote in 1943:

> Today as of old, Isocrates, like Plato, has admirers and exponents; and there is no doubt that since the Renaissance he has exercised a far greater influence on the educational methods of humanism than any other Greek or Roman teachers.[19]

Jaeger goes on to call Isocrates "the father of humanistic culture"—Cicero called it "liberal education."

Isocrates was a contemporary of Socrates and Plato—Isocrates and Plato studied with Socrates, and Aristotle studied under Plato; but there were sharp, often petty, disagreements between them. Isocrates is the outlier, differing most sharply from the others, since his view of education placed rhetoric at the center of the studies and aimed at preparing young people for effective citizenship, skilled at public speaking, persuasion, and the proper use of language and was opposed to theoretical speculation characteristic of the Socratic search for truth found in Plato's and Aristotle's educational ideas. Isocrates' ideas on education are chiefly found in the essays *Against the Sophists* (390 B. C.) and *Antidosis*[20] (354 B. C.), both of which are found in vol. 2 of the Norlin translation), Isocrates sums up the experience students would have under his program:

> [W]hile we are occupied with the subtlety and exactness of astronomy and geometry [for example] and are forced to apply our minds to difficult problems, and are, in addition, being habituated

[18] In the courts of Athens, citizens were required to defend themselves, without a lawyer. However, to argue their cases. they could hire an orator to write a defense for them that they could learn and deliver.

[19] Werner Jaeger, *Paidea: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, vol. 3, trans. Gilbert Highet (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), 46f.

[20] *Antidosis* is the name of a legal suit Isocrates had undergone, but he uses the name for what is essentially a defense—*apologia*—of himself and his work. *Antidosis* was written when Isocrates was eighty-two years old—he lived to be ninety-eight years old!

> to speak and apply ourselves to what is said and shown to us, and not to let our wits go wool-gathering, we gain the power, after being exercised and sharpened on these disciplines of grasping and learning more easily and more quickly those subjects which are of more importance and of greater value (*Antidosis*, 265).

Thus, Isocrates identifies the aim of studying the arts to be improvement of the intellect, which is not essentially different from Plato and Aristotle, as well as John Henry Newman. For Plato and Aristotle, the aim is to develop the philosophical mind which can think theoretically, while for Isocrates, it is to develop the rhetorical mind for citizenship. Not every subject or skill will serve the aim of developing the mind. But by the same token, it is not only the certain few which became *trivia* and *quadrivium* that can serve that purpose.

While some want to call *the arts* of *paideia* "philosophy," Isocrates doesn't want to call it that; "rather I would call it 'a gymnastics-of-the-mind' and a *preparation* for philosophy." In the same breath, Isocrates defines wisdom, "I hold that man to be wise who is able by his powers of conjecture to arrive generally at the best course, and I hold that man to be a philosopher who occupies himself with the studies from which he will most quickly gain that kind of insight" (*Antidosis,* 271). His more negative view of philosophy is: "I do not, however, think it proper to apply the term 'philosophy' to a training which is no help to us in the present either in our speech or in our actions." Behind his dislike of what is being called "philosophy" is the theoretical speculation in the Socratic/Platonic idea. Those arts are not completely useless, but "I would, therefore, advise young men to spend some time on these disciplines, but not to allow their minds to be dried up by these subtleties, nor to be stranded on the speculations of the ancient sophists" (*Antidosis*, 268).

The most important single element that Isocrates wants his students to acquire is good character:

> Furthermore, mark you, the man who wishes to persuade people will not be negligent as to the matter of character; no, on the contrary he will apply himself above all to establish a most honorable name among his fellow citizens; for who does not know that words carry greater conviction when spoke by men of good repute than when spoken by men who live under a cloud (*Antidosis*, 278).

Finally, Isocrates describes what turns out to be the core of his teaching when he rejects one of the themes of the worst of the sophists:

"the kind of art (*technē*) which can implant honesty and justice in depraved natures has never existed, and those who profess that power will grow weary and cease from their vain pretensions before such and education is ever found." But at the core of Isocrates' education method, he taught that "People can become better and worthier if they conceive an ambition to speak well, if they become possessed of the desire to be able to persuade their hearers, and finally if they set their hearts on seizing their advantage" (*Antidosis*, 275).

The key subjects in Isocrates' teaching lay in grammar (the Romans translated it *litteratura*) and in rhetoric which consisted of practicing the writing of clear, correct, and persuasive language, in addition to reading the orations of others. The consequence in such a person is a virtuous life and honorable relationship to others.

*Artes liberale*s in Cicero, Quintilian, and the Roman World

The first Roman known to have used the term *artes liberales,* while not necessarily inventing it, was Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B. C.), a Roman orator, politician, jurist, and philosopher. Kathryn Tempest cites Cicero's *De Inventione* as the source where the term *artes liberales* first appeared in about 84 B. C.:

> With reference to a man's way of life it is proper to consider among what men, and in what manner, and according to whose direction he has been brought up; what teachers of the *liberal arts* he has had; what [counselor] to encourage him to a proper course of life; with what friends he is intimate; in what business, or employment, or gainful pursuit he is occupied; in what manner he manages his estate, and what are his domestic habits.[21]

Tempest suggests that "it seems to be something which he [Cicero] has previously experienced,"[22] that is, Cicero, either in his Greek education in Rome or in his later studies in Athens, learned about the *enkyklios paideia.* When Cicero refers to the *artes liberales* in 55 B. C., he includes music, geometry, astronomy, literature [translation of *grammar*], oratory/rhetoric. That description implies something different from the Socratic speculative liberal education. Rather, it fits Cicero into the rhetorical model. The mathematical arts are not in an upper division, but lower, and the capstone study is rhetoric.

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[21] Cicero, *De inventione*, 35, cited in Kathryn Tempest, "Cicero's Artes Liberales And The Liberal Arts," *Ciceroniana On Line* 4, no. 2 (2020): 479.

[22] Tempest, 480.

A first century A. D. text equates *artes liberales* and *enkyklios paideia,* holding that both refer to the same things. Marcus Fabian Quintilian (c. 35–96 A. D.) authored a large text on Rhetoric, *Institutio Oratoria,* written about 95 A. D., in which he lists the program for those who would study oratory: music, geometry, astronomy, literature, and rhetoric. Note that for both Cicero and Quintilian, the study of the *technes* lead up to rhetoric. In his treatise *Institutes of Oratory,* Quintilian writes:

> I shall now add some concise observation on the other departments of study, in which I think that boys should be initiated *before they are committed to the teacher of rhetoric*, in order that the circle of instruction which the Greeks call *ἐγγκύκλιος παιδεία* may be completed (Book I, Chapter 10,1, emphasis added).

How can the statement that *artes liberales* is the translation of *enkyklios paideia* be explained? They are not equivalent translations, so a plausible connection must exist between them. Cicero, or another Roman, familiar enough with usage of "*enkyklios paidea,*" knew full well that a basic element of the Greek *paideia* [teaching] was that it was an education for the Greek aristocracy (the freemen). Even though that element was not explicit in "*enkyklios paidea,*" it was clear that the paideia was for freemen, so they used the Latin word *liberales*. The subjects of that *paideia* for freemen were *technē, technes,*of which Latin *ars, artes,* were equivalent translations. If that was the thought process, any writers in the two centuries before Christ, and Quintilian in the first century A. D. were perfectly correct to say that *artes liberales* and *enkyklios paidea* were equivalent. It also appears that *enkyklios paidea* in the centuries before Christ, included both the Socratic, philosophical version and the rhetorical version of the liberal *paideia*. The translation opted for a descriptive term specifying that it was a *paideia* for the aristocracy, which also was part of the Roman culture.

Bruce Kimball refers to "the popular view…that Varro and Cicero first or finally formulated the normative curriculum of *septem artes liberales.*" He footnotes "popular view" with several references showing that the "popular view" is demonstrably false.[23] Marcus Terentius Varro, 116–20 B. C., a contemporary of Cicero, wrote *Nine Books of Disciplines,* which included a list of the subjects of liberal arts, which used of the liberal arts as organizing principles. Varro identified nine arts: grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music, medicine, and architecture. Using Varro's book which was still extant,

[23] Kimball, 29, f.n. 49.

Martianus Capella, early in the fifth century wrote an allegory in which he reduced the list to seven classical "liberal arts" which was followed by the medieval schools. However, in none of those writings is there a *septivium*, divided into a *trivium* and *quadrivium,* nor is there a prescriptive list.[24] Terminology of a seven-arts program consisting of a *trivium* and *quadrivium*, was not used until the Middle Ages. *Quadrivium* was first used by Boethius 480–524 for the four mathematical arts as the preparation for philosophy. Boethius favored the philosophical model which had not been in vogue during the late centuries before Christ to the centuries immediately after (Kimball, 47). The origin of the term *trivium* is less clear. Kimball cites reports that the term was first used for the three language studies by Alcuin of York and his school in eighth-century England among other sources.[25]

Various sources indicate that the rhetorical school generally used only the language arts, or with one or two other arts added. In the first century A. D., the rhetorician Quintilian reports four arts in his program: music, grammar, geometry, and rhetoric, while Cicero counts five—geometry, astronomy, literature, oratory.

About the same time, Augustine, in a dialog entitled *De Ordin*e converses with his mother and two students and they are led by Augustine to a program of seven subjects, much the same as Cappela had. But in none of these efforts was a required canon of seven subjects established—even if seven are named. After discussing what were probably Varro's primary arts Augustine then proceeded to suggest which ones could be omitted, until the only thing left is to know what unity is.

Quintilian, in the quotation cited above, referred to the "circle of instruction which the Greeks call *ἐγγκύκλιος παιδεία*." "Circle of instruction" raises the question of the specific meaning of *enkyklios paideia.* Quintilian indicates that he understands that the Greek *enkyklios* has to do with circularity. In a long and thorough study of *enkyklios paideia* and its original meaning, L. M. De Rijk notes that Marcus Quintilian, the notable rhetorician writing in the first century A. D. refers to the *artes liberales* "which the Greeks call an all-around education." De Rijk concludes:

[24] As far as I know, *septivium* has not been used in traditional discussions of the liberal arts. It is in imitation of *trivium* and *quadrivium* to indicate that one is referring specifically to the *septem artes liberale*s, the seven arts, rather than liberal education generally. In any case, those terms do not appear until the Middle Ages.

[25] Kimball, 51.

> From the first century B. C. onwards the term *enkyklios paideia*… is used in order to denote the new ideal of all-round education preparatory to any specialistic training (especially to that of the future orator). From then on, the *enkyklia mathēmata* are the constitutive parts of *enkyklios paideia* which is the whole circuit (kúklios) of both the arts of literary culture and the mathematical sciences (92).

The *Liddel and Scott Abridged Lexicon* (1909) gives "well-rounded, general, or common" as meanings of *enkyklios* when used with *paideia*. Greeks in the century before Christ understood *enkyklios paideia* to mean well-rounded or general education preceding specialized education. In addition to De Rijk, others deal with the problem of *enkyklios paideia*: see articles in Notes on Sources by the following: DeRijk, Bos, De Vries, Morgan, and Doody. Some of them push the beginning of *enkyklios paideia* into previous centuries.

A more important question which arises at this point is the extent to which the Greek and the Roman ideas of education can be connected. When the Romans took up the Greek *enkyklios paidea,* they were *not* taking over a well-defined system. There was no established canon of studies defining the education system, and there were no guidelines as to how the subjects were to be taught. There is really no way of pressing the texts to require a definite seven subjects. If there were differences between Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle on education, there could well have been at least that many different views to choose from in the first century B. C. It is apparent that Cicero and others were familiar with the idea of *enkyklios paideia*. However, since the educational needs of republican Rome were not the same as Athenian democracy, and since Roman life was not arranged completely along the lines of Plato's *Republic* or Athenian democracy, the Romans did not adopt a form of *paideia* traceable to the schools of Plato and Aristotle. Rather, the Greek *paideia* fostered by Isocrates was a better fit for the collective citizenship of Rome and supported Cicero's rhetorical ideals.

What was the *paideia* fostered by Isocrates? Bruce Kimball's study of the terminology "liberal education" and "liberal arts" shows that the *enkyklios paideia* developed into two distinctly different models, the philosophical and the rhetorical. This was not a late development. The debates about education began prior to Socrates. Plato refers to the sophist practices sometime before, and Isocrates took the sophists to task even though he was himself a sophist and had been taught by Gorgias (483–375 B. C.), one of the best known of the sophists. The rhetorical

school predates the philosophical school. Plato and Isocrates both attended Socrates' lectures, but what they learned they applied differently. Plato was nine years younger than Isocrates; both were teaching at roughly the at the same time. However, there were deep differences between their educational ideas. Plato's philosophically centered idea was clear early on, so that his idea was to prepare an aristocracy (guardians) that followed Socrates' speculative philosophical idea, and that was the goal of his educational program.

On the other hand, Isocrates was a sophist-trained rhetorician and that meant that the nature of his educational ideal was rhetorical, with a sharper moral conscience than his former fellows. The most important *technē* accompanying rhetoric was grammar. Grammar included correct grammatical style, practicing the Isocrates mode of writing, and strong emphasis on literature—such as Homer, and other poets, dramatists and other literature of the eighth through fifth centuries, which included a lot of history. Grammar was not simply a course in sentence structure with constant drilling in declensions and conjugations. The heart of grammar for the rhetorical studies, was a heavy and steady dose of reading the literature that already existed.

The two differing models existed side by side through the three centuries before Cicero in the first century A. D., but the rhetorical model dominated. For the philosophers, the primary art to be mastered was dialectics. "Dialectics" was not a fancy name for logic or reasoning, as many treatments of liberal arts seem to assume, but it was an activity which placed opposing ideas side by side and by questioning and debating, the object was to find the real truth, which turned out to be a never-ending pursuit. The scholastic disputations that were familiar to Luther grew out of the dialectic, not rhetoric. On the other hand, rhetoric was the supreme art for the orators, but with a strong reliance on grammar, that is, *litteratura*. The rhetorical and the grammatical arts both included cultural and historical writings and thus the *artes liberale*s became equivalent to *humanitas*.

It is clear, then, that the education model that dominated at the time of Cicero, was not the philosophical model but the rhetorical model that had developed from Isocrates. Kimball summarizes several sources, given in a lengthy footnote for the dominance of the Isocratean model of liberal education. For one thing, in the first century, the emperor Vespasian despised sophism so much, that he expelled the sophists from Rome, and then appointed Quintilian who followed Isocrates' rhetorical

methods to the first state professorship of rhetoric, (Kimball, 32 and footnote 59). Kimball describes the position of the rhetorical school:

> If both the Greek word [*rhetorica*] and the Greek art, *rhetorica,* had thus come to dominate education in Rome and the western provinces, *oratoria* was the Latin for the Greek word *rhetoric*. And it was the orator Cicero who first exemplified this Roman educational ideal for the *artes liberales,* a fact affirmed by Quintilian when he became the exemplar. Both men were beholden to Isocrates, whom Cicero called "that eminent father of eloquence" and "the master of all rhetoricians and whom Quintilian labeled "that most brilliant instructor" whose school is said to have turned out the greatest orators. In fact, the "Isocratic" tradition is said to have had its complete expression in Cicero's *De Oratoria.*[26]

What difference did it make that the Romans adopted the rhetorical model and not the philosophical model of the Greek *paideia*? Both had developed methods by which students could be trained to think. Kimball finds that nearly all those who wrote about the *artes liberales* from Cicero on followed the rhetorical/oratorical tradition of Isocrates or tended toward it (Kimball, 25–35). One distinguishing characteristic of the rhetorical model was that instead of following the Socratic search for truth as an end in itself, the rhetorical model emphasized the communication of truth, the necessity of ethical behavior on the part of the orator, the importance of virtuous behavior, and for having a good reputation for honesty and fairness so that those the orator would persuade could trust him. All of this was in the service of citizenship, the goal of training citizens in oratory/rhetoric. It might also be the case that the principle that each art had to be an end in itself, was not as important, if at all, to the rhetorical tradition. See Appendix C for a summary of the differences between the philosophical and rhetorical models.

In Book I of *de Oratore,* Cicero offers a list of the subjects of the *artes liberales,* (put in the mouth of Crassus):

> Nearly all elements now forming the content of arts, were once without order or correlation: In *music*, for example, rhythms, sounds, and measures;
>
> in *geometry*, lines, figures, dimensions and magnitudes;

[26] Kimball, 33, especially see f.n. 61–65.

> in *astronomy* the revolution of the sky, the rising, setting and movement of heavenly bodies;
>
> in *literature* [the Roman translation of "grammar"], the study of poets, the learning of histories, the explanation of words and proper intonation in speaking them;
>
> and lastly in this very theory of *oratory*, invention, style, arrangement, memory and delivery, once seemed to all men things unknown and widely separate one from another.
>
> And so, a certain art was called in from outside [*dialectics*?], derived from another definite sphere, which philosophers arrogate wholly to themselves, in order that it might give coherence to things so far disconnected and sundered, and bind them in some sort of scheme. Let the goal then of the common law be defined as the preservation, in the concerns and disputes of citizens, of an impartiality founded on statute and custom (*De Oratore,* Rackham translation, I, 187).

Cicero was familiar with a large body of Greek literature, having studied Greek since his youth, and had studied for a time in Greece. In *De Oratore,* he comes close to suggesting that the rhetorical model came first, and the philosophical model, with its dialectics, was the interloper. The rhetorical model had the objective of cultivating the mind ("gymnastics of the mind"). But its purpose in doing that was to teach the art of expression, eloquence, and persuasion of true knowledge in a virtuous and ethical way. Its method was to teach the fulness of the human use of λόγος (word, speech, reason). Its goal was to produce good citizens, rhetorically trained for ethical and virtuous participation in the republican government. And that was what was attractive to Cicero. The most important difference, however, between the philosophical and the rhetorical models is that the rhetorical model was essentially humanistic, that is, it taught culture and values through the best literature of the past.

Was it all a waste? The Roman Republic ended in 46 B. C. when Julius Caesar was named Dictator for life and then assassinated in 44. Cicero was assassinated the next year in 43, and Octavian (Augustus) was crowned Emperor in 27 B. C. But Cicero had made the *artes liberales,* which he also called *studia humanitatis,* a standard for education, even after the Roman Republic was dead.

Artes liberales as *Humanitas*

That the Greek *enkyklios paideia*, in the hands of the Romans become the vehicle for an education that could characterize itself as *humanitas* is not without significance for liberal education in the nineteenth through twenty-first centuries—except that a few detours took place in the 1800 or so years between. The Latin noun *humanitas* refers to human nature or civilization. It can also be used as a synonym for philanthropy, "love of mankind" or simply kindness. In our context, it would refer to the study of the virtues and intellectual expressions of humankind, similar to the Bethany courses in humanities in years past.

The heart of Renaissance humanism was the study of human literature and art. Of course, as happens with many movements, renaissance humanism turned up an ugly side in which *mankind became "the measure of all things,"* (attributed to Protagorus) and Alexander Pope's "Presume not God to scan, the proper study of mankind is man," which reflects the idea of secular humanism, which rejects the idea of a deity or religious faith. However, the studies of the ancient classics have always been regarded as beneficial in Christian education.

But as intimated before, Renaissance humanism was not so new. There were movements in education centuries before which placed a premium on the study of what human beings had thought and recorded in literature and the arts. While much classical work aims to glorify humankind, much also shows the tragic frailty of the human heart and belongs to the humanities. Already at the time of Isocrates, concern was expressed about being familiar with what those in the past had written. Ancients had written about good character, the virtues (Aristotle wasn't the first), about values, and generally about good and evil—especially about good versus evil character.

The humanism that characterizes Isocrates cannot be summarized in just a few words, but it shows itself, for example in his words: "the kind of art (*technē*) which can implant honesty and justice in depraved nature does not now exist…. But I do hold that people can become better and worthier if they conceive an ambition to speak well." (*Antidosis*, 274,5).

What makes oratory in contrast to theoretical, speculative philosophy more valuable for the education of the citizen? Isocrates explains:

> Because there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other and to make clear to each other whatever we desire, not only have we escaped the life of wild beasts, but we have come together, founded cities, and made laws and invented arts; and, generally

> speaking, there is no institution devised by man which the power of speech has not helped us to establish. For this it is which has laid down laws concerning just and unjust, and things honorable and base; and if it were not for these ordinances, we should not be able to live with one another. It is by this also that we confute the bad and extol the good. *Through this we educate the ignorant and appraise the wise; for the power to speak well is taken as the surest index of a sound understanding.* … [N]one of the things which are done with intelligence take place without the help of speech, but that in all our actions as well as in all our thoughts speech is our guide and is most employed by those have the most wisdom (*Antidosis*, 254-257, emphasis added).

In other words, in twenty-first century terms, society and civilization cannot exist apart from communication, i.e. rhetoric/oratory. Therefore, the heart of education must be to enable humanity to communicate"—"*the power to speak well is taken as the surest index of a sound understanding.*"

The humanism of Isocrates and Cicero was not an empty hope of the perfectibility of man that has appeared in every age, but a vision of a nobility which knows right and strives for it, in spite of weakness. "I consider that man to be wise who is able by his powers of conjecture to arrive generally at the best course, and I hold him to be a philosopher who occupies himself with the studies from which he will most quickly gain that kind of insight."

Two Models of *artes liberales* in the Middle Ages

We have already seen that in the Middle Ages two different versions of the rhetorical tradition of *artes liberales* developed. By the ninth and tenth centuries, liberal arts education had, by some accounts, virtually disappeared. But then came the Renaissance, the reawakening. One of the effects of the "rediscovery" of Greek literature and philosophy is discussed in the last essay in David Wagner's *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages*, written by Ralph McInerny, which concludes:

> In the twelfth century, the traditional liberal arts could still seem to provide sufficient categories to contain the full range of secular knowledge. In the thirteenth century this is no longer so.… The great reason for replacement of the liberal arts as an adequate division of secular learning is the flood of literature that comes from the Arabic world…. [I]t is the introduction of the complete Aristotelian

> corpus [body of writings] with the result that one of the divisions of philosophy that had been known all along is suddenly made concrete in a library of unknown works…. Only after the introduction of the whole Aristotle could it be asked whether the liberal arts provided an adequate division of secular knowledge."[27]

One of the most profound effects of the recovery of the Greek writers came in Thomas Aquinas' theology and philosophy. Following the example of Aristotelian dispute, in *Division and Methods of the Sciences*, Aquinas posed an objection to his thesis and answered it—in dialectical style:

> Objection 3: [P]hilosophy is commonly divided into seven liberal arts, which include neither natural nor divine science, but only rational and mathematical science.
>
> Reply:
>
> The seven liberal arts do not adequately divide theoretical philosophy; but as Hugh of St. Victor says seven arts are grouped together, leaving out other ones, because those who wanted to learn philosophy were first instructed in them. And the reason why they are divided into the *trivium* and *quadrivium* is that 'they are as paths introducing the eager mind to the secrets of philosophy.[28]

In the same passage, Thomas refers to Aristotle as "The Philosopher." And it is thus that Aristotelianism becomes the philosopher/arbiter of the liberal arts. Prior to Thomas, the liberal arts were equated with philosophy or were the "way to philosophy." Instead, Thomas makes the liberal arts to be a *part* of philosophy. The objection that the liberal arts leave some arts out (the sciences), leads to the conclusion that the liberal arts are merely a piece of a larger whole, and philosophy is it. It might also be noticed that the content of the liberal arts, the accumulation of knowledge has taken over as more important. In effect, at this point, Aristotelian philosophy, becomes the interpreter of the liberal arts, and Aristotelian philosophy takes over theology. That is the Aristotelian world that Martin Luther met in pursuing his liberal education at Erfurt, and in a few years, it was Luther's turn against Aristotle that infuriated the Thomist faculties of the universities, which was also felt

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[27] Ralph McInerny, "Beyond the Liberal Arts," in *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages*, ed. David L. Wagner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 250.

[28] Thomas Aquinas, *Division and Methods of the Sciences*, cited in Wagner, 251.

in the church hierarchy, and had no small influence on the course of the Reformation.

In that way, the "orthodox" Ciceronian-rhetorical *artes liberales* adopted Socratic-Aristotelian skepticism and became the way to philosophy. The two types of liberal education were conflicted, the balance tipping one way and then another. In later centuries the conflict between the two created serious problems for understanding the liberal arts. A second effect of the Medieval Renaissance on the liberal arts is described by Willard Dickerson in "Ethics and the Seven Liberal Arts." Dickerson writes that during this period "the liberal arts curriculum would undergo a radical transformation. The ancient *auctores* [authors] would be pushed all the way to the outer periphery of the education program. In their place scholars would take up Aristotle, who came to dominate almost every aspect of the liberal arts education."[29]

Martin Luther and the Liberal Arts

Those who have studied the biography and theology of Martin Luther understand that he had some very decided views on issues of education. The place to start would naturally be his own education. However, we would keep in mind that the more important matters concerning his education would have to be what can be historically known and verified about his education, rather than his own recollections after passage of some rather tumultuous times.

The education of Martin Luther in the late fifteenth century gives some insights into the effects of the Thomistic type of liberal education. Of the Luther biographers, Ernst Schwiebert and Martin Brecht present more detail than many others, along with some observations by Heiko Oberman. Luther's education began at Mansfeld, where his parents had moved from Eisleben when Luther was an infant. At about the age of five, or six, or seven in 1491, he was enrolled in a local Latin school. Schwiebert suggests it was possibly at the age of five or less on the basis of a report that a family friend had once picked Luther up and carried him the few blocks to school.[30] Whatever Luther's age, the school was a *trivialschule*—a school where the education focused on the *trivium* of the liberal arts—and also on music.

[29] Willard W. Dickerson III, "Ethics and the Seven Liberal Arts: Another Look at the Liberal Arts Curriculum of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," *Quidditas* 16 (1995): 82.

[30] E.G. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 111.

Schwiebert describes the curriculum at Mansfeld as being divided into three levels ("grades"?). The first began basic reading and memorizing Latin texts from the Latin primer, Lord's Prayer, Creed, etc. The second level used a more advanced textbook, with German and Latin interlinear text. The third division had a still more advanced level of Latin instruction. In music, some theory was taught, and in rhetoric, Latin texts were read. Compare this outline of the Mansfeld curriculum to the curriculum Luther and Melanchthon proposed in the "Instructions for Parish Visitors" below.

In 1497, Luther transferred to a school in Magdeburg, staffed by the Brethren of the Common Life, an order which focused on the subjective, spiritual life in a way that might later be termed "pietistic." It is conjectured that Luther's father sent him away from Mansfeld because the small town was limited in the education available there, compared to the larger Magdeburg. However, for a reason undiscovered, Luther remained in the Magdeburg *trivialschule* for only a year and in 1498, he was transferred to Eisenach, where the school was also a *trivialschule.*

In 1498, Luther's parents enrolled him in Eisenach, where he remained until 1501. There too the curriculum was the *trivium*. Thus, for eleven or more years of Luther's education, the schools taught the *trivium*, but each time, raising the level of difficulty and the breadth of Latin literature. This period would be comparable to kindergarten through tenth grade. Most of the instruction consisted of reading Latin literature, some of which had been translated from Greek. While in Eisenach, Luther moved into the upper classes, and no longer experienced the discipline of the lower levels. By the time Luther reached the higher level, he could write and speak Latin and German equally well.[31]

The next stop was the university at Erfurt where Luther entered the Liberal Arts college of the university. First, he demonstrated his mastery of the *trivium* and was awarded the Bachelor of Arts degree. He then began to work on his master's degree. There were some lectures on the *quadrivium* subjects, and considerable reading of Aristotle's Physics, Metaphysics, and Ethics, Besides that, there were special seminars, debates and disputations. The M. A. functioned as a license to teach the liberal arts, but also meant two years of teaching in the arts faculty. Some biographers point out that Luther had ranked thirtieth out of

[31] Schwiebert, 125.

fifty-seven in the exams for the baccalaureate but rose to second of seventeenth in the master's exam.[32]

One point that must be recognized here is that the number of students who began their education in the Grammar schools, eroded through the next year. Those who earned their Bachelor of Arts degree also saw a significant erosion before the Master's degree, an even smaller contingent persevering to the level of professional studies. After completing the M. A., a student could enter one of the professional faculties, theology, law, or medicine. In accord with his father's wishes, Luther then entered the Erfurt faculty of law, but his law studies soon ended, and he entered the monastery at Erfurt.

When it came time to arrange schools for the German territories which had accepted the Reformation, Luther retained his interest in liberal arts education. In 1528, Luther and Melanchthon drew up a set of instructions for the Saxon visitation to be carried out by the Lutheran superintendents (overseers or bishops) to examine the pastors and congregations in Saxony. The first part dealt with doctrine and church practices, and a second part had instructions for Christian schools. As the Reformation spread, the cathedral and monastic schools disappeared, and were replaced by city and parish schools. The program divided the students into three groups, of ascending age and year in school. The instruction was to be in Latin. The first group learned to read, memorize, and build up a vocabulary of Latin words and each day studied music. The second division moved on to grammar, reading Aesop, music, and memorizing Psalms (from the Latin Vulgate). The third division was devoted to reading Virgil and Ovid, studying more Latin grammar, and then moving on to dialectic and rhetoric.[33] The final paragraph read: "The pupils shall also be required to speak Latin. The schoolmaster himself, as far as possible, should speak only Latin with the pupils so that they become accustomed to and are encouraged in this practice." [34] The way this program would be detailed would essen-

[32] Heiko Oberman, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 113.

[33] Originally, "dialectic" (Greek) referred to the type of argument used by Socrates in Plato's dialogs, questioning to expose arguments. Eleonore Stump writes in Wagner's *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages* that "When we turn to the early Scholastic period, we find a different understanding of dialectic… then dialectic is equivalent simply to logic." *Rhetoric* is simply "oratory," 127, see notes on sources.

[34] Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslave Pelikan, Helmut Lehmann, and Christopher Brown (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Press, 1955–), 40:320. Hereafter LW.

tially be the liberal arts program. In other words, the parish schools were to be *trivialschule*, teaching the *trivium*—in Latin.

Education programs, especially in the Lutheran countries, continued that practice for many years, and may be viewed as the beginning of the Christian congregational schools established among some of the Lutheran immigrants. Many of the early pastors in the old Norwegian Synod, in the middle of the nineteenth century, were educated in secondary schools in Norway called "Latin schools," where not only Latin but also Greek and Hebrew would be taught. Instruction also included logic, metaphysics, and rhetoric. The students had to learn to read, write, and speak in Latin; some of them also taught in Latin schools before emigrating.[35] C. F. W. Walther's studies in Germany would have been very similar before he emigrated to America. Generally, European Latin schools were the "grammar schools" from the late Middle Ages into the twentieth century. The strong emphasis placed on the congregational schools by the Missouri Synod and adopted by the other Synodical Conference churches certainly is rooted in the educational practices in Europe.

While Luther did not write any treatises specifically on the liberal arts, his output did include two significant works on Education, "To the Councilmen of all cities in Germany, that they Establish and Maintain Christian Schools" (1524) and "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School" (1530). In "To the Councilmen…" Luther wrote:

> [I]n ancient Rome, boys were so taught that by the time they reached their fifteenth, eighteenth, or twentieth year they were well versed in Latin, Greek, and all the liberal arts (as they are called), and then immediately entered upon a political or military career. Their system produced intelligent, wise, and competent men, so skilled in every art and rich in experience that if all the bishops, priests, and monks in the whole of Germany today were rolled into one, you would not have the equal of a single Roman soldier.[36]

Luther also refers to the liberal arts in "Sermon on Keeping Children in School." He asks, "Where are the preachers, jurists, and physicians to come from, if grammar and the other rhetorical arts are not taught?"[37] When Luther refers to "grammar and the other rhetorical

[35] Knute Gjerset, *History of the Norwegian People*, vol. 2 (New York: MacMillan, 1915), 294–300.

[36] LW 45:356.

[37] LW 46:252.

arts," he is referring to the *trivium,* which for the rhetorical model of the liberal arts was the main thing while the quadrivium belongs more to the philosophers.

Luther's own writings and his biographers show how his intellectual capacity was formed through his immersion in Latin and the liberal education. A *wunderkind* he was not—he was never reported to be a top-rated or brilliant student or a prolific learner. He might have been what used to be called in our circles "late boomers." Neither did he formulate any theoretical and historical understandings of liberal education. But the historical record knows his accomplishments: an effective rhetorician, with a mind that could quickly analyze arguments and grasp errors in logic, an academic lecturer, equally facile in German or Latin, something of a latecomer to Greek and Hebrew whose output of biblical commentaries and Bible translations outpaced most of his contemporaries. In his 1549 biography of Luther, Philipp Melanchthon wrote about Luther:

> And since his mind was eager for learning, he sought more and better things, and he himself read the many writings of the ancient Latin writers, Cicero, Virgil, Livy, and others. He read these, not as boys do, picking out the words only, but as the teaching of human life, or, since he looked at the counsels and sayings of these men more closely, and as he had a faithful and firm memory and read and heard many authors, the images were insight and before his eyes. Thus he was therefore outstanding among the youth, so that Luther's intelligence was a thing of wonder to the whole Academy.[38]

From the study of his second year at Erfurt, Luther knew Aristotle well enough so that he could successfully dispute the arguments advanced by the Aristotelian Thomists. Though never serving as a regular parish pastor (his stints at the St. Mary's, the city church in Wittenberg were always done in addition to his full teaching load at the university), his output of sermons, and the power of his preaching pointed to the central core of the Reformation—justification through faith alone and a firm faith in the divine authority of Scripture. The Weimar edition of Luther's writings numbers 127 volumes and 80,000 some pages in both Latin and German. For one who was decidedly not a child prodigy, his liberal education doesn't seem to have disadvantaged him.

[38] Philip Melanchthon, *History of the Life and Acts of Dr Martin Luther*, in *Luther's Lives:Two contemporary accounts of Martin Luther*, trans. Thomas D. Frazel (New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 17.

John Henry Newman

In more modern times, a highly significant treatment of liberal learning in higher education is John Henry Newman's *The Idea of a University,* first published in 1852 and in several editions since then. John Henry Newman was a professor at the university at Oxford, England. Newman was dealing strictly with Liberal Arts education in the University of Ireland. In Bruce Kimball's study, Newman merits only one reference, and that in a footnote concerning his Oxford style.[39] Newman finds the one essential of liberal education to be the culture of the mind—thinking, which also includes virtue and character. That is not to say that one doesn't acquire knowledge through liberal education. In my view, Newman's view of liberal education belongs to the rhetorical model. Even if I am incorrect, it would still be true that the essential function of the liberal studies is to develop the capacity for critical, analytic thinking. A few observations from Newman that are worth including here:

> The studies which it was found to involve were four principal ones, Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, and Mathematics. The science of Mathematics again, was divided into four, Geometry, Arithmetic, Astronomy, and Music…. And thus, a definite school of intellect was formed.[40]

> The question is not what department of study contains the more wonderful facts; … but simply which out of all provides the most robust and invigorating discipline for the unformed mind.[41]

> To advance the useful arts is one thing, and to cultivate the mind another.[42]

Regretting that there isn't a one-word expression for what liberal education does, Newman wishes that "the English, like the Greek language, possessed some definite word to express, simply and general *intellectual proficiency,*" as "health" does for the human frame. Liberal education serves the "cultivation of the mind."

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[39] Kimball, 195.

[40] John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ed. Frank M. Turner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 172.

[41] Newman, 265.

[42] Newman, 175.

Artes Liberales at the End of the Second Millenium

What survives of the idea of the education invented by Greeks and taken over and developed by the Romans in the post-Republic era? Bruce Kimball writes in his introduction about the term *artes liberals*, "No volume about the historical roots of 'liberal education' in America has taken adequate account of this background." He adds, "It is paradoxical that, precisely on a topic where academicians are forever eager to appeal to history, many erect ahistorical and relativistic conceptions of 'liberal arts education' as cairns to mark a trail."[43] Professor Kimball's analysis of the education theory that began with the Greeks and their *enkyklios paideia* until recent times attempts to answer that question. Though Kimball begins with the Greeks, by the time the idea of the *enkyklios paideia* was adopted by the Romans in the first century B. C., it set off on a quite different course and thus has its own history. Cicero and Quintilian (the former, first century B.C. and first century A. D.) advocated for an emphasis on oratory and the development of citizenship. While others echoing school of the Greeks wanted to emphasize *ratio,* [reason], the advocates of Cicero and Isocrates emphasized oratory or rhetoric. Through the years of the Roman empire, these were conflicting views among the teachers of the *artes liberales*. With the gradual death of the Roman empire, the *artes liberales* almost died out, though Kimball suggests that one factor that kept it alive was that Christians such as Augustine and Jerome (347-420 A. D.) promoted liberal education among Christians and made grammar and rhetoric predominant (40 f.).

As we have seen earlier, in the Middle Ages, many of the ancient Greek texts once again became available. Much of them came via the Arabic philosophers and mathematicians who had studied and preserved them. The scholastic movement in the Roman Catholic church, especially under the influence of Aristotles' philosophy adapted the *artes liberales* to their purpose of theoretical and rationalizing Christian teaching. According to Kimball:

> Rhetoric almost dropped from sight… while grammar was transmuted into linguistic analysis and stripped of its association with literature and texts. Overall, the liberal arts became narrow and relatively brief "speculative sciences" intended to prepare the student

[43] Kimball, 2.

> for advanced and specialized study in the graduate faculties of the universities.[44]

Kimball maintains that this type of liberal arts education was the majority view into the time when the great universities of Europe, followed by the universities in the American colonies, and formulates a picture of the two conflicting views in force since the time of Plato and Isocrates fall into two differing and conflicting ideals. One was *"Artes Liberale*s Ideal" the (rhetorical) which developed from the writings of Cicero and Quintilian. The other, the "Liberal-Free Ideal" (philosophic) developed from the renaissance recovery of the ancient Greek texts. Earlier, we referred to this as the Thomistic type. The categories between the two are not very neat, and all sorts of ironies and exceptional cases can be seen. However, they can help us understand the difficulties in discussing the liberal arts today.

Confusion in Higher Education.

Robert Hariman, a reviewer of Kimball's *Orators and Philosophers,* observes that "contemporary discussions of liberal arts education in America are incoherent, for they assume a single tradition of thought while using the terms of two traditions that were and are in conflict."[45]

After describing some shifts in the way some educators spoke of the "liberal" in "liberal arts," Kimball makes some observations about the adoption of Darwinism, ethical pragmatism, and other ideas:

> The rise of pragmatism, with its epistemological antagonism toward absolutes, was integrally related to the development of progressivism in the United States, all of which encouraged educators to incorporate characteristics of the liberal-free ideal into theories of education.[46]

Kimball's critique is that various issues, too many to enumerate, made their way into the debates. They included the establishment of college majors by which specialization was introduced into undergraduate education, thus adding a new emphasis on individualism, replacing the previous emphasis on the city and the republic. Citizenship was

[44] Kimball, 207.

[45] Robert Hariman, "Review: Orators and Philosophers," *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 6, no. 2 (1988): 199.

[46] Kimball, 168.

crowded out as key for the *Artes liberales* ideal, and "liberal" came to refer to a freedom of the mind without limits.

An example of the confusion that the Liberal-free Ideal led to was the "general education" idea based on "three axes" (plural of "axis"):

> Individualism, egalitarianism, culture—cut through the historical ideals of liberal education and so, the ways in which people talked about liberal education. The consequent blurring of historical distinctions led to simultaneous phenomenon both liberal and general education: the defining of either term as a basket of many diverse educational goods without providing a systematic rationale.[47]

Kimball's analysis goes into more detail and is recommended reading. For our purposes here, the confusion and wide disagreement on what the term "liberal arts" has meant throughout its history, this should be enough to show that a discussion of the liberal arts is not a simple matter. It is seldom the case that a word, term, or phrase forever-after the first time it is written, retains precisely the same meaning for all time.

That does not mean that discussion is futile. There was a big change when someone translated *enkyklios paideia* from Greek to Latin as *artes liberales,* and there were significant changes as education moved its way through the Middle Ages, Renaissance and Reformation, through Europe and transplanting in the New World. Not all of the changes were good; whether or not it is possible to repristinate some form of the *artes liberales* into a larger system of public education or a smaller system of Christian education, or a few isolated systems of Lutheran education, such as on a Minnesota river bluff, is probably too much to think about. But it should be possible to try to isolate those aspects of the general idea of the liberal arts that serve the needs of a particular group in a particular place to carry out its mission.

The Liberal Arts in Bethany's Curriculum

The first time Bethany's educational philosophy was publicly referred to as "liberal education" was by Prof. Martin Galstad writing in the *Lutheran Sentinel:* "Education at Bethany is liberal, for it makes men free" (September 27, 1947), unfortunately using the corrupted version of *liberales*. When the college catalog in the 1940 began to include sample curricula for students to follow to prepare themselves for more intense study in their third and fourth years, the first curriculum listed was

[47] Kimball, 195.

"Liberal Arts, Pre-Law, and Terminal" ("terminal" referred to those who would not go beyond the AA junior college degree). In the mid 1990s, when it was determined that the Bachelor of Arts program would begin with two majors, the Board of Regents specified Communication as one of the beginning majors; the second would be determined by the faculty, which chose to develop a Liberal Arts major. It consisted of some core courses and some concentrations which, over time, would develop into majors. Someone involved had some kind of idea of what *liberal arts* signified.

At the time, no systematic statement had been prepared defining the meaning of "liberal education," although the committee had discussed the meaning of the term. There is an examination of the writings of Sigurd Christian Ylvisaker in the *Bethany Bulletin* in the 1930s and 40s. The bulletin was a quarterly mailing used to promote Bethany, especially to members of the Norwegian Synod and Synodical Conference, and to discuss issues of education effecting Bethany and the synod. While he doesn't use the terms "liberal education" or "liberal arts," what he describes, sometimes under the term "general education," are the outcomes expected of liberal education. It should be noted that the "general education" debate began in the eastern U. S. in the 1930s, and as most things, gradually moved to the west. If Ylvisaker had something like the *artes liberales* in mind, he had probably not have realized yet that its meaning had changed, and besides that, he was not so likely to use the word "liberal," out of fear that it had serious pejorative baggage for church people.

College catalogs usually include statements about the philosophy or principles that govern the school's purpose and practices. In the first years after 1927, Bethany catalogs explained that the school was now co-educational. In 1936, the catalog included the following two aims:

1. The specific one of training the young people of our church to intelligent and consecrated membership in the church of their faith. To this end Scripture teachings and principles are made the basis in every branch of instruction and in all matters of discipline.
2. The more general purpose, too, of educating a God-fearing generation, sober in its judgment, well-disciplined for intellectual accomplishments, young men and women of Christian culture and refinement, who go out with a deeper understanding and appreciation of their opportunities for service in a

> nation they love. To this end the courses of instruction lay stress on certain fundamental and cultural branches which are at the same time definite in their content and wide in their scope, courses which educate for true leadership.

In later editions of the catalog, the purpose given priority was to prepare a "well-trained Christian laity." In 1936, the emphasis was on "intelligent and consecrated." The second point is cast in language that found in descriptions of liberal education, more in tune with Isocrates and Cicero than the philosophical model. The catalog does not brand its curriculum as a novel form of liberal education; rather its objective was "to educate young people with disciplined intellect, culture and refinement, deeper understanding, true leadership"—a fair description of a modern liberal arts college.

Behind Lutheran thinking on the function of education is the doctrine of the two kingdoms; since the beginning of Bethany's existence as a co-educational junior college, the distinction has been made that education is for the two kingdoms: (1) the kingdom of the right, that is, the spiritual kingdom which pertains to faith, divine service, salvation, and eternal life, and where Christ serves his people with the gospel, and (2) the kingdom of the left, that is, life in this world, where the governing principles are reason and service to neighbor and society, but where the Christian lives outwardly as a Christian.[48]

In 1953, the catalog developed a detailed statement of another one of the fundamental facets of liberal arts education—that there is an important distinction between vocational training or education for a job or livelihood, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, education for a consecrated life of service. Here it is in the form found in the catalogs from 1969 to 1987.

1. To grow in the grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by means of the Gospel, the power of God unto salvation.
2. To assume a responsible Christian attitude towards the talents God has given them and towards their obligation to develop and use their talents for the glory of God and the welfare of their fellowmen.

[48] The Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms does not entail *separation of church and state* or the first amendment but it does not exclude it either.

3. To progress in the development of critical and creative thinking.[49]
4. To become more effective citizens in their community by means of the study and appreciation of our American and world cultural heritage, and the study of our contemporary social, economic, and political life.
5. To acquire the ability to use written and oral English effectively.
6. To maintain good mental and physical health habits.
7. To develop an appreciation for art, music, and literature so that as educated young men and women they will lead a more full and satisfying life.
8. To acquire fundamental skills and understandings for achieving a satisfactory vocational adjustment.
9. To learn the basic mathematical skills necessary for everyday life.
10. To secure a foundation in the basic sciences for a better understanding of the world in which we live.

This statement was certainly not prepared intending it to reflect the Isocrates-Cicero model of liberal education, but in fact it does just that. With its emphasis on citizenship, It reflects that idea of the rhetoric model of *artes liberales* rather than the philosophical model. Whatever is to be said about it, I believe that seventy-five years later, it is worthy of a longer life.

In an address at a commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of ELS' ownership of Bethany College, B. W. Teigen commented on the above statement:

> We have had the aim of helping students to "do independent critical thinking on their own…to become more effective citizens by means of the study and appreciation of American and world cultural heritage, and the study of contemporary, social, economic and political life…to acquire fundamental skills and understandings for

[49] Before 1969 and after 1987, the following wording was used: "To do independent critical thinking on their own so that they are not shaken from the eternal foundations on which their moral and spiritual growth is founded." From 1969–1987, the "critical thinking" clause stood alone. There may have been a well-intentioned fear of rationalism if "independent critical thinking" stood alone. On the other hand, the reason for creating a separate point for "critical thinking…" was to reflect the confessional statements in Luther's explanation of the first and third articles concerning reason in the *Small Catechism* section on the Apostles' Creed, that God has created my reason and my senses and I cannot come to believe the gospel by my reason and senses.

> achieving a satisfactory vocational adjustment."[50] Dear Alumni and friends, we have done what we could to help you achieve a balanced roundness, in high school, in college, and in seminary.
>
> We must admit that our resources over the years have been modest, modest in faculty, modest in financial resources and equipment over these fifty years. But the objective has always been to have broadly trained tent makers, homemakers, farmers, and businessmen who take their place in life as effective citizens. And it has been our hope that our pastors, too, would have been well trained, not only in the foreign languages but also in the arts and sciences, so that they can take their place as pastors with sympathy and understanding for the work-a-day world of people going about their business.

While this is not a definition which describes a strict, classical view of liberal education, it describes a philosophy of education that values the ideals of liberal education which intends to cultivate the intellect and describes what has been called "a liberal arts college." It also nods to some of the seven of the traditional *artes liberales*. The nine points remain but are now recast as a statement of goals and how they are fulfilled.

This essay has intended to provide the reader with a sense of how the idea of liberal education has come to be and how it has developed. In fact, there is much more to the history of the liberal education, and for those who wish to see it more completely, the Notes on Sources will provide some suggestions for where to start.

This can by no means be the last word on this subject. It has not been my intention to present a closed subject. I do, however, believe that the history of liberal education will not provide a determination of "exactly this form." I also believe that the aims of liberal education, in spite of their ebb and flow in history, can be known and can serve our church and society in a God-pleasing way. I also believe that there is a history of liberal arts education that has operated at Bethany since 1927, but it has undergone some changes over the years.

My hope is that this essay will give the Bethany community, administration, faculty, alumni and our many friends, some focus in how to view the place in education that Bethany has chosen for itself.

[50] BLC Catalog 1957–1959, 10 f.n. 21.

There are many challenges facing the church college, and especially a confessional Lutheran college like ours that is dedicated to God's Word and the ancient and Lutheran confessions of the faith taught by Holy Scripture. God help us and guide us to be able to our confession of his truth. LSQ

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    Note: Ian Ker (1942-2022) is the foremost expert on John Henry Cardinal Newman and also Newman's biographer. Like Newman, he was an Anglican convert to Roman Catholicism, and also a member of the faculty of Oxford.
30. Kimball, Bruce A. *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Ideal of Liberal Education, Expanded edition.* New York: College Board Publications (1995). See also New York: Teachers College Press (1986). Online at Internet Archive, free to loan books and articles 1 hour to 14 days upon registering. https://archive.org/details/oratorsphilosoph0000kimb.

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    Vol 45 (1962) "To the Councilmen of all Cities in Germany, that they Establish and Maintain Christian Schools" (1524).

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41. Nightingale, Andrea Wilson. "Liberal Education In Plato's *Republic* And Aristotle's *Politics.*" In *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, edited by Yun Lee Too, 133–173. New York: Brill Academic Publishing, 2001. https://www.academia.edu/95319556/Liberal_Education_In_Platos_Republic_And_Aristotles_Politics.

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Note: This essay is cited in a number of other papers in this bibliography and elsewhere.

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Online at Internet Archive, free registration required to borrow books and articles 1 hour or 14 days upon registering. https://archive.org/details/sevenliberalarts0000unse_b3x5/mode/1up?view=theater&q=David+L.+Wagner%2C+the+Seven+Liberal+Arts.

Note: The editor has an introductory essay on the history of the liberal arts; following, seven other scholars each has an essay on one of the seven arts with a preface to each by the editor. A concluding chapter is entitled "Beyond the Liberal Arts.

56. West, Andrew Flemming. *The Seven Liberal Arts.* Originally published in *Alcuin and the Rise of Christian Schools,* Scribners, 1912. https://scholeacademy.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/TheSevenLiberalArts.pdf
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Appendices

Appendix A: Summary theses

These statements summarize the paper "Liberal Education at Bethany Lutheran College" and may also serve as a guide for discussion on Liberal education (Education for Citizenship).

I. Education was discussed by the Greeks beginning at least by the sixth century BC. Two different forms developed: 1. The philosophical model, credited to Plato and Aristotle, and 2. The rhetorical model credited to Isocrates and Cicero.

II. The two models agree that the purpose of liberal education is to develop the intellect. "The essential function of the liberal studies is to develop the capacity for critical, analytic thinking"; "to advance the useful arts is one thing, and to cultivate the mind another" (Newman).

III. From the sixth through first century B.C. the rhetorical model became dominant, and was adopted by the Romans, the two most prominent of whom were Cicero and Quintilian.

IV. The name for liberal education given by the Romans was *artes liberales* as a translation of the Greek term ἐγγκύκλιος παιδεία *(enkyklios paideia).*

V. For Greeks and Romans, *liberales* meant "befitting the free man." "Until modern times the Latin term *liberales* has never meant "free from prejudice and falsehood" The view that it meant "free from"… was based on a linguistic mistake and should not be perpetuated. See (Kimball, 13–15).

VI. The Latin term *Ars, artes* (sing. & pl.) translates the Greek term τέχνη (technē) which refers to an art or skill; in liberal education, it excludes those skills by which one would earn a living or use in vocation.

VII. Quintilian was mistaken when he said that *artes liberales* translated the Greek *enkyklios paideia* (Cicero probably made the same mistake).

VIII. The most equivalent translation of *enkyklios paideia* is "general or well-rounded education."

IX. *Enkyklios paideia* and general education are equivalent *if* the subjects (technes) of the *paideia* are not of the kind that would prepare for an occupation; and the technes are the kind that would cultivate the intellect.

X. It is a mistake to believe Cicero and the Romans adopted an education system of seven arts, three of them a trivium and four a quadrivium as some have claimed. (That belief misses the mark by 400 or more years.)

XI. he Rhetorical tradition, followed by Cicero, Quintilian, and later Roman educators, was not limited to just those seven arts "traditionally" named: Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric, Mathematics, Geometry, Astronomy, Dialectic. Plato's and Aristotle's versions do not agree; Isocrates' model has little in common with any other—he emphasizes grammar and rhetoric but includes gymnastics and music (mousikē—the gifts of the muses) which looks a lot like a modern humanities program.

XII. The rhetorical tradition is characterized by placing rhetoric as the final study, after literature and other studies, by emphasizing virtue, character, reputation, and citizenship, and rejecting the theoretical and speculative approach of the philosophic model.

XIII. That the list of seven arts by Marcus Varro (116–27 B. C.) is emphasized as authoritative and prescriptive is dubious since Varro's work (*Nine Books of Disciplines*) is not extant. It existed at the time of fifth century and is known through Martianus Cappela—*who wrote* "On the Marriage of Philology and Mercury," also called *De septem disciplinis,* is an elaborate allegory written in mystical language. Augustine knew it also, and reproduces a list like Cappela's, but then proceeds to dismiss most of it, leaving only a study of what "unity" is.

XIV. The notion of a *septivium* consisting of a *trivium* and *quadrivium*, was not in place until the Middle Ages—The term trivium was first used for the three language studies by Alcuin of York and his school in eighth century England. *Quadrivium* was first used by Boethius 480–524 for the four mathematical arts as the preparation for philosophy. The rhetorical school generally used only the language arts.

XV. In the early Middle Ages, Roman education was severely weakened but was revived again with the Renaissance when many of the ancient classical writings were re-discovered. With increased interest in

Aristotle, liberal education adapted itself to the philosophical and was in vogue during the ages of Enlightenment and Rationalism.

XVI. There is no doubt that during the Middle Ages, there were seven liberal arts "idealized as a normative program of education" (Kimball, 14), but there was no unanimity as to how each art was to be interpreted or taught. The dominant approach to the arts was that of Isocrates and Cicero.

XVII. For Renaissance humanism, the idea of *artes libera*les was that the *studia humanitatis* make men free by binding them to a common culture in the world and society, and from that came the "free thinking" of the age of Rationalism, freedom from prejudice, etc. (Kimball, 115). Kimball terms this form of *artes liberale* the "*Liberal Free Ideal."*

XVIII. The two strains of artes liberales, the rhetorical tradition and the philosophical tradition met in nineteenth and twentieth century America, some universities holding to the one and some to the other, resulting in further confusion regarding the liberal arts.

XIX. "Contemporary discussions of liberal arts education in America are incoherent, for they assume a single tradition of thought while using the terms of two traditions that were and are in conflict" (Robert Hariman, in a review of Kimball, see notes on sources*).*

XX. "Liberal education is a process defined *not by its content, not by its method, but by its aims" (*Wayne Willis, see notes on sources). Therefore, educational institutions today cannot be considered by the presence of the historic forms of liberal education or by a curriculum containing certain types of courses selected from the traditional *technē.* They must rather be considered according to the intention of their education principles —cultivation of the intellect and execution of that principle.

XXI. Usage determines meaning. In this case, institutions of higher education tasked with professional or vocational training are not liberal arts schools. Colleges requiring a basic core which includes humanities courses and majors in disciplines of the humanities and the liberal arts, can be considered liberal arts colleges. They are incomplete, however, without a strong element of critical thinking and rhetoric.

XXII. The practice of calling special high schools, junior colleges, or four-year colleges "liberal arts schools" is valid when there is a strong curriculum for development of the intellect, orderly thinking and with a strong core of courses in the humanities, along with some of the mathematical studies.

XXIII. The rules and traditions for the medieval form of liberal education *form* are largely irrelevant to liberal education practice today. The distinction between the medieval liberal arts and general education (App. C) is not relevant to the rhetorical tradition of liberal education.

XXIV. The 1953 statement of Bethany's aims for its students reflects Isocrates' and Cicero's rhetorical model of liberal education.

XXV. The most important and practical aspect of liberal education is in the *Trivium*, i.e. grammar in the sense of language *study* and literature, study of logic, (critical thinking, formal and informal logic), and rhetoric (not only public speaking, but clear and persuasive writing, and the principles of communication).

Appendix B: Liberal Arts and Professional Majors

When the curriculum committee and faculty were discussing the addition of additional majors, the question arose as to whether it was possible for a liberal arts institution to include professional majors in its program.

Some participants in the discussion, including this one, did not believe it to be workable to intertwine professional majors with a liberal arts program. Supporting that position, Bruce Kimball, in an afterword to *Orators and Philosophers*, analyzes reports about undergraduate education [in the 1980s] He responds to a 1985 report by Ernest Boyer, who wrote, "Here then is the heart of our curriculum proposal: Rather than view the major as competing with general education, we are convinced that these two essential parts of the baccalaureate program should be intertwined" (Kimball, p 287, f. n. 65). It is not clear here exactly what is meant— a core curriculum, or a set of courses aimed at accomplishing the aims of the rhetorical model of education. In any case, Kimball rejects that "intertwining" as an impossibility and a contradiction.

However, in a 2018 response, Ria van der Lec, a retired professor of classics at Utrecht University, The Netherlands, cites Kimball favorably several times, but near the end writes that she does "not share Kimball's opinion that the two traditions cannot be integrated or even coexist in one curriculum." She acknowledges that it may be "difficult to be a specialist and a generalist at the same time…Yet, this is what interdisciplinarians do. Interdisciplinarians are specialists who possess the skills to work together with other specialists to solve complex problems…. But it is not impossible. Liberal education with its combination of breadth and depth creates a perfect environment for making connections." In other words, Van der Lecq suggests that such interdisciplinary study may be advantageous to the student.

This is certainly not the end of the debate about the combination of liberal education and the academic or professional majors in undergraduate education. The rationale offered by van der Lecq is certainly worth considering.

Appendix C: A summary of Bruce Kimball's two different models of *Artes Liberales Ideal* and Liberal Free Ideal (philosophical).

1. The ***Artes Liberales Ideal (Isocratic Rhetorical)*** *(Kimball, 37 ff.)*
    1. Aim: training good citizens and leaders of society.
    2. Schooling involved the prescription of values and standards for personality formation and civic responsibility.
    3. Expectation of commitment to the same.

4. A body of classical authoritative texts, a body of classical authors as the source of the teachings of the *artes*.
5. Identification of an elite who achieve merit due to their education in the *artes liberales.*
6. Truth can be known and expressed (dogmatic epistemology); liberal education informs the student of the virtues, rather than the philosophers teaching the student how to find the virtues.
7. Liberal education is a good (an end) in itself.

Medieval educators *accommodated* the *artes liberales* to preparation for explicating divine texts rather than to personal refinement according to an idealistic notion of the perfect orator, though the arts continued to be taught as the sum of "philosophy.

2. The ***Liberal Free Ideal (Philosophical)*** *(Kimball p. 115 ff.)*
    1. Emphasis on freedom: esp. freedom from *a priori* strictures and standards—liberty as a fundamental human right.
    2. The desire for freedom is particularly linked to an emphasis on intellect and rationality.
    3. Liberal-free idea incorporates a critical skepticism even though some freethinkers converted to a new faith in natural science.
    4. Tolerance, a new virtue which depended on the epistemology of skepticism.
    5. Tendency toward egalitarianism—following from the relativizing of standards and norms.
    6. Emphasis on volition of the individual rather than upon the obligations of citizenship found in the *artes liberales* ideal.
    7. Freedom of intellect realized in the pursuit of knowledge becomes a goal that is sought for its own sake—not the truth, but seeking it is the ultimate desirable goal.

Lessons from the Golden-Mouthed Preacher:
Lutheran Reflections on the Life and Homiletics of John Chrysostom

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IN RECENT YEARS, CONSERVATIVE PROTESTANTS seem to have rediscovered the Church Fathers. *The Lutheran Study Bible* is so bulky precisely because the editors, helpfully, decided to include many quotes from the Fathers. The Christian Standard Bible *Ancient Faith Study Bible*, English Standard Version *Church History Study Bible*, and New King James Version *Ancient-Modern Bible* consist entirely of quotes from Church Fathers, pulled completely out of their context in order to provide "ancient wisdom" to evangelicals desiring to dip their toes in church history and rediscover their faith's past. Additionally, several book series, such as Crossway's *The Christian Life* and Lexham Press's *Lived Theology*, discuss the continued relevance of the Fathers' ministries and writings to twenty-first century believers.

To some extent, John Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed preacher of Antioch and bishop of Constantinople, has benefitted from this rediscovery of ancient Christian theology. Unfortunately, Chrysostom has not drawn the same attention from historians or theologians as Augustine or the Cappadocian Fathers. However, as his quotes have entered new study Bibles and evangelical Protestants have sought to make him one of their own, he is making a comeback in twenty-first century American Christianity.

This paper provides a preliminary historical and practical engagement with John Chrysostom from a Lutheran perspective by recounting his life, analyzing a few of his sermons, and suggesting ways

in which Lutheran preachers can engage critically and appreciatively with Chrysostom's homiletics. As one ought to expect, Chrysostom's preaching and teaching would not perfectly align with confessional Lutheranism. However, as an exemplar expository preacher, Chrysostom provides a glimpse into the historic Christian preaching tradition out of which came the Lutheran homiletical tradition of the Lutheran Orthodox and C. F. W. Walther.

A Sketch of John Chrysostom's Life[1]

Unlike Augustine, John did not leave behind an autobiography, and he discussed his youth sparingly in his writings and homilies. Therefore, scholars know little concerning his earliest years. Nevertheless, they have reconstructed an outline of John's youth.

John was born around AD 349 in Antioch, in the Roman Empire's eastern province of Syria. John grew up in a diverse community. Antioch may have been on the empire's periphery, but it was hardly a backwater burg. It matched Constantinople in population. A major trade and military hub, the East met the West in Antioch. Antioch was a cultural center, with citizens equally concerned with philosophy, theatre, and horseracing.[2] It possessed significant Christian, Jewish, and pagan populations.

John's father was an imperial servant, likely of Roman background. Scholars doubt that he was Christian. His mother, on the other hand, likely was Christian. John's father passed away early in John's life, leaving him to be raised by his mother. Despite this hardship, John received a standard, classical education, one which would serve him well in his future ecclesiastical service. He was taught Greek and Roman literature, pagan mythology, and the principles of rhetoric. His teachers drilled proper grammar into him. As John advanced in his education, he studied public speaking skills, and he learned well. Chrysostom's biographer J. N. D. Kelly notes that "his chief debt to his teachers was for

[1] Unlike other Church Fathers, John Chrysostom has received extremely limited biographical treatment by historians. Presently, there is only one modern biography of him, upon which this paper heavily relies. See J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom—Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995). Gerald Bray provides a similarly derivative summary of Chrysostom's life in Gerald Bray, *Preaching the Word with John Chrysostom*, Lived Theology (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2020), 1–26.

[2] Kelly, 1–3.

the classic purity of his Greek diction and the astonishing elegance of expression he acquired from them."[3]

By the time John was born, Christianity had become a legally acceptable religion within the Roman Empire. However, despite the faith's growth in popularity, Christianity was far from secure. This reality marked John's youth. Many Greco-Roman pagans remained in positions of influence, including John's teachers, and they employed various apologetics to counter the "new" religion.[4] As John transitioned into adulthood, the Emperor Julian abandoned the Christian faith, reverting to Roman paganism. Julian sought to counteract Christianity's growth not only through reviving traditional polytheism, but also by using his imperial influence to strengthen Judaism, going so far as to advocate reconstructing the Temple of Jerusalem.[5] Even though Julian's reign was short-lived (and his successor did not continue his religious project), Julian's programs frightened the Christian community.

Additionally, the Christian Church was not doctrinally united. Despite the Council of Nicaea, the controversy between Arians and orthodox trinitarians continued, with Arians remaining the most popular party in influential cities like Constantinople. Arian theologians continue to preach against *homoousios*, preaching that the Son was *anomoios* ("unlike") the Father. Even as they combatted Arianism, orthodox trinitarians were divided amongst themselves, particularly on Christological issues, which undermined their response to the Arian threat.

Therefore, the Antiochene Christianity into which John was baptized around the age of twenty was far from united. It was torn asunder by theological debate. It was under periodic assault by Roman officials. Additionally, it was challenged by the local Jewish population, which did not hesitate to critique the Christian faith. With this context in mind, it is hardly surprising that, following his ordination, John's homilies were strongly polemical.

Even though John's education (and his mother) prepared him to follow in his father's footsteps and pursue a lucrative imperial civil service career, John felt called in a different direction. He became an ascetic.[6] Asceticism was an important aspect of the Church in

[3] Ibid., 7.

[4] Concerning the cultural transition from paganism to Christianity within the Roman Empire, see Edward J. Watts, *The Final Pagan Generation: Rome's Unexpected Path to Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015).

[5] Kelly, 10.

[6] Ibid., 16.

Antioch, taking on many different flavors.[7] John initially became a "city monastic." While he adopted a coarse attire of a monk, he continued to live in Antioch. His life was marked by intense scripture study and prayer. Kelly describes John's monastic cell as

> a close-knit fellowship of dedicated Christians who, while staying in their separate homes and living in the world, accepted self-imposed rules of rigorous self-denial and met together, probably in some private house, to pray, study the bible and hear expositions of it, and be counselled by the master in ascetic withdrawal.… Without exception they entered into a pact or covenant with Christ, and bound themselves to remain celibate, abstain from wine and meat, wear a distinctive dress, and devote themselves to prayer; secular employment was forbidden for them. For discipline and support they generally depended on the local clergy…and they were expected to assist the clergy in liturgical, administrative and pastoral functions. They formed a pool to which bishops readily turned when they needed new clergy for their churches.[8]

Therefore, it was little surprise when the bishop of Antioch sought to ordain John.

Kelly cheekily describes Antioch's answer to their vocations crisis as "press-ganging."[9] John apparently heard that he and one of his friends were going to be seized by church officials and then "ordained under duress."[10] Deeming himself terribly unworthy of the priesthood, he staunchly refused ordination, choosing instead to leave the city and become a "mountain monk," living in the caves which surrounded Antioch. While each mountain monk lived in their own cave, they joined together for worship and study.[11]

After four years, John opted for the most rigorous form of Antiochene asceticism, which involved complete solitude, severe fasting, and extreme self-denial (including denying oneself sleep).[12]

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[7] Concerning Antiochene asceticism, see Columba Stewart, "The Ascetic Taxonomy of Antioch and Edessa at the Emergence of Monasticism," *Adamantius* 19 (December 2013): 207–221.

[8] Kelly, 19. See also Stewart, 208.

[9] Kelly, 25.

[10] Ibid., 25. John writes of this experience in *On the Priesthood*. See John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood*, trans. Graham Neville, *Popular Patristics Series,* vol. 1 (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996).

[11] Kelly, 30–32; Stewart, 210–213.

[12] Kelly, 33–34.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this routine wrecked John's health, leading to him to return to the city. However, Kelly notes, "when he left his cave and resumed city life he did not conceive of himself as ceasing to be a monk. As a deacon, priest and bishop he not only remained a monk at heart (what, after all, was a monk but a Christian striving to live out the gospel to the full?), but continued, as far as his new situation permitted, to practice his routine of monastic austerities."[13] John's continued self-identification as a monastic influenced his strong homiletical emphasis on holy living.

Returning to Antioch, John surrendered to his superiors' desires and allowed himself to be ordained. He likely was ordained as a deacon in 380. While John did not preach homilies, he was heavily involved in teaching the faith to catechumenates and caring for the poor, sick, and widows.[14] John's diaconate ministry was a "ministry in the trenches." He also grew as a writer, composing polemical pamphlets against Julian-inspired pagans and emboldened Jewish opponents of Christianity.

John was ordained a priest in 386. Very quickly, he gained a reputation as a talented preacher. John's style endeared him to his congregants. Kelly writes that "it is generally agreed that he preached extempore; a late biographer has preserved a reminiscence that, when he went to the ambo, people were amazed that he had no scrap of paper or book in his hand but held forth impromptu, something they had never seen before."[15] Stenographers recorded his sermons, which were later edited, polished, and published.[16]

As will be discussed later, in modern terms, John's sermons primarily were expository in nature, elucidating the Scriptures passage-by-passage. He preached in *lectio continua*, marching sequentially through books of scripture while inserting his pastoral commentary. Inevitably, John's monastic impulse would rear itself, imploring his hearers to the holy living called for by the sermon text. Ingeniously, many of John's sermons ended by inviting the congregant, in essence, to be a participant in the act of preaching, not only by living a Christian life but also sharing the Word which John proclaimed from the pulpit.[17]

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[13] Ibid., 35.

[14] Ibid., 39.

[15] Ibid., 57–58.

[16] Ibid., 94.

[17] Ibid., 58–60; Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church: Volume 2, The Patristic Age* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 173.

John's expository preaching does not mean that his sermons were removed from current events. Most importantly, perhaps, were his "Homilies on the Statues." In 387, a riot occurred in Antioch against new taxes imposed by the emperor. The governor's residence was ransacked, as were the homes of several prominent supporters of the new tax. Unwisely, rioters burned imperial effigies. These rebellious acts infuriated the emperor in Constantinople. As a result, civic life in Antioch ground to a halt. The city was stripped of its metropolis status. Some city counselors were set to be banished, while others received the death sentence. However, the punishments were deferred.[18]

By happenstance, this civic unrest and disquietude occurred during Lent. While John did not change the texts for his Lenten sermons, he preached to the current situation. He used his sermons to condemn the anti-tax violence which had engulfed Antioch. John leveraged the pervasive uncertainty and fear to implore the city to fast, not only in repentance but also with the goal that God (and the emperor) would spare Antioch from destruction. He noted that the imperial closure of local theatres and baths provided people with an opportunity to turn to God. Providentially, just before Easter, word came from Constantinople that the emperor fully pardoned the city counselors. John took the opportunity to proclaim that the emperor's mercy towards a sinful city imitated Christ's mercy towards sinful humanity.[19] While one might quibble with the providential approach to current events taken by John in this instance, it solidified his reputation in Antioch as the region's premier preacher.[20]

In 397, John was selected to be the new bishop of Constantinople. Much as, earlier in his life, his bishop attempted to "press-gang" him into the priesthood, John was Shanghaied to Constantinople. Imperial soldiers whisked him away to his new position with no notice, fearing the consternation of John's congregants in Antioch.[21] John likely came to imperial notice through his reputation as an unparalleled preacher. Additionally, the emperor was orthodox and desired to suppress the Arian heresy within Constantinople, where it maintained a strong foothold. Given the combination of John's eloquent preaching and trinitarian orthodoxy, John seemed the ideal candidate for the position.[22]

[18] Kelly, 72–75.

[19] Ibid., 80–81.

[20] Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church: Volume 2, The Patristic Age*, 189–196.

[21] Kelly, 104.

[22] Ibid., 105.

Thus began the most tumultuous period of John's life and ministry. John's tenure as the bishop of Constantinople was marked by his efforts to reform the church and sharp conflict with the imperial household and other ecclesiastics. As mentioned earlier, John never shed his self-identity as a monk, and this influenced his episcopal ministry. Whereas many of his predecessors ingratiated themselves with Constantinople's nobility, John refused. Preferring to live simply, he refused to host grand banquets or accept invitations to them. While seeking to model Christ-like simplicity, John also cut himself off from powerbrokers who may have served as his allies.[23] John's asceticism was interpreted as antisocial behavior, revealing a political tone-deafness that, particularly in the imperial city, served him poorly.

John's monastic impulses, as well as his experiences as a deacon, likely also guided his concerns for widows, the poor, and the sick. The bishop's office was responsible for sponsoring hospitals and providing welfare services to those in need, and John took those responsibilities seriously. To increase funding for church charities, John sold off many properties and valuables owned by the church. Again, this proved unpopular.

John similarly antagonized his clerics by expecting them to match his high monastic standards. The new bishop accused many of his priests of being self-indulgent, and he demanded that they live simpler lifestyles. He interviewed widows who had consecrated themselves to God concerning the manner in which they led their lives, particularly attempting to root out worldly behavior. John's rigorism did not win many allies.

Most damaging to his ministry, John alienated the empress. The Eastern emperor, Arcadius, was a weak ruler. His wife, Eudoxia, filled the void, and the impolitic John was unafraid to challenge her. One incident stands out. Eudoxia desired to possess a vineyard which was owned by a widow. The vineyard was the widow's only source of support, but that did not faze Eudoxia. On the basis on a non-existent law which said that the emperor or empress could take any land he or she had walked upon, Eudoxia took possession of the vineyard. This act triggered John's pastoral impulse for protecting widows, and he responded with a sermon on Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21). Of course, John did not hesitate to identify Eudoxia as Jezebel, which, regardless of the obviousness of the parallel, did not endear himself to the empress. Their

[23] Ibid., 118.

relationship was severely strained, which portended poorly for John's future in Constantinople.[24]

While John's sermons continued to gain loyal followers, and John's devotion to the gospel led him to expand missionary efforts among the Goths, conflict was the defining mark of his episcopate. His tumultuous ministry in Constantinople climaxed in 403 with the Affair of the Long Brothers and the Synod of the Oaks. This controversy originated in the Origenist Controversies in Egypt in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Many Egyptian monks refused to accept that God was incorporeal, believing that the biblical anthropomorphisms should be understood literally. Others, influenced by Origen, confessed that God is spirit. This doctrinal divide rocked the Egyptian church, and the waffling bishop of Alexandria, Theophilus, desiring to maintain the peace, supported the anthropomorphites.[25] Four monks, known due to their height as the "Long Brothers," maintained the Origenist position. When their monastery was ransacked by anthropomorphites (personally led by Theophilus), the Long Brothers fled to Jerusalem and eventually journeyed to Constantinople.

The Long Brothers requested and received sanctuary from John. The bishop of Constantinople demanded that the brothers abstain from discussing the controversy while they remained in the imperial city, and he also sent a letter to Theophilus requesting that he allow the brothers to return home to Egypt.[26] Theophilus did not acquiesce, and the matter quickly devolved into a political battle between two rival patriarchates on opposite sides of the Mediterranean Sea. Besides any theological concerns Theophilus might have had about the nature of God, the bishop of Alexandria was determined to maintain his see's independence and parity with that of Constantinople, refusing to allow John any precedence or influence over Egypt. Theophilus escalated the controversy by excommunicating one of the Long Brothers.[27]

The controversy provided an opportunity for John's ecclesiastical and political opponents in Constantinople to rid themselves of this meddlesome bishop. Theophilus travelled to the imperial city, sharing his grievances against John with anyone who would listen. Fortunately for him, many did. Theophilus, through an allied bishop, convened

[24] Ibid., 169–170.

[25] For a fuller discussion of this fascinating debate, see Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

[26] Kelly, 196.

[27] Ibid., 198–199.

a synod at an imperial palace known as "the Oaks." Of the thirty-six bishops present, twenty-nine were Egyptian, revealing the stacked nature of the court in Theophilus' favor.[28] Twenty-seven charges were leveled against John, and they spanned the full gamut of grievances held against him. He was accused of mistreating his clergy, mishandling church property and finances, and a smattering of other offenses. John refused to acknowledge the synod's validity and, therefore, declined to participate. Unsurprisingly, the synod convicted John, though not on the basis of the twenty-seven charges. Instead, John was guilty of failing to respond to the synod and attend its proceedings.[29]

As a result, John was immediately banished from Constantinople. In his farewell sermon, John compared Theophilus to the Egyptian slave master Potiphar who falsely accused Joseph and Eudoxia to Herodias, who served John the Baptist's head on a silver platter. However, circumstances quickly turned on their head. Eudoxia may have been morally challenged, but she was superstitious. The empress miscarried a child, and she interpreted this as a sign of God's disfavor upon John's exile. Therefore, she recalled him, and he returned to Constantinople in October 403.[30]

However, the détente between Eudoxia and John was short-lived. To emphasize her imperial power, a silver statue of Eudoxia was erected within eyeshot of the Hagia Sophia. The festivities of the dedication, held on a Sunday, disrupted the Divine Liturgy. Unsurprisingly, John, who presided over this liturgy, furiously voiced his irritation. Word of John's behavior traveled to Eudoxia, who interpreted John's outburst as a personal insult. Regretting her decision to cancel John's exile, she decided to depose him again. The golden-mouthed preacher responded with a sermon which began: "Again Herodias is enraged, again she dances, again she seeks to have John's head on a platter."[31]

Soon, John was deposed again on a technicality. His original conviction at the Synod of the Oaks had never been reversed. Therefore, John's ecclesiastical opponents had legal grounds to refuse communion with him. Additionally, church officials appealed to the canons of the Synod of Antioch held in 341. The fourth canon, conveniently supplied to John's adversaries by Theophilus of Alexandria, "laid it down unequivocally that, if a bishop who had been deposed by a synod resumed his

[28] Ibid., 218.

[29] Ibid., 226.

[30] Ibid., 232.

[31] Ibid., 240; J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose and John Chrysostom: Clerics between Desert and City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 245-246.

function on his own responsibility, without first having his sentence quashed by another synod, he was excluded from office henceforth, without the possibility of an appeal."[32] Ultimately, this proved to be the trump card, and John was deposed and banished again. Massive riots broke out in Constantinople, revealing a sharp divide between the populace and the ecclesiastical and political elites. The Hagia Sophia burned down, and a schism erupted between those loyal to John and those opposed to him.[33]

John entered into exile in 404. Even though other bishops, including the Bishop of Rome, criticized the disciplinary proceedings surrounding John and declared themselves to remain in communion with him, John never returned to Constantinople. Initially, John was sent to Cappadocia. John continued to preach and write, but he suffered due to the social isolation, cold weather, health issues, and barbarian raids.[34] To further silence his influence, the government exiled him to modern-day Georgia, on the empire's furthest peripheries. However, John never made it. While on a forced march to his new place of exile, John collapsed from exhaustion. On September 14, 407, John died at a clerical community in Comana Pontica (in modern Turkey). His final words were "Glory be to God for everything."[35]

John Chrysostom's Homilies

Even though John's episcopate was defined by political fighting with an empress, his clerics, and rival bishops, John was remembered by the people he served and by church history first and foremost as a preacher—the "Golden Mouth." John's homilies gained him attention, caused him to be elevated to the most prominent see in the Eastern Empire, and endeared him to the believers in Constantinople who, in 438, succeeded in having his remains returned to the city's Church of the Holy Apostles. Therefore, Emperor Theodosius II, the son of Eudoxia, bowed and kissed the new grave, praying that the sainted John would intercede for his now-deceased mother.[36]

As a preacher, John favored *lectio continua*. Though John preached catechetical, state event, and liturgical sermons, John's preferred method, as an expository preacher, was to illuminate the scriptures passage-by-passage. This method was grounded in his training with in the

[32] Kelly, 242.
[33] Liebeschuetz, 247.
[34] Ibid., 259.
[35] Ibid., 285.
[36] Ibid., 290.

Antiochene school of exegesis. As opposed to Alexandrian exegetes, who, heavily influenced by Platonic thought, comfortably trafficked in allegory, Antiochene preachers hewed closer to the original, historical meaning of the text. In contemporary categories, they employed a historical-grammatical approach to the Bible.[37] Therefore, John's expository method, geared towards preaching the whole counsel of God as revealed in individual books of scripture, fits.

John did not step to the ambo, open his text, and pontificate freely as the Spirit dictated. John, an intense student of scripture, prepared beforehand, running through the passage in his mind and composing a mental framework for his sermon. Following *lectio continua*, every sermon would pick up where the previous sermon ended.[38]

Contrary to modern practice in Lutheran and classically Reformed sermons (whether expository or not), John did not use theme and parts to form the skeleton of his sermons. However, that does not mean that John's preaching lacked structure. Instead, almost universally, John began with a broad *exordium*, followed by expository commentary on the biblical text, and concluded with application. As Hughes Oliphant Old remarks, "One does not always find the sort of introduction, body, and conclusion, all developing a single theme, which today we are taught to expect of well-thought-out public speaking. It is often more like a three-course meal: salad, main course, and dessert. Each course is different, although they all complement each other."[39]

Rather than summarize themes which span the breadth of John's preaching, perhaps the best way to taste the flavor of John's preaching is to consider individual sermons which represent his expository style.[40] To that end, three sermons will be discussed. One regards Romans 3:9-31, in which is found the classic *sedes doctrinae* for the doctrine of justification. A second, regarding John's description of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan River, provides a glimpse into how John dealt with the sacraments. Finally, John's "Paschal Homily," perhaps his most famous homily, will provide an example of John's non-expository, holy day preaching.

[37] Old, 170. Concerning John's hermeneutical principles, see Bray, 16-26.
[38] Old 173.
[39] Ibid., 174.
[40] For a description of themes in Chrysostom's preaching, see Bray.

Homily 7 on Romans (Romans 3:9–31)[41]

Homily 7 on Romans is an expository sermon preached during John's time in Antioch.[42] Therefore, following the *lectio continua* method, John begins immediately following the concluding verse from the previous sermon. As Old noted, John did not begin his sermons with any introductory material, and that is the case here.

John begins by quoting Romans 3:9–18, in which Paul notes that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin. The Law was no benefit to the Jews, and the Gentiles violated the Law written within their hearts. John notes this, and, outlining the progression of Paul's logic, he draws his congregation's attention to the central truth of Romans 3, that righteousness is by faith. Paul exposes the futility of righteousness by the Law so "that he may again be paving the way for faith." Referencing passages in the Old and New Testaments that corroborate this doctrine, John mentions that "so close is the relationship of the Old Testament with the New, since even the accusations and reproofs were entirely with a view to this, that the door of faith might open brightly upon them that hear it." Both the Old and New Testaments accuse the sinner, and John wields them to drum out any self-righteousness on the part of Jew or Gentile, both of whom would have been among his listeners in Antioch.

Moving forward to verse 20, John focuses on Paul's teaching that "through the law comes knowledge of sin." According to John, "If you boast in the Law, [Paul] means, it puts you to greater shame: it solemnly parades your sins before you…. For the Law accomplished the disclosure of sin to you, but it was your duty then to flee it. Since then you have not fled you have pulled the punishment more sorely on yourself, and the good deed of the Law has been made to you a supply of greater vengeance."

John does not hesitate to preach "strong Law." However, following Paul's lead, he quickly transitions to the Gospel: "Not then having added to their fear, he next brings in the things of grace, as having brought them to a strong desire of the remission of their sins…." The congregants then hear Paul's words in verse 21: "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law." John places his homiletical emphasis on "the righteousness *of God*." The fact that it is God's righteousness is crucial, "so by the worthiness of the Person displaying

[41] John Chrysostom, "Homily 7 on Romans," New Advent, accessed 1 September 2024, https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/21027.htm.

[42] Old, 202. Concerning John's preaching of Paul's epistles, see Bray, 95-113.

the greater degree of grace, and the possibility of the promise. For to Him all things are possible." Since the Law cannot supply righteousness, God must do it. Importantly, this is not a novel doctrine. Again, John discovers this doctrine in both the Old and New Testaments.

John then draws His attention to Christ. Commenting on verses 24–25, which proclaim that all "are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith," John recalls to mind the Old Testament sacrifices. If those sacrifices, which were types of Christ, cleansed sin, "much more would this [Christ's] blood." Grounding Christ's atoning work in the imagery of Old Testament sacrifices and the language of God's foreordination, John again emphasized that Christianity teaches nothing new. Not only is it the fulfillment of the Old Testament, it was God's plan from all eternity.

Therefore, since the Law provides no righteousness and exposes unrighteousness, God justifies according to the "law of faith" (v. 27). According to John, Paul uses the language of "law" "to keep to the names, and so allay the seeming novelty." Regardless, the "law of faith" is "being saved by grace" through Christ's work.

Continuing to verse 29 ("Or is God the God of Jews only?"), John preaches God's universality. While he swipes at Jews believing that God is theirs alone, John also notes that God "is not partial as the fables of the Gentiles are, but common to all, and One." Knowing that his audience includes not only believing Christians but Jews and Gentile pagans, John critiques their religious positions from the pulpit.

Concluding with verse 31 ("Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the Law"), John exhorts his congregants at length to live a holy life which reflects the reality of their justified status. Contrary to Jewish opponents to Christianity, who apparently accused Christians of ignoring the Law, John recognizes that faith and holy living are not contraries. Instead, he preaches, "But since after this grace, whereby we were justified, there is need also of a life suited to it, let us show an earnestness worthy the gift."

John provides a detailed description of what holy Christian living might look like. It involves charity and love to those in need and weeping with those who weep. John lambasts Christians who refuse to love their enemies, accusing them of warring against Christ and serving the devil. Instead, the Christian life exudes sacrificial love for everyone, reflecting Christ's universal, sacrificial love. He criticizes Christians who fixate on the cares of this world, particularly food, comfort, and money,

while ignoring the trials of the poor. Because of their justified status, the Christian, first and foremost, serve and love, storing treasures in heaven rather than on earth.

In Homily 7, the contemporary reader encounters a preacher focused on Scripture. Rather than reorganizing the scriptural text to fit preconceived themes, John allows the text to dictate the sermon. While this lacks the organizational framework with which many contemporary pastors are acquainted, it bares reminding that John's homiletical framework was understandable—and beloved—by his congregants. Nevertheless, discernible themes are present. Law and Gospel are both clearly preached. The Law's accusatory power, the absolute necessity of justification of faith alone by grace alone through Christ alone, and the Law's sanctifying use for Christians are present. What contemporary Lutherans would identify as the Law's "third use" is nearly as long as the expository section, which might raise concerns today. However, it also reflects John's Antiochene monastic background, and also his conviction that monastic morality is for all believers. John does not preach the two-tiered monastic morality critiqued by the Reformers.

Importantly, Homily 7 is an evangelistic sermon. Thankfully, the reader does not encounter a fifth century version of the "sawdust trail." John's evangelistic drive is subtle. John knew his audience. He knew that those within earshot of his preaching consisted of a religiously diverse crowd. John knew that, of course, the majority of the congregation consisted of believing Christians, and he preached accordingly. They were his main audience. However, John knew that Jews and Gentile pagans were present as well, and he spoke to them. As Old writes, "Antioch had a sizeable Jewish population and Christians and Jews were in constant discussion. John preached for the Jews' conversion, and he was convinced that what would convert them…. For John Chrysostom the sober exposition of Scripture is very effective evangelism."[43]

As a good Antiochene exegete, he allowed the text to speak to their concerns. Romans 3:9–31 naturally provided John the opportunity to critique Jewish understandings of the Law. The Law provided no grounds for righteousness. Additionally, verses 29–30 gave John to take a brief swipe at the partiality of the pagan gods and the central claim of polytheism, that there are multiple deities ("God is one"). John understood the religious climate in Antioch. He recognized that unbelievers stood in his congregation, and therefore, wisely, while he preached primarily to believers, he did not preach only to believers. Nevertheless,

[43] Old, 179.

both needed to hear the same message, that God's righteousness is gifted to humanity only through Christ.

Homily 17 on the Gospel of John (John 1:28–34)[44]

The second sermon under our consideration concerns the Baptism of our Lord. Unlike the Romans homily just discussed, this time John commences with a recognizable introduction:

> A great virtue is boldness and freedom of speech, and the making all things second in importance to the confessing of Christ; so great and admirable, that the Only-begotten Son of God proclaims such an [*sic*] one in the presence of the Father. Yet the recompense is more than just, for you confess upon earth, He in heaven, thou in the presence of men, He before the Fathers and all the angels. Such an [*sic*] one was John, who regarded not the multitude, nor opinion, nor anything else belonging to men, but trod all this beneath his feet, and proclaimed to all with becoming freedom the things respecting Christ.[45]

John the Baptist's ministry focused on proclaiming Christ, as demonstrated in the sermon text's opening verse, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Interestingly, John Chrysostom briefly notes the location of the baptism and takes an apologetical tack. According to the preacher,

> Since [John the Evangelist] was not about to relate matters of old date, but such as had come to pass but a little time before, he makes those who were present and had beheld, witnesses of his words, and supplies proof from the places themselves. For confident that nothing was added by himself to what was said, but that he simply, and with truth, described things as they were, he draws a testimony from the places, which, as I said would be no common demonstration of his veracity.

Again, John knows his audience. He recognizes that Jews reject Jesus' messianic claim and are skeptical regarding the historical accuracy of the Gospels. Additionally, Gentile pagans similarly were tempted to

[44] John Chrysostom, "Homily 17 on the Gospel of John," New Advent, accessed 1 September 2024, https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/240117.htm.

[45] Hear, John references Luke 12:8: "And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God…." (ESV).

treat the Gospel accounts of Christ's life as myths. Subtly, much as he did in "Homily 7 on Romans," John briefly engages with the unbelievers standing in his congregation.

John Chrysostom quickly moved to the mystery of why Jesus, the perfect Son of God, would approach his cousin for baptism. While others approached John the Baptist repenting of their sins, that reasoning did not apply to Jesus. Chrysostom preaches: "For very plain it is that One so pure as to be able to wash away the sins of others, does not come to confess sins, but to give opportunity to that marvelous herald to impress what he had said more definitely on those who had heard his former words, and to add others besides." Jesus approaches John the Baptist to provide an opportunity for preaching, for proclaiming Christ: "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

John Chrysostom emphasizes the Old Testament language employed by John the Baptist: "He calls Him Lamb, to remind the Jews of the prophecy of Isaiah, and of the shadow under the law of Moses, that he may the better lead them from the type to the reality. That Lamb of Moses took not at once away the sin of any one; but this took away the sin of all the world; for when it was in danger of perishing, He quickly delivered it from the wrath of God." Again, perhaps there is some subtle evangelism directed towards John Chrysostom's Jewish hearers, proclaiming Jesus to be the promised Messiah of the Old Testament and the substance of the Old Testament shadow.

John Chrysostom then shifts his focus to the baptismal scene in Jordan's waters. John the Baptist saw the Holy Spirit "descend from heaven like a dove, and it remains on him." Here was an additional witness of Christ's identity. It was not simply mortal and fallible John the Baptist identifying Jesus as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," but it was the Holy Spirit. The Spirit always points to Christ.

In the most influential part of this homily, John Chrysostom explains why Christ was baptized. "In truth," John Chrysostom preached, "Christ needed not baptism, neither his nor any other; but rather baptism needed the power of Christ. For that which was wanting was the crowning blessing of all, that he who was baptized should be deemed worthy of the Spirit; this free gift then of the Spirit He added when He came." Martin Luther echoed this line in his 1534 sermon on baptism: "It is good, then, to conclude that Christ did this not for His own sake but for our sake… For by doing this [being baptized], He Himself [Christ] shows that Baptism must be a blessed affair, abounding

in grace, since He not only provides His Word and office for it but also sinks and puts Himself into it and touches this water with His own holy body; indeed, He sanctifies it and fills it with blessing."[46] Here, Chrysostom provides one of the classic statements not only regarding Christ's baptism but also baptismal regeneration: Christ left His holiness for us in the baptismal waters. A free gift is found in baptism.

Next, John Chrysostom pivots to discredit stories shared by Christian heretics. He points out that John the Baptist declares that "I myself did not know Jesus," but God identified Jesus to him. Therefore, Chrysostom presumes that John did not have any acquaintance with Jesus between his infancy and their encounter on the banks of the Jordan River. Chrysostom also declares: "Hence it remains clear to us, that the miracles which they say belong to Christ's childhood, are false, and the inventions of certain who bring them into notice. For if He had begun from His early age to work wonders, neither could John have been ignorant of Him, nor would the multitude have needed a teacher to make Him known." While the precise target of Chrysostom's barbs necessarily remains speculation, it may refer to the "Infancy Gospel of Thomas," a Gnostic text which provides details of Christ's youth and the many miracles he performed during that stage of His life. Therefore, Chrysostom takes the opportunity to correct a heresy which apparently would have been known, if not entertained, by his hearers.

Additionally, John Chrysostom notes that miracles, such as the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, do not produce faith. He asks a rhetorical question concerning how the Jews who viewed this miracle could witness this astonishing occurrence and yet reject Jesus as the Christ. Seeing, according to Chrysostom, is not believing. Instead, faith only comes through the Holy Spirit. Chrysostom preaches, "Even if they did see, such things require not only the eyes of the body, but more than these, the vision of the understanding, to prevent men from supposing the whole to be a vain illusion."

Concluding his homily, John Chrysostom points to John the Baptist's confession of faith and the Holy Spirit-inspired faith shared by believers, and asked if his congregants can present similar confessions of faith, particularly when questioned by unbelievers. Chrysostom notes that many of his contemporaries can fervently defend their favorite athletes or dancers and cast aspersions on their competitors, but is the same zealousness shown for defending the Lamb of God? Applying to

[46] Benjamin T. G. Mayes, ed., *Martin Luther on Holy Baptism: Sermons to the People (1525–39)* (St. Louis: Conordia Publishing House, 2018), 33–34.

the Law to his listeners' souls, he asks, "Must not this deserve excessive wrath, when Christ is shown to be less honorable in your estimation than a dancer? Since you have contrived ten thousand defenses for the things they have done, though more disgraceful than any, but of the miracles of Christ, though they have drawn to Him the world, you cannot bear even to think or care at all." Chrysostom continues: "If now any heathen say, 'What is this Father, what this Son, what this Holy Ghost?' How do you who say that there are three Gods, charge us with having many Gods? What will you say? What will you answer? How will you repel the attack of these arguments?" Pointing his congregants to 1 Peter 3:15 ("But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect…", ESV), he encourages them to be better prepared to confess their faith in Christ.

Readers find the same expository style in this homily as in "Homily 7 on Romans." John focuses on an individual passage and allows the text to guide his preaching. Just as the earlier homily on Romans focused squarely on the Law's accusations and the good news of justification by faith, this sermon focuses on the Holy Spirit's role in faith, found in the confessions of faith supplied by John the Baptist and ordinary believers. Finally, the evangelistic and apologetic nature of John Chrysostom's sermons is evident. He recognizes errors, such as Gnosticism, that have infiltrated the church, and his proclamation of God's Word intends to root them out. Also, as earlier, John recognizes the religiously mixed audience for this sermon. He knows that his hearers include orthodox and heretical Christians as well as Jews. Therefore, working within the confines of his sermon text, Chrysostom demonstrates that the Old Testament points to Christ, and therefore Christianity is nothing less than the religion of the Old Testament. Weaving its way through all of these homiletical impulses and interests is the central fact that Jesus is "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

The Paschal Homily[47]

Perhaps the most enduring of John's homilies is his catechetical sermon for Easter, which, in the Eastern Church, is read every year during the Matins of Pascha. As a catechetical homily, John does not use a particular biblical text as a launching point. Rather, like an *exordium* in

[47] John Chrysostom, "The Paschal Sermon," Orthodox Church in America, accessed 18 September 2024, https://www.oca.org/fs/sermons/the-paschal-sermon.

some Western Christian traditions, John intends to explain the Festival of the Resurrection, its doctrinal import, and its relevance to his hearers. In doing so, John is at his rhetorical best.

John begins: "If any man be devout and love God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast." Emphasizing that Easter joy is for everyone, John quickly points to God's universal grace. Alluding to the parable of the workers in Matthew 20, John proclaims:

> If any have arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; because he shall in nowise be deprived thereof. If any have delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near, fearing nothing. If any have tarried even until the eleventh hour, let him, also, not be alarmed at his tardiness; for the Lord, who is jealous of his honor, will accept the last even as the first; He gives rest unto him who comes at the eleventh hour, even as unto him who has wrought from the first hour.

Easter joy is for all—seasoned believers and new converts, rich and poor, and those who have observed the Lenten fasts and those who ignored them: "The table is full-laden; feast ye all sumptuously. The calf is fatted; let no one go hungry away."

Having proclaimed the festival's universality, John transitions to explaining why Christians are joyful at Easter. Unlike Lent, which is a season of penitential sorrow, Christians have no reason to be downcast. John preaches:

> Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it has annihilated it. By descending into Hell, He had Hell captive. He embittered it when it tasted of His flesh…. It was embittered, for it was abolished. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It was embittered, for it was slain. It was embittered, for it was overthrown. It was embittered, for it was fettered in chains. It took a body, and met God face to face. It took earth, and encountered Heaven. It took that which was seen, and fell upon the unseen.

John employs a lyric pattern to impress Easter's meaning and relevance to his hearers. Riffing on Isaiah 14:9 ("Sheol beneath is stirred up to meet you when you come; it rouses the shades to greet you, all who were leaders of the earth; it raises from their thrones all who were kings of the nations," ESV), John mocks hell, because Easter mocks it. Christ

conquered it. The sermon ends with 1 Corinthains 15:55ff ("O Death, where is your sting," ESV).

In the Paschal Homily, we encounter the rhetorical genius that lent John the title "Golden Mouth." The hearer cannot but hear that the joy of Easter is for them. Any congregant within earshot of the preacher's voice recognizes that the grace of Christ, who is so powerful as to overpower death and "embitter" the hell which tried to engulf Him, is for every sinner, no matter how far they have strayed or how long they have delayed their acceptance of the gospel. The contemporary reader or hearer receives a clear explanation of the festival, and the gospel message is at the forefront. Rather than retreating to Good Friday and the cross, John basks in the astonishment of the empty tomb.

Reflections on John Chrysostom and Lutheran Preaching

For some confessional Lutherans today, to read the sermons of John Chrysostom likely is into enter into a foreign world. There is no discernible skeleton aside from the sermon text, the length of which seems random. Usually, his sermons lack an obvious theme or introductory remarks. Chrysostom concludes his sermons with detailed sanctification preaching, which largely is absent from Lutheran preaching. Additionally, the deeper one digs into Chrysostom's sermons, confessional Lutherans would (and should) quibble with some of his doctrines. He was an Eastern Christian with a higher view of humankind's free will than that expressed in the Lutheran Confessions, and he was a synergist regarding salvation. This, likely, was the reason why C. F. W. Walther did not spare the golden-mouthed preacher from snide commentary in *Law and Gospel*: "There is no doubt that in ages past many a poor, simple presbyter of no renown, called to a small rural parish, was able to distinguish Law and Gospel better than Chrysostom, the great orator in the metropolis of Constantinople…."[48]

However, analyzing how well John Chrysostom's theology agrees or disagrees with confessional Lutheran orthodoxy in twenty-first century America would be a different paper. Here, the focus is on Chrysostom's life and homiletics. To expect Chrysostom to be at home in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod is to expect too much. Nevertheless, Lutherans approach the fathers of the Christian faith with critical humility. The fathers are not beyond reproach. They are critiqued by the norm of scripture. However, following in the footsteps of Martin

[48] C. F. W. Walther, *Law and Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible*, trans. Christian C. Tiewes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), 58.

Chemnitz and the Lutheran orthodox, Lutherans have the liberty to appreciate and appropriate the positive contributions of the Church Fathers. Accordingly, perhaps we, as preachers, might benefit by considering three aspects of Chrysostom's homiletical method and how they might be relevant to contemporary Lutheran preaching: John's use of expository preaching, his application of polemics and apologetics, and the role of sanctification in his preaching.

Expository (Verse-by-Verse) Preaching

One of the more interesting, yet under-recognized, stories of twentieth- and twenty-first century conservative Protestantism in the English-speaking world has been the renewal of interest in expository preaching.[49] A seemingly never-ending supply of books, conferences, magazines, and lectures promote this manner of preaching over against arguably less-substantive preaching within the American evangelical world.

Quietly, this conversation has bled into confessional Lutheran circles. While the subject of expository preaching has been raised in private conversations within the ministerium and publicly in various podcasts, unfortunately little scholarly or practical material has been published, thereby keeping the conversation informal.[50] In particular, these conversations revolve around the obvious difference in tone, style, and structure found in the sermons of the Church Fathers, Martin Luther, the Lutheran Orthodox, Walther, and the early Synodical Conference fathers as opposed to that found in the sermons of most ELS, WELS, and LCMS pulpits in 2024. A worthy question for future research, on the history of confessional Lutheran preaching in North America, is how and why that is the case.

Perhaps the most intriguing publication on Lutheran preaching written in recent years in Benjamin T. G. Mayes' "The Useful Applications of Scripture in Lutheran Orthodoxy: An Aid to

[49] Hughes Oliphant Old defines expository preaching as "the systematic explanation of Scripture done on a week-by-week…basis at the regular meeting of the congregation" in Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church: Volume 1, The Biblical Period* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 9. For a popular, classically Reformed text on expository preaching, see Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015).

[50] The primary exception is Adam C. Koontz, "From Reinhold Pieper to Caemmerer: How Our Preaching Changed," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 85, no. 3–4 (2021): 193–214.

Contemporary Preaching and Exegesis."[51] In it, Mayes acknowledges the obvious, that there is something which divides much contemporary confessional Lutheran preaching from that of our forebearers, particularly the Lutheran Orthodox.

According to Mayes, the source of this divergence is that "when reading and expositing Scripture, the Lutheran Orthodox seem to have thought in terms of multiple *uses* more than in terms of distinguishing law and gospel."[52] Drawing on 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Romans 15:4, the Lutheran Orthodox noted the uses of scripture as teaching, refutation of errors, correction of life and morals, training in righteousness, and consolation.[53] This does not mean that the categories of Law and Gospel were irrelevant to earlier Lutheran preachers. Mayes writes:

> If the four or five "uses of Scripture" are so primary in the exegesis and preaching of Lutheran Orthodoxy, does this shove the distinction of Law and Gospel to the side? Not necessarily. What it indicates, instead, is that the Lutheran Orthodox took the characteristics of individual biblical texts seriously and sought to apply them to people in more ways than simply "law" and "gospel." For the Lutheran Orthodox, "law and gospel" was not a Procrustean bed onto which everything else must fit.[54]

Here, Mayes opens the door to a wider understanding of what it means to "preach the text," and it is not a view which would be foreign to Walther. In his *Pastoral Theology*, while Walther identifies five of the uses mentioned by Mayes, writing that "every sermon should be based on these *fives uses* of the Word of God, which are given by the Holy Spirit Himself."[55] Like the Lutheran Orthodox, Walther balanced the five uses of scripture alongside the need to properly distinguish between Law and Gospel. There was no contradiction between those two necessities.

Mayes' essay is important because it illuminates the homiletical methodology which guided Lutheran preachers for the preponderance of Lutheran history. For the purposes of this paper, the methodology described by Mayes is also closer to that employed by Chrysostom than

[51] Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "The Useful Applications of Scripture in Lutheran Orthodoxy: An Aid to Contemporary Preaching and Exegesis," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 83 (2019): 111–135.

[52] Ibid., 111.

[53] Ibid., 112.

[54] Ibid., 115.

[55] C. F. W. Walther, *American-Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, trans. Christian C. Tiews (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 99 (emphasis in original).

that of today. If preachers are going to consider (and reconsider) the methodologies they employ to proclaim God's Word to His people (which is already occurring), then Chrysostom's sermons and his method are worthy of consideration.

Rather than shoehorning the biblical text into a preconceived formula, Chrysostom allowed the structure and flow of the text to dictate the structure and flow of the sermon. His sermons provided a continuous, running commentary on scripture, something which, today, would more likely find a home in a Lutheran Bible study than a sermon. There are valid reasons for that. A preacher might be concerned about whether or not that method would allow for logical flow. Rhetorically, it is helpful to focus on one point rather than taking a "shotgun approach," which might be tempting, if not inevitable, with expository preaching. Additionally, lectionary preaching, as it has developed, privileges Sunday-by-Sunday themes so that the preacher's responsibility to preach the "whole counsel of God" is spread out over a liturgical year rather than being laser-focused on a single text and mining the "whole counsel" found within it.

However, in my personal experience, believers want more rather than less. They want to know and hear again (and again) that they are justified sinners washed white in Christ's blood—and they want to hear of the deep things of God, learn about the ancient cultures which form the backdrop for the biblical narrative, and better understand the intertextuality and interconnectedness of the Word. To use the language of the five uses employed by Walther and earlier generations of Lutherans, believers value the "didactic" use of preaching, which sucks the marrow of Scripture to draw the most out of a text. This approach to a sermon text defines Chrysostom's sermons, because expository preaching privileges the didactic use.

This does not mean that preachers should repristinate Chrysostom's homiletical approach. However, as some reconsider the various methods faithful preachers of the past have proclaimed God's Law and Gospel, perhaps the expository, passage-by-passage method employed by Chrysostom is worth revisiting, reappropriating, and adapting to individual ministry contexts.

Polemics and Apologetics

Perhaps one of the most jarring aspects of Chrysostom's preaching is his polemical tone against Jews, Gentile pagans, and "Christian" heretics. However, Chrysostom's tone finds itself at home within the historic

Lutheran homiletical tradition. Returning to the fives uses referenced by Mayes, Chrysostom's polemics would be considered the "reproof" or "elenchthic" use of scripture. According to Walther,

> Whoever presents pure doctrine but does not correct and refute the false doctrines which are opposed to it [and] does not warn against the wolves in sheep's clothing (that is, false prophets) and does not expose them—he is not a faithful steward of God's mysteries, is not a faithful shepherd of the sheep entrusted to him, is not a faithful watchman on the ramparts of Zion. Instead, according to God's Word, [he is] a wicked servant, a silent dog [cf. Isa. 56:10], a traitor.[56]

Walther unlikely was fazed by Chrysostom's barbs at his theological opponents.

Chrysostom—and Luther, Gerhard, and Walther—thought it was essential (when the context of the sermon text allowed) to mark false teachers so that believers could avoid them. That necessitated polemics, which, for Chrysostom, was an aspect of apologetics.

Chrysostom lived in a world which was only partially Christian. To the extent to which Christendom existed while John was alive, John's Antioch was at its periphery. Therefore, Christianity was engaged in a war of ideas with Jews who mustered scriptures and theological arguments against Christian truth claims, heretics who rejected recently articulated creedal orthodoxy, and pagans who thought this "new" religion was nonsense. These were the voices against which Chrysostom reacted in his sermons, because these were the voices which filled his hearers' ears.

Chrysostom publicly engaged with contrary voices because Christianity was hardly common sense, and the same is true today. Of course, a pastor's voice (and those of fellowship pastors) are not the only voices his congregants hear. Many of these voices, from secular idealogues and progressive Christian voices on the left to dispensationalists and the "Trump prophets" on the right, would fall under the biblical category of "false prophet." Like Chrysostom, Lutheran preachers proclaim God's Word within the context of a war of ideas as their congregants compare their pastor's voice with competing and contradicting voices. While it might not be wise or appropriate to call out individuals or movements by name in the context of a sermon, it may be necessary, through other methods, to reclaim Chrysostom's (and Luther's and Walther's) pulpit forthrightness when confronting error.

[56] Ibid., 101.

To that end, if preachers employ polemics and apologetics in preaching, then we must know what we are talking about. Again, Chrysostom serves as a model. He was educated by pagan teachers, and so he thoroughly comprehended their religion from the inside. When Chrysostom critiqued pagan religion and mythology, he knew of what he spoke. If Lutheran preachers engage false doctrines and teachers, then we must possess a similarly accurate understanding of our opponents' positions, lest we do unintentional harm to the gospel through sloppy apologetics.

Preaching Sanctification

A confessional Lutheran pastor, reading through Chrysostom's sermons, might similarly be unnerved by John's emphasis on sanctification, particularly the amount of time he spends encouraging holy, Christ-like living in each sermon (often a quarter or third of the entire sermon). Length aside, though, he again falls within the boundaries of the historic Lutheran homiletical tradition. As Mayes writes, a Lutheran preacher does not command sanctification. Rather, on the basis of God's Word, he instructs, because "he is talking to Christians and he wants them to be happy and eager servants of God."[57] Walther, following in the footsteps of the Lutheran Orthodox, implored his theological students to preach sanctification. In his *Pastoral Theology*, Walther writes that "[another] shortcoming that belongs here is when, while a preacher always preaches about repentance and faith, he does not preach about the necessity of *good works* and *sanctification*, or does not provide *thorough instruction* about good works, Christian virtues, and sanctification."[58] Quoting Luther, Walther remarks that such preachers are "fine Easter preachers, but disgraceful Pentecost preachers."[59]

Though of course Chrysostom would not use this language, Chrysostom did what Walther believed every competent pastor should do, preach the third use of the Law. Chrysostom believed that the regenerate Christian, empowered by the Holy Spirit, could live a holy, Christ-like life. This was grounded in his monastic background which rejected the two-tiered morality which later developed within Christian monasticism. In Chrysostom's mind, holy living was possible for every Christian.

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[57] Mayes, 126.

[58] Walther, *American-Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, 111.

[59] Ibid., 111.

Lutherans rightly would reject some of the points of sanctification preached by Chrysostom, particularly regarding celibacy as a holier estate than matrimony or the obligation to fast rigorously. One can easily understand and agree with Walther's criticism of Chrysostom. However, Chrysostom's desire to encourage holy living through specific exhortations is worthy of reconsideration and, perhaps, emulation.

Avoiding the issue of sanctification and refusing to provide concrete instruction for Christian living creates a vacuum filled by other resources, since the holy people of God naturally desire practical instruction on holy living. Lutheran silence yields the floor to heterodox Christians and provides them with a dangerous foothold in Lutheran churches. While confessional Lutheran pastors—wisely—may not desire to focus on sanctification to the degree and depth of Chrysostom, and we would certainly desire to better balance Law and Gospel and emphasize Christ's continual forgiveness given to Christians who are simultaneously saints and sinners, Chrysostom's sermons remind us of sanctification's role in historic Christian—and Lutheran—preaching.

Conclusion

The life of John Chrysostom is the story of a preacher faithful to God's Word. He firmly believed in the power of preached Word. Therefore, he took it seriously and exposited it, desiring to deliver the "whole counsel to God" to his people. He understood that the preacher sometimes can be called to be prophetic. Therefore, he did not hesitate to criticize those in power, often to his own detriment. Transfixed by Christ's grace, he sought to proclaim that grace to all within earshot of his voice, both believers or unbelievers. Therefore, possessing an understanding of Jewish and Gentile pagan doctrines and worldviews, he engaged them, seeking to demonstrate Christianity's truthfulness. John's voice maintains relevance today. While his polemics against Jews and pagans may be dated, his preaching of the Word seems timeless. For those interested in biblical preaching, John Chrysostom serves as a model. To preach God's Word is to preach *all* of God's Word. LSQ

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The Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms and its Application for Today

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INNUMERABLE ESSAYS, BOOK CHAPTERS, AND monographs have been written on the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms—or of the two realms, the two governments, or the two powers. Renewed research into this topic was triggered by the challengeable claim, after the Second World War, that Martin Luther's teaching on submission to secular authority was largely responsible for German Protestant acquiescence in the Nazi agenda and in all of its holocaustic horrors in the 1930s and 1940s. Less dramatically, interest in this subject has been triggered also by a renewed appreciation for Luther's doctrine of vocation, and for how their vocations insert Christians into the social, political, and economic life of the world in which they live.

American Lutherans have been particularly interested in how the doctrine of the two kingdoms might shed light on the principle of the separation of church and state, which is not actually articulated by the United States Constitution but which has been read out of it—or into it—by various Supreme Court decisions over the years. Many American Lutherans also seem to take a special delight in going against the grain of the patriotic assumptions of the larger society, by boldly claiming, on the basis of this doctrine, that the War for American Independence was inherently wrong, since it did not show proper respect for the

duly-constituted civil government that properly ruled the colonies on God's behalf from London, England.[1]

In this essay I will not be able to review and analyze the many interesting writings on the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms that are available, but will content myself with a very basic overview of that doctrine—especially as it is unfolded from the Biblical *sedes doctrinae* in the Lutheran Confessions. And there will be some discussion of practical applications.[2]

The Two Kingdoms in the Scriptures and in the Confessions

Bengt Hagglund provides us with a useful summary of the Lutheran "doctrine of the two realms, the spiritual and the secular," as he explains that, according to Luther's teaching:

> God exercises His dominion over the human race in different ways: in part through the Word and the sacraments, in part through the authorities and the secular order. The gifts which are needed for man's salvation are imparted in the spiritual realm, while the external order which is necessary for human society (and also for the existence of the church) is upheld through the secular realm.
>
> This distinction must not be confused with modern ideas concerning church and state, in which the state is thought to stand outside the religious sphere, while the church represents the spiritual domain. According to Luther, God rules in both, in the spiritual as well as the secular. … In some respects both realms are included in God's Word, inasmuch as the secular authority is also constituted by God's word and command. At the same time Luther drew a sharp line of demarcation between the two realms. The spiritual realm

[1] It is, of course, very safe for American Lutherans to say this today, and in so doing to beg the exact question with which conscientious British Americans were wrestling in 1776. In almost all cases it would have been safe for their ancestors to have said this back then as well, since they were in almost all cases living in Germany or Scandinavia at the time. Unlike the Lutherans who were living in colonial America in the eighteenth century, they did not need to wrestle through the difficult issue of how the unique contours of the British constitution would shed light on the question of what the legitimate government of the colonies, according to their charters, actually was.

[2] The Evangelical Lutheran Synod has not been without scholarly writings on this subject. Anyone who wants to take a deeper dive into these things can read Bjarne W. Teigen, "The Lutheran Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms and Its Significance for the American Bicentennial" (1975 Reformation Lecture), *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 16:1 (1975), 1–57; and Erling T. Teigen, "Two Kingdoms: Simul Iustus et Peccator: Depoliticizing the Two Kingdoms Doctrine," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 54:2–3 (June-September 2014), 157–84.

> is without external power. Its power is exercised by God Himself through the Word and the preaching office. The secular realm is subject to human reason, and its authority is exercised by men who have the power to enforce laws, etc. It is God Himself who is active in both realms, and thus they are united. In the spiritual sphere God works through the Gospel to save men, and in the secular He works through the Law and impels men to live in a certain way, to do the good and avoid the evil, so that their neighbors can be ministered to and general chaos prevented.
>
> Hence we can see that the spiritual realm does not represent a special sphere of power at the side of the secular. Neither is the latter a purely profane area, completely sundered from God. The secular authorities represent God's own power, as it confronts man in visible form in our earthly relationships. Even a completely pagan authority can be used by God to work what is good, to uphold public order and promote human society.[3]

Hagglund also comments on the traditional Lutheran understanding of the three estates (or three "ranks"), noting that:

> Luther ordinarily divided human interdependence into three broad ranks, *ecclesia*, *politia*, and *oeconomia*, which correspond in general with the church, the state, and the home respectively. The two latter represent the secular realm, while the church represents the spiritual. … They overlap, of course, so that one person might be involved in more than one rank (*Stand*), according to the varied relationships in which he finds himself. A man might at the same time be a father, a pastor, and a citizen.
>
> Luther's understanding of authority was based on Rom. 13:1: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God." The Christian is thereby obligated to obey even those rulers who do not share his faith. The only exception is found in the words, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). If the authorities should command that which is contrary to God's command or implies a denial of the Christian faith, the Christian must refuse to obey, and suffer instead the punishment meted out to

[3] Bengt Hagglund, *History of Theology*, trans. by Gene J. Lund (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 235-36.

> him for the sake of his faith. But Luther did not approve of armed uprisings against the state. Insurrection is contrary to God's order.[4]

For a fuller summary of the Biblical basis for the doctrine of the two kingdoms or realms, I will borrow a paragraph from Erling T. Teigen:

> As one can see in most treatments of the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms, the *sedes doctrinae* are located in these passages: "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things which are God's" (Matthew 22:21/Mark 12:17); "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36); "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God" (Romans 13:1 f.); "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him…" (1 Peter 2:13 f.); and "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). And certainly, the Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:10) has something to say about where the Christian lives. Other passages flesh out this doctrine, but these are the foundational texts.[5]

God's spiritual realm, where his reign is explicit, is the spiritual fellowship of his church. According to the Augsburg Confession, "the Christian church is, properly speaking, nothing else than the assembly of all believers and saints" (AC VIII:1).[6] The Apology of the Augsburg Confession expands on this in affirming that

> this church truly exists, consisting of true believing and righteous people scattered through the entire world. And we add its marks: the pure teaching of the gospel and the sacraments. This church is properly called "the pillar…of the truth" [1 Tim. 3:15] for it retains the pure gospel, and, as Paul says [1 Cor. 3:12], "the foundation," that is, the true knowledge of Christ and faith (Ap VII/VIII:20).

With respect to the government of the church (*Kirchenregiment*), the Augsburg Confession does not speak of local voters' assemblies or of territorial consistories, but declares instead: "Concerning church

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[4] Hagglund, 237.

[5] Erling T. Teigen, 160.

[6] All Confessional quotations are from *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2000).

government it is taught that no one should publicly teach, preach, or administer the sacraments without a proper [public] call" (*ordentlichen Beruf*) (AC XIV). The Apology unfolds this doctrine of the orderly, public, and regular call, in its teaching that those who

> hold office in the church… represent the person of Christ on account of the call of the church and do not represent their own persons, as Christ himself testifies [Luke 10:16], "Whoever listens to you listens to me." When they offer the Word of Christ or the sacraments, they offer them in the stead and place of Christ (Ap VII/VIII:28).

The various external polity structures of the church, developed for the sake of good order in different ways and at different times and places, are not, strictly speaking and in themselves, a part of the spiritual *Regiment* or government of the church in its essence. Hermann Sasse explains that

> our confession strictly distinguishes between that in the church which is of divine law (*de iure divino*) and that which is of human law (*de iure humano*). But practically all external legal forms of the church, of the congregation and the office, belong in the sphere of human law.[7]

This does not mean that it does not matter how the church is ordered, or that it can be ordered thoughtlessly, arbitrarily, and whimsically. Church order and polity are largely matters of human right, but church order and polity serve and facilitate—or are supposed to serve and facilitate—things that are of divine right. Sasse accordingly goes on to observe that, "According to Article XIV of the Augustana, it matters greatly who exercises the preaching office, namely, whether the person in question is legitimately called (*rite vocatus*) according to correct ecclesiastical order."[8] Some forms of church polity and ecclesiastical order serve the faithful preaching of the gospel, and the administration of the sacraments in accord with Christ's institution, better than other forms of polity and order. Sasse again:

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[7] Hermann Sasse, "Church Government and Secular Authority," trans. Matthew C. Harrison, *The Lonely Way*, 2 vols. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001-2002), 1: 215.

[8] Sasse, 1:215.

> A multiplicity of ecclesiastical forms of life are possible as long as they do not preclude unity in the faith and thus the unity of the church. The external forms of the church may be adapted to the necessities of times and peoples. The constitution of a church may indeed undergo development. With this answer we avoid the *legalistic misunderstanding* that there is one definite and only correct ordering of the church prescribed in the New Testament. But we also avoid the *libertine misunderstanding* that according to Lutheran doctrine there is no such thing as a false way of organizing the church. We know that no external ordering of the church can assure purity of doctrine. But we also know just as well *that the doctrine of the church is never independent of the external ordering of the church* and that there are church constitutions which make it impossible for the church to preserve its pure doctrine.[9]

God rules in his spiritual realm or kingdom in and through his Word. Pastors and other called servants exercise authority in God's name within this realm only because, and only insofar as, they are faithful in their use of God's Word, in accordance with the vocations they have received from God through the voice of his church.

The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope also shows us the difference between the catholicity and liberty of the spiritual kingdom as we now experience it in the New Testament era, and the theocratic rigidity that characterized the Israel of the Old Testament, in pointing out that

> the ministry of the New Testament is not bound to places or persons like the Levitical ministry, but is scattered throughout the whole world and exists wherever God gives God's gifts: apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers [cf. Eph. 4:11]. That ministry is…valid… because of the Word handed down by Christ (Tr 26).

And the church within which this public ministry operates is described by the Apology in a similar way, as it comments on what the Creed confesses concerning the existence of a holy catholic church. The Apology comforts us with the assurance that

> however great the multitude of the ungodly is, nevertheless the church exists and Christ bestows those gifts that he promised to the church: forgiveness of sins, answered prayer, the gift of the Holy

[9] Sasse, 1:216–17. Emphases in original.

> Spirit. Moreover, it says "church catholic" so that we not understand the church to be an external government of certain nations. It consists rather of people scattered throughout the entire world who agree on the gospel and have the same Christ, the same Holy Spirit, and the same sacraments, whether or not they have the same human traditions (Ap VII/VIII:10).

Taking all this into account, the Treatise also describes the basic contours of what the "gospel" or New Testament revelation has indeed set in place for the church, and for its spiritual government under God, when it states that

> The gospel bestows upon those who preside over the churches the commission to proclaim the gospel, forgive sins, and administer the sacraments. In addition, it bestows legal authority, that is, the charge to excommunicate those whose crimes are public knowledge and to absolve those who repent. It is universally acknowledged, even by our opponents, that this power is shared by divine right by all who preside in the churches, whether they are called pastors, presbyters, or bishops (Tr 60).

This presiding or governing power is, however, limited and channeled by the revealed Word of God in Holy Scripture. Pastors, presbyters, and bishops are called to preach, teach, and apply God's Word, in both law and gospel. They are not authorized by their divine vocation to lay upon consciences demands and requirements that are outside of, or that go beyond, God's Word. And so the Apology teaches that

> Bishops do not have the power of tyrants to act apart from established law, nor regal power to act above the law. Bishops have a definite command, a definite Word of God, which they ought to teach and according to which they ought to exercise their jurisdiction. … They have the Word; they have the command about the extent to which they should exercise their jurisdiction, namely, when anyone does something contrary to the Word that they have received from Christ (Ap XXVIII:14).

Francis Pieper compares the authority of the church and of its ministers in this regard to the authority of the civil government and of parents in the home:

> Laws enacted by men are a norm binding our consciences only when God sanctions them and thus makes them His precepts. God does that in the case of the laws of civil government (Rom. 13:1 ff.: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers") and of the parents (Col. 3:20: "Children, obey your parents in all things"), and He sanctions here only such laws as do not contradict the divine Law (Acts 5:29: "We ought to obey God rather than men"). The socalled "laws of the Church" cannot bind our consciences. Christ has not given His Church any legislative power (*potestas legislatoria*); on the contrary, He has forbidden His Church to exercise any such power. Matt. 23:8: "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." What Christ has not commanded is regulated in the Church not by command, but by mutual agreement of the Christians themselves. Even the abuse of this liberty must not lead the Church to command things which God has not commanded.[10]

And God does indeed work and rule in and through the "civil government," albeit in a more implicit manner than is the case with the church and the spiritual realm. From the perspective of the New Testament, the proper basis for civil ordinances is not God's direct Scriptural revelation, but is the natural knowledge of God, imprinted at birth on the minds and consciences of all human beings. This enables even an unbeliever, who is willing to listen to his conscience, to know the basic difference between right and wrong in the areas of civil righteousness and outward societal order, and to act accordingly in his external behavior. This also enables heathen nations to establish law codes and legal institutions that fulfill God's purposes in maintaining outward order in their civil society, even if the revealed gospel has not yet penetrated that society.

Regarding unregenerated people, and the natural knowledge of God's existence to which they have access, St. Paul writes in his Epistle to the Romans that

> what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse (Rom 1:19-20, ESV).

[10] Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 4 vols. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950–1957), 1:530.

And the natural knowledge of God includes also a natural knowledge of God's law. This is so even for Gentiles who have no knowledge of the revealed Law of Moses in general or of the divinely-chiseled Ten Commandments in particular, but who have only the testimony of their hearts. And so Paul goes on to say that

> when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them (Rom 2:14-15, ESV).

In the words of the Apology, we Lutherans

> concede to free will the freedom and power to perform external works of the law… In this way outward discipline is preserved, because all people alike ought to know that God requires civil righteousness and that to some extent we are able to achieve it. (Ap XVIII:7, 9)

Civil righteousness and the temporal blessings that are often associated with it are certainly not to be confused with the righteousness of faith that avails before God for justification and eternal salvation. But civil righteousness, as far as it goes, is a good thing and not an evil thing. And the realm of civil righteousness is also a realm of God, in which God reigns, and in which Christian citizens may and should fulfill their earthly vocations with confidence that God will bless and help them in their work. The Augsburg Confession therefore teaches, "Concerning public order and secular government," that

> all political authority, orderly government, laws, and good order in the world are created and instituted by God and that Christians may without sin exercise political authority; be princes and judges; pass sentences and administer justice according to imperial and other existing laws; punish evildoers with the sword; wage just wars; serve as soldiers; buy and sell; take required oaths; possess property; be married; etc. … The gospel does not overthrow secular government, public order, and marriage but instead intends that a person keep all this as a true order of God and demonstrate in these walks of life Christian love and true good works according to each person's calling. Christians, therefore, are obliged to be subject to political

> authority and to obey its commands and laws in all that may be done without sin. But if a command of the political authority cannot be followed without sin, one must obey God rather than any human beings (Acts 5[:29]) (AC XVI:1-2, 5-7).

In the civil realm, people who do not restrain their lawless impulses, and conform their outward behavior to the requirements of the natural law (and of the law of the land as based on natural law), can and should be externally restrained by force, at the hands of the civil authorities. And so, later on in his Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul tells us that

> the one who is in authority…is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience (Rom 13:3-5, ESV).

That last point—concerning subjection to the civil authorities for the sake of conscience—is important. Some or many unbelievers may very well be willing to comply with the laws of the society in which they live because they fear punishment if they do not do so. They are *externally compelled* to obedience. But Christians, with God's help, seek to comply with the laws of the society in which they live because they can see God's good purposes and God's will in those laws. They are *internally impelled* to obedience by their faith-filled desire to fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

Christians citizens should not try to impose explicitly "Christian" laws onto the secular society in which they live, but they will obey the laws that are in place—assuming that these laws do not contradict the moral law of God—with a deeper understanding of their source, and with a deeper commitment to their purpose. And they will advocate for better and more just laws, not on the basis of the Ten Commandments *per se*, but on the basis of what the voice of natural law would call all people to do and refrain from doing.

Pieper contrasts the ethical and moral foundation that is proper for the governance of physical bodies and of physical life in the civil realm, with the ethical, moral, and evangelical foundation that is proper for the governance of bodies and souls and of spiritual life in the ecclesiastical realm. He explains

> (1) that the State cannot and should not be ruled with the Word of God, but should be organized and ruled according to natural reason (common sense); and (2) that the Church cannot and should not be built with force and coercion, but only with the Word of God, and that all external coercion in matters of faith blocks the growth of the Church unless God later corrects the errors committed by men.[11]

Those who publicly govern under the aegis of the state—as they deal with criminals—are authorized by God to wield a sword of physical restraint and punishment. But those who publicly govern under the aegis of the church—as they deal with sinners—have recourse only to "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph 6:17, ESV).

Just as the spiritual realm can be ruled by God through various forms of external polity and ecclesiastical order, so too can the civil realm—as it exists in various places on earth—be ruled by God through various forms of external government. Some human societies have been governed as democracies; others have been governed under an absolute monarch or dictator. Many countries today function as constitutional republics with democratic components; others function under a constitutional monarchy with legislative components. Any of these systems can work, although some of them work better than others.

Luther lived in a territory of the Holy Roman Empire that was ruled by a hereditary prince, but he also knew that the imperial free cities within the Empire were governed by mayors and city councils who were elected to their offices by the city's burgers. This system was an early example of government by the consent of the governed, which Luther actually thought was the best form of secular government, and which he recommended. In his "Lectures on Deuteronomy," when commenting on Moses' directive to the Israelites, "Choose for yourselves wise and discerning men, known to your tribes, and appoint them as your leaders" (Deut. 1:13, ISV), Luther wrote:

> *Choose wise men.* Beasts are managed by power and skill. Men should be ruled by wisdom and understanding, since man thrives on reason, which cannot be assaulted with a rope or brandished sword but through a word directed to the ear. And when reason has been grasped through a word, the whole man is moved and led wherever you wish. Here you see that the magistrates should be chosen by the votes of the people, as reason also demands. Therefore this nation, too, is taken in charge by this means through the word of Moses, and

[11] Pieper, 3:418.

> it gladly follows and praises Moses. For to thrust government upon a people against its will is dangerous or destructive. He calls them "known" because they should be known among the people; much more, however, because they should be experienced and acquainted with affairs, so that you may understand *well-known* and *knowledgeable* to be the same. They are the wise men who understand affairs divine and human, especially those who know the statutes and laws and all that is necessary for the life of the people.[12]

The Two Kingdoms in Practice, Past and Present

As the Confessions lay out the Biblical and Christian teaching on each of the two kingdoms or realms of God, so too do they compare and contrast those two kingdoms or realms, to clarify differences and to avoid confusion. And so the Lutherans say in the Augsburg Confession that their teachers

> have been compelled, for the sake of instructing consciences, to show the difference between the power of the church and the power of the sword. They have taught that because of the command of God both are to be devoutly respected and honored as the highest blessings of God on earth. However, they believe that, according to the gospel, the power of the keys or the power of the bishops is the power of God's mandate to preach the gospel, to forgive and retain sins, and to administer the sacraments. For Christ sent out the apostles with this command [John 20:2123]: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you. … Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." And Mark 16[:15]: "Go…and proclaim the good news to the whole creation…." This power is exercised only by teaching or preaching the gospel and by administering the sacraments either to many or to individuals, depending on one's calling. For not bodily things but eternal things, eternal righteousness, the Holy Spirit, eternal life, are being given. These things cannot come about except through the ministry of Word and sacraments, as Paul says [Rom. 1:16]: "The gospel…is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith." And Psalm 119[:50]: "Your promise gives me life."

[12] Martin Luther, "Lectures on Deuteronomy," in *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, Helmut Lehmann, and Christopher Brown (St. Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Press, 1955–), 9:18. Hereafter LW.

> Therefore, since this power of the church bestows eternal things and is exercised only through the ministry of the Word, it interferes with civil government as little as the art of singing interferes with it. For civil government is concerned with things other than the gospel. For the magistrate protects not minds but bodies and goods from manifest harm and constrains people with the sword and physical penalties. The gospel protects minds from ungodly ideas, the devil, and eternal death. Consequently, the powers of church and civil government must not be mixed (AC XXVIII:4-12).

What is articulated here sounds good to American Lutheran ears. Hence we are puzzled when we learn that Luther himself seems not to have fully grasped the significance of the Augustana's statement that "civil government is concerned with things other than the gospel." Luther in many ways remained as a man of his times, who held to many of the medieval assumptions and prejudices that were still common in his era, even though the Augsburg Confession, and the Reformation as a whole, had begun to unravel the bases for many of those medieval assumptions and prejudices.

Luther did not believe in the principle of religious freedom as we would understand and value that principle. With others of his day, he thought instead that the cohesiveness and stability of a society required there to be one publicly-practiced religion in that society, and that to this end the government should regulate religious matters.

Regarding the controversies that were then raging between Christians who adhered to the reform movement of which he was the leader, and Christians who adhered to the authority and teachings of the pope, Luther said in his 1530 commentary on Psalm 82:

> If it happens that in a parish, a city, or a principality, the papists and the Lutherans (as they are called) are crying out against one another because of certain matters of belief, and preaching against one another, and both parties claim that the Scriptures are on their side, I would not willingly tolerate such a division. My Lutherans ought to be willing to abdicate and be silent if they observed that they were not gladly heard… But if neither party is willing to yield or be silent, or if neither can do so because of official position, then let the rulers take a hand. Let them hear the case and command that party to keep silence which does not agree with the Scriptures. … It is not a good thing that contradictory preaching should go out among the people of the same parish. For from this arise divisions,

> disorders, hatreds, and envyings which extend to temporal affairs also.[13]

Most people in Luther's day believed that people who were guilty of sedition should be punished by the civil authorities. Luther agreed, but he also expanded the definition of "sedition" to cover many of the non-violent yet socially disruptive practices that the Anabaptists of his time were advocating. In the same commentary he wrote that

> some heretics are seditious and teach openly that no rulers are to be tolerated; that no Christian may occupy a position of rulership; that no one ought to have property of his own but should run away from wife and child and leave house and home; or that all property shall be held in common. These teachers are immediately, and without doubt, to be punished by the rulers, as men who are resisting temporal law and government (Rom. 13:1, 2). They are not heretics only but rebels, who are attacking the rulers and their government… [14]

For Luther and for most others in his time, the enforcement of blasphemy laws was also seen as a proper duty of the civil government. Luther simply assumed that secular rulers have the duty "to advance God's Word and its preachers." So,

> If some were to teach doctrines contradicting an article of faith clearly grounded in Scripture and believed throughout the world by all Christendom, such as the articles we teach children in the Creed—for example, if anyone were to teach that Christ is not God, but a mere man and like other prophets, as the Turks and the Anabaptists hold—such teachers should not be tolerated, but punished as blasphemers. For they are not mere heretics but open blasphemers; and rulers are in duty bound to punish blasphemers as they punish those who curse, swear, revile, abuse, defame, and slander. … In like manner, the rulers should also punish—or certainly not tolerate—those who teach that Christ did not die for our sins, but that everyone shall make his own satisfaction for them. For that, too, is blasphemy against the Gospel and against the article we pray in the Creed: "I believe in the forgiveness of sins" and "in Jesus Christ, dead and risen." Those should be treated in the

[13] Martin Luther, "Psalm 82," LW 13: 62–63.
[14] LW 13: 61.

> same way who teach that the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting are nothing, that there is no hell, and like things, as did the Sadducees and the Epicureans, of whom many are now arising among the great wiseacres.
>
> By this procedure no one is compelled to believe, for he can still believe what he will; but he is forbidden to teach and to blaspheme. For by so doing he would take from God and the Christians their doctrine and word, and he would do them this injury under their own protection and by means of the things all have in common. Let him go to some place where there are no Christians.[15]

Turkish Muslims, Anabaptists, and others who might dissent from the public religious orthodoxy, would have found little comfort in the concession that they may believe as they wish as long as they do not tell others what they believe (or what they do not believe). According to this medieval way of thinking, it is also easy to see how the presence of a synagogue in an otherwise Christian community would be perceived as even more socially disruptive than conflicting Christian congregations with conflicting Christian theologies in a community. And it is easy to see how the Jewish teachings that Jesus was not the Son of God, was not born of a virgin, did not by his death atone for the sins of humanity, and did not rise from the grave, were perceived as blasphemous teachings.

Luther had previously called upon the German princes to take direct charge of reforming the church, as "emergency bishops," since the canonical bishops were unwilling to introduce necessary reforms. As Luther saw it, the princes were Christians, who not only should be concerned about the serious problems that were then troubling their church, but who also were in a position to do something about those problems. He had written in his 1520 address *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate* that "those who exercise secular authority have been baptized with the same Baptism, and have the same faith and the same Gospel as the rest of us." For this reason, "we must regard their office as one which has a proper and useful place in the Christian community."[16] The Treatise also states that

> It is especially necessary for the most eminent members of the church, the kings and princes, to attend to the church and take care

[15] LW 13: 61–62.

[16] Martin Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate," LW 44: 129.

> that errors are removed and consciences restored to health, just as God expressly exhorts them: "Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth" [Ps. 2:10]. The first concern of kings should be to promote the glory of God. It would, therefore, be most shameful for them to use their authority and power to encourage idolatry and countless other disgraceful acts and to slaughter the saints (Tr 54).

The German-American Lutheran theologian and historian J. L. Neve explains that

> The early Lutherans led by Luther and his colaborers put the government of the young evangelical church into the hands of the princes. It was intended to be temporary. Luther looked forward to a time when this government could be put into the right hands. But it looked like a permanent condition. That temporary arrangement was made at a time when the princes were generally men of sincere interest in the Church and at a time when they were the best fitted persons for the task. Nevertheless it laid the foundation for a continuing injury to Lutheranism… The time came when the Church had to bear the yoke of the State for definite service. Some of the worst cases may be seen in the forced introduction of the Church Union in Prussia and other parts of Germany.[17]

In Neve's view, "Purely political aims as such must not be made an interest of the church." But in the old state-church system, the church and its operations were almost always under the influence of national politics, and were generally imbued with the political and social agendas of the political rulers of the day, so that "the Church was degraded into a mere factor of civilization, in line with the education through school, theater and press. In times of war, through the pulpit, it was her task to stir the sentiment of the nation for the cause of the country irrespective of right or wrong."[18]

What we have in Luther's 1530 commentary are not descriptions of what he thinks "the most eminent members of the church" might do in their temporary capacity as emergency bishops. Rather, we hear Luther telling us what he thinks secular princes *as secular princes* should do on a permanent, ongoing basis. Lutherans are very much aware of the fact

[17] J. L. Neve, *Churches and Sects of Christendom*, revised edition (Blair: Lutheran Publishing House, 1944), 159.

[18] Neve, 159–160.

that Luther was not infallible, and that he sometimes did err—especially when he veered off from his Biblical expositions and opined on social and political matters. In what he said concerning the relationship between the state and the church within the state, and concerning the enforcement of religious laws by the state, Luther was simply wrong. I say this not because he disagrees with me—or with Roger Williams and Thomas Jefferson—but because he disagrees with Jesus, who said: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17, ESV). When Caesar's imperial office became Christianized in the Constantinian era, "the things that are God's" did not then automatically become "the things that are Caesar's." The divine division of duties remained as before—or at least it should have. That this division of duties did not remain in actual practice, became for centuries the cause of no end of grief for the church in this world.

Luther's medieval way of thinking was also the context for his supposed antisemitism. In truth, Luther did not have a special animus against the Jews as a distinct ethnic or national group, but he did think that in a Lutheran territory or city the public practicing of the rabbinic Jewish religion should be proscribed. He also believed that in a Lutheran territory or city, the public practicing of Roman Catholicism, Anabaptism, Islam, and everything else other than Lutheranism, should likewise be proscribed. In Luther's notorious treatise, "On the Jews and Their Lies," where he called upon government officials to shut down and destroy the synagogues and to silence the rabbis, and also to impose upon the Jews other harsh restrictions, the worst punishment that Luther envisioned for Jews who would not desist from publicly practicing Judaism in a Lutheran territory, was that they might "be expelled from the country and be told to return to their land and their possessions in Jerusalem."[19]

Thinking of Luther as a forerunner of Zionism would therefore probably be just as accurate as thinking of him as a forerunner of Nazism, which was based on a purely racial definition of Jewishness, and which prohibited the conversion of Jews to Christianity. But for Luther that was the whole point of his agenda—misguided though it may have been in means and methods. He wrote with respect to the Jews that "With prayer and the fear of God we must practice a sharp mercy to see whether we might save at least a few from the glowing flames." And Luther prayed for the Jews, "May Christ, our dear Lord,

[19] Martin Luther, "On the Jews and Their Lies," LW 47: 276.

convert them mercifully and preserve us steadfastly and immovably in the knowledge of him, which is eternal life. Amen."[20]

A new movement of "Christian nationalism" is currently growing in America, emerging from within certain Reformed and Evangelical circles, and also including many who seldom go to any church but who yearn for a restoration of what they consider to be a vanishing "Christian" culture—as it existed in America circa the 1950s or thereabouts. This is a real movement and a real set of ideas, and is not just an epithet hurled by the liberal media at any politically active person whose Christian faith influences the way he lives. A leading spokesman is Presbyterian layman Stephen Wolfe, whose book, *The Case for Christian Nationalism*,[21] sets forth a comprehensive social, cultural, and political agenda. Believing that the American experiment of governmental religious neutrality has failed, Christian nationalists want to institute twenty-first century versions of some of the medieval policies that Luther held to and advocated. In an online interview, Wolfe stated:

> I don't know where Lutherans are on this, but I do think, as Protestants, we can actually have a lot of—we can recognize—spiritual unity among brethren, and still have disagreements even in political matters, certainly in theology, but still seek some kind of country and nation that can at least, in a sort of pan-Protestant sense, become Christian. And so that's the end goal. … We as Christians need to start talking to one another about how abnormal we are in relation to the history of the church. The history of Christianity is Christians saying, "This is my Christian place and I'm going to defend it; and this is a Christian land and this is a Christian people and we're going to use the powers God had ordained in order to make it that way, or to keep it that way." So it's not just that we have to come up with an action plan, like how are we going to go through electoral politics to win. We should think about that; we should also think about: How do we talk to our fellow Christians who are so thoroughly modernized in their thinking in politics that they can't even conceive of the idea that you'd have a public school with prayer—just a generic prayer? To most Evangelicals it would seem—and most would find that—odd.[22]

[20] LW 47: 268, 306.

[21] Stephen Wolfe, *The Case for Christian Nationalism* (Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 2022).

[22] Stephen Wolfe, an interview on "Turnip's Digest," February 4, 2023. www.youtube.com/watch?v=lw7PLQFmMo.

"Where Lutherans are on this" is reflected in the fact that Confessional Lutherans in America would not like to see the introduction of generic prayers in public schools, either. They do not (or at least they should not) share Luther's medieval perspective in regard to these matters. Neither should they embrace the kind of Christian nationalist agenda for which Wolfe contends. Rather, in view of the painful yet instructive lessons that the church has learned during the past five centuries, they have a clearer and more consistently Biblical understanding of the proper and distinct roles of the state and of the church. Carroll Herman Little writes in *Disputed Doctrines*:

> We Lutherans should honor the State as an institution of God for the regulation of the outward affairs of men, that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives here upon earth. God has given us this institution "for the punishment of evil doers and for the praise of them that do well" [1 Peter 2:14]. And for the execution of this purpose God has bestowed upon it the sword. The State has authority from God to employ force where this is necessary for the accomplishment of its ends.
>
> The Church also is a Divine institution, but its realm is quite different from that of the State. It is limited to spiritual affairs. It touches matters which the State cannot reach—religion, conscience, the thoughts and intents of the heart. God has entrusted it with the means of grace and has laid upon it the obligation to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments. The Church's work is, in a word, evangelization. The Church has no sword but the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. She employs no force, but uses only the persuasive power of the Word. Church and State observing their appropriate spheres should dwell together in harmony.[23]

In *Lutheran Confessional Theology*, Little also writes that

> Civil government is independent of Christianity. It exists also among non-Christians and is the ordinance of God there as well as in the most Christianized lands. By God's ordinance civil governments are authorized to enact and enforce laws for external peace and order. This does not imply that they will never make mistakes or err or become vicious. Subjection to them is therefore not absolute. It does not, e.g., pertain to them when they transgress their bounds

[23] C. H. Little, *Disputed Doctrines* (Burlington: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1933), 88–89.

> and extend their authority to spiritual things or abrogate the rights of conscience. In all cases of real conflict between civil government and the Word of God, Christians must follow the apostolic example and obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).[24]

And Pieper writes that

> If we desire to retain the Christian doctrine, namely, the doctrine that we are justified and saved by God's grace through faith without the deeds of the Law, we must, for one thing, hold to the divinely ordained means of grace; and, secondly, we must be content with these means and refrain from employing the powers of the State to build the Church.[25]

In reflecting on his own personal growth over time in understanding how the Lutheran doctrine of fellowship would properly be applied in the pulpits and at the altars of Lutheran congregations, Charles Porterfield Krauth articulated a principle that is also germane to our observation that the Lutheran Reformers did not immediately grasp all the necessary practical implications of the sound principles regarding civil and spiritual authority that they had articulated in the Lutheran Confessions. Krauth wrote:

> Our aim is to see whether, in the light which we now have, we can come to the full comprehension of our own language: for often nothing is harder than to comprehend the full force of our own words. We have often found a principle to the acceptance of which we had been brought in the providence of God, unfold and again unfold itself, until we have been astonished at the result. We have admitted the acorn and it has become an oak.[26]

So too, Luther's *acorn* of the doctrine and practice of the two kingdoms in the sixteenth century has grown into the Confessional Lutheran *oak* of the doctrine and practice of the two kingdoms in the twenty-first century.

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[24] C. H. Little, *Lutheran Confessional Theology: A Presentation of the Doctrines of the Augsburg Confession and the Formula of Concord* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), 87–88.

[25] Pieper, 3:182.

[26] Charles Porterfield Krauth, remarks on the floor of the 1876 Pennsylvania Ministerium convention in Reading, Pennsylvania; quoted in Adolph Spaeth, *Charles Porterfield Krauth*, 2 vols. (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1898–1909), 2:220.

With respect to things like the restoration and preservation of public morality and the rule of law, a nation in decline does not need to have forced upon it a new state-church system—which as Wolfe envisions it would be something like a pan-Protestant Prussian Union. What a nation in decline needs, for the sake of a renovated and reinvigorated political and civil life, is a robust re-appropriation of natural law as a governing principle in the making and enforcing of laws and public policies. Christian citizens can and should make valuable contributions to such a project. But Christians citizens should not want the government to become, in effect, a church—even if it becomes a variation on their own brand of church.

In Europe, the Lutheran governments in the Reformation era that took the Lutheran Church under their wings, to reform and protect it, in time sat on the church and crushed the life out of it. Pietism, Rationalism, Liberalism, and modern historical-criticism were all incubated in the theological faculties of state-run universities, where the church, strictly speaking, had little if any control over what its future pastors were being taught. And it was the Swedish parliament that forced women's ordination onto the Church of Sweden in 1960.

Confessional Lutherans in America and elsewhere are and should be willing to share public space with people of various confessions and religions, and with people of good will who may not adhere to any particular religion, as long as we can all live together civilly under the dictates of natural law. And we should continually work together to heighten and improve our collective understanding of the duties and civic obligations that natural law lays upon us. To be sure, it is a great benefit for a county to have a religious population, as long as the religions to which its citizens adhere inculcate in them a moral code that is in harmony with the standards of natural law by which the society functions and is governed. But *any* religion that impresses upon its adherents a deep commitment to this kind of public morality is as good as any other, as far as the state is concerned.

The concept of an identifiable "Judeo-Christian" religious and moral tradition can make some sense when that concept is applied to the common ethical standards for life in this world that various religions fundamentally share, even when they teach different ways of acquiring *eternal* life for the *next* world. But there is no single "Judeo-Christian" *religion* or "Abrahamic faith" that would allow all monotheists to worship and pray together, or to assure each other of a shared heavenly hope. A government that would press for this kind of thing is overstepping its

bounds, and is also grasping for something beyond what it really needs from the various religions that exist within its domain.

The Two Kingdoms and Contemporary Issues and Controversies

In his 1521 *Loci Communes*, Philip Melanchthon spoke of the role of natural law in determining what is just and right for a civil society, and also in guiding citizens to work toward legal reforms where they are necessary. He gave as an example an issue that later tore apart the United States, due to the fact that the United States as a whole failed to see what Melanchthon had seen. In his *Loci* we read that

> so-called civil law contains many things which are obviously human affections rather than natural laws. For what is more foreign to nature than slavery? … A good man will temper civil constitutions with right and justice, that is, with both divine and natural laws. Anything that is enacted contrary to divine or natural laws cannot be just.[27]

In other words, civil laws and constitutions that allow for slavery should be changed, because slavery contradicts natural law and is accordingly unjust. As much as possible, civil laws and constitutions should be brought into conformity with natural law, through the efforts of good men.

Important areas of permissive civil law and of societal laxity and perversion in the United States of our time, regarding which natural law can shed some corrective light, are also touched on by Luther, as he criticizes the concubinage and homosexuality that were either engaged in or winked at by the papal clergy—even while they were criticizing Luther and many of his evangelical colleagues for renouncing their vows of celibacy and getting married. In a polemical blast that he aimed at the Roman clergy in 1530, Luther wrote:

> Though you can reproach us for our wives, whom we acknowledge before God and before the world with a good conscience not as our whores but as our wives, you would never believe how masterfully we will picture for you your harlots and stolen wives, whom we both know you have without a good conscience, and whom you do not

[27] Philip Melanchthon, *Loci Communes* (1521), *Melanchthon and Bucer*, ed. Wilhelm Pauck (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), 53. Luther described the 1521 edition of Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* as "an unanswerable little book which in my judgment deserves not only to be immortalized but even canonized" ("The Bondage of the Will," LW 33: 16).

> acknowledge before the world as anything but your whores. You must let yourselves be styled and judged before God and the world as procurers and harlot keepers. We shall depict for you in addition your Roman sodomy, Italian marriage, Venetian and Turkish brides, and Florentine bridegroom, so that you shall see and comprehend that our marriage has taken honest vengeance on your honorless chastity.[28]

Luther also observed that bestiality and homosexuality were to be found in abundance among the Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. He wrote in 1529:

> God…smites them with blindness so that it happens to them as St. Paul says in Romans 1[:28] about the shameful vice of the dumb sins, that God gives them up to a perverse mind because they pervert the word of God. Both the pope and the Turk are so blind and senseless that they commit the dumb sins shamelessly, as an honorable and praiseworthy thing. Since they think lightly of marriage, it serves them right that there are dogmarriages (and would to God they were dogmarriages), indeed, also "Italian marriages" and "Florentine brides" among them; and they think these things good. I hear one horrible thing after another about what an open and glorious Sodom Turkey is, and everybody who has looked around a little in Rome and Italy knows very well how God revenges and punishes the forbidden marriage, so that Sodom and Gomorrah, which God overwhelmed in days of old with fire and brimstone [Gen. 19:24], must seem a mere jest and prelude compared with these abominations.[29]

The kind of "forbidden marriage" of which Luther speaks so derisively is, as we know, no longer forbidden in the United States.

The regulation of marriage, on the basis of natural law, is within the purview of the state, since marriage is a divine institution for this world and not for the next. In the resurrection "they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven" (Mark 12:25, ESV). Marriage is an institution that exists in all human societies, Christian and non-Christian alike. And it is an institution through which many

[28] Martin Luther, "An Exhortation of Martin Luther to All the Clergy Assembled at Augsburg for the Diet of 1530," LW 34: 48. "Florentine bridegroom" was a reference to the then-current Pope, Clement VII, who was the natural son of Giuliano de' Medici of Florence and a mistress.

[29] Martin Luther, "On War Against the Turk," LW 46: 198.

temporal blessings are received by those who enter it, Christians and non-Christians alike. Unlike other human relationships, the state has a unique interest in promoting and protecting marriage as God instituted it, since it is through marriage, and the procreation of children in marriage, that the next generation of citizens is brought into existence. It is in the interest of the civil society to see to it that children within the society are, as much as possible, being raised in functional, stable homes, with a proper moral formation that will equip them for responsible adult participation in the society.

In countries where clergy are permitted to solemnize marriages, they do so indeed as representatives of God, but also as agents of the state. When judges and other magistrates preside at a civil wedding, they likewise do so as representatives of God—whether or not they realize it. It is God who unites a man and a woman in a lifelong union, under the aegis of the civil government, whether the wedding ceremony is religious or is secular in character.

This is also why a pastor may not declare a man and woman to be husband and wife in a wedding ceremony that is not performed on the basis of the pertinent laws of the state, and that is not recognized by the state. We would be sympathetic to the financial plight of an older man and an older woman who want to get married, but whose Social Security incomes would be significantly reduced if they were no longer single or widowed. Yet a pastor could not accede to a request to officiate at a surreptitious religious wedding for such a couple, without a marriage license and without legal recognition, because he has no legal right to do this and no divine vocation to do this. He would be sending them into fornication, not into marriage, because an illegal marriage, even if it has religious trappings, is not a real marriage. As long as there is a legal way for such a man and such a woman to marry, then they should marry according to and under the law, even if there would be a financial penalty. If they are not willing to do this, then they should remain unmarried.

A possible exception to this rule, in discrete pastoral practice, might be justifiable in circumstances where the state forbids marriage altogether to people who, according to the standards and criteria of natural law, should be allowed to marry. One thinks of laws in the past which forbade interracial marriage, even though a man and a woman of differing racial backgrounds are able to have a fully functional and normally fruitful married life according to the purposes for which God instituted marriage. A Christian pastor might therefore conclude that

he can and should speak God's blessing upon the lifelong committed union of a man and a woman who would otherwise be allowed to marry legally, if an unnatural ideology had not been imposed upon the marriage laws of the governmental jurisdiction in which they live.[30]

But of course, there are some legal "marriages" that are *not* real marriages, according to the standards and criteria of natural law. A "marriage" between two men or between two women is not a real marriage, even if the state permits it and even if the society approves of it. This is because such a relationship is clearly and objectively outside the parameters of how God defines marriage, not only in Scripture, but also and most relevantly in natural law, in view of the anatomical and biological facts of human sexuality. A Christian pastor may not, therefore, officiate at a wedding involving two persons of the same sex. And even if he were to do so, before God, and in the eyes of anyone with common sense, this would not be a marriage.

The ideological narrative that pushed for allowing same-sex marriage in the United States, before the Supreme Court granted this wish in its 2015 Obergefell decision, included an argument that laws which prohibit such marriages were akin to those laws of the past which prohibited interracial marriage; and that allowing same-sex marriage is the next logical step in the march toward full civil rights for all with respect to marriage. But this is a false argument. Laws that forbade interracial marriage, and laws that allow same-sex marriage, are actually similar to each other, in that both sets of laws contradict and depart from natural law through the imposition of a foreign ideology onto the divine institution of marriage.

And while Luther's understanding of reproductive biology was woefully lacking,[31] he in his conscience did at least know that

[30] We read in the Apology that "the jurists have…spoken wisely and rightly that the union of male and female is a matter of natural law. However, since natural law is immutable, the right to contract marriages must always remain. For where nature is not changed, it is necessary for that order with which God has endowed nature to remain; it cannot be removed by human laws. … Therefore let this remain the case, both what Scripture teaches and what the jurists wisely have said: the marriage of male and female is a matter of natural right. Moreover, a natural right truly is a divine right, because it is an order divinely stamped upon nature. However, because this right cannot be changed without an extraordinary act of God, the right to contract marriages must of necessity remain, for the natural desire of one sex for the other sex is an ordinance of God in nature" (Ap XXIII:9, 11-12).

[31] See Paul Althaus, The Ethics of Martin Luther, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 96–97, f.n. 82.

> there should be no joking with pregnant women, but they should receive careful attention because of the fetus. For there are countless dangers of miscarriages, monsters, and various deformities. Therefore a husband should live "considerately" with his wife at this time most of all, as Peter says (1 Peter 3:17). … For those who pay no attention to pregnant women and do not spare the tender fetus become murderers and parricides. Thus some men are so cruel that they vent their rage on pregnant women even with blows. Of course, they are brave and full of courage against the weak sex! Otherwise, however, they are complete cowards.[32]

Elective abortions should be illegal in any civilized nation. This is not only because Holy Scripture in many places recognizes the humanity of unborn children, but also and most relevantly because natural law, in conjunction with the scientific facts of fetal development, likewise identifies the life that is in the womb as a human life and consequently as a life deserving of protection in an ethical human society. At the same time, support mechanisms for girls and women whose pregnancy is a crisis pregnancy should also be put in place. Christians are very good at this sort of thing, but the civil society should also make such provisions. At the very least the civil society should not try to shut down Christian counseling and assistance agencies.

In his book on *The Christian Life,* Lutheran theologian Joseph Stump delves into the subject of how church and state should properly relate to one another, what they should each be doing according to the tasks assigned to them by God, and what they should not be doing. He writes:

> The relation of Church and State is to be determined on the basis of Christ's command to render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things which are God's (Matt. 22:21). The sphere of the Church and that of the State are different. Neither must interfere with the affairs of the other. Since the Church possesses an external organization, it is in temporal matters subject to the laws of the State; but in spiritual matters, in those which concern the sphere of the Church as such, the State has nothing to say. On the other hand the Church has no right to interfere in the affairs of the State. She has no right as an organization to take any part in politics. In all her activities she must aim at spiritual results and use spiritual means. Her one fundamental duty is that

[32] Martin Luther, "Lectures on Genesis," LW 5: 381–82.

> of administering the Means of Grace. She has no call officially as a Church, therefore, to enter into any purely humanitarian enterprises, to organize plans for social uplift, to take sides in industrial disputes, to line up with a particular political party, or to push political measures of any kind through legislatures or congress. Her members as individual Christian citizens may and often should do many of these things. They have political rights and duties which they are to assert and fulfill in a Christian and conscientious manner. But the Church as a Church should confine herself to that work which belongs to her; namely, the work of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and of enunciating the principles of love and righteousness which should guide men in their social and political relations.[33]

Basically, according to Stump, "The State is concerned with the temporal welfare of men and the maintenance of outward law and order; while the Church is concerned with the spiritual welfare of men and the maintenance of genuine religion and morality in the heart."[34]

Stump's approach demonstrates that he is not at all encumbered by any remnants of medieval thinking. He makes a careful distinction between the relationship of the state to the church *as church*, and the relationship of the state to the church as an external organization. He makes a careful distinction between what the church *per se* should or should not do in the political sphere, and what individual *members* of the church—who are also citizens—should or should not do in the political sphere.

Stump states that the church "has no right as an organization to take any part in politics," and that the church as such is not called by God "to enter into any purely humanitarian enterprises, to organize plans for social uplift, to take sides in industrial disputes, to line up with a particular political party, or to push political measures of any kind through legislatures or congress." These assertions require comment.

The work of the church does often include a human care component, and Stump would not deny this. What he condemns is the church involving itself in projects that are *purely* humanitarian enterprises, and that include no gospel witness. And people with social problems that flow directly or indirectly from sinful dysfunctions, such as substance abuse, will ordinarily *be* socially uplifted when they find restoration and

[33] Joseph Stump, *The Christian Life* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), 245–246.

[34] Stump, 265–266.

spiritual strength in the forgiving and healing grace of Christ. If industrial disputes involve criminal actions, such as assault or destruction of property, a pastor can condemn those specific actions as contrary to the Fifth and Seventh Commandments, even if he does not take sides with respect to the underlying issues. And if the dispute involves concerns over unsafe working conditions or an unhealthy work environment, then a pastor may certainly point out how the Fifth Commandment would apply to such concerns, and guide a mine owner or a factory owner in making reasonable provisions for the safety and health of his employees.

When Stump speaks against the church's involvements in party politics and in political advocacy, we do need to make a distinction between politics strictly speaking, and ethical issues that have become politicized, but that are still ethical issues in their own right, touching on the moral law of God. In our time, the church *as church*, and not merely the individual members of the church, must defend the First Article of the Creed, and those who adhere to that Article, from the attacks that are being launched against it and against them by an angry and demanding transgender insurgency. Even if it seems to be a lost cause, the church must still teach, in accord with the Sixth Commandment, what marriage truly is, and for what purposes God created humans as sexual beings. Our elected and appointed civil officials, especially when they are Christians, can also be reminded of what the Bible teaches concerning their duty under God, in protecting the lives and property of law-abiding citizens, and of people who are vulnerable and at risk, from the predations of criminals.

These things are done by the church *as church*, partly for the sake of instructing people in the larger society in what God says concerning the hot issues of the day, when God has in fact said something about those issues in Scripture. These things are done by the church *as church* in order to shine a beacon of life and healing that can be seen and followed by those with a troubled conscience, whose current lifestyle matches one of the LGBTQIA acronym letters, but who are now ready to hear what God wants to say to them and to receive what God wants to give to them. But these things are done by the church *as church* mostly for the instruction of the *members* of the church, so that they will not be drawn to error or to the loss of their faith by the siren songs of the decadent culture in which we live.

Another thing to remember is that Christians may "appeal to Caesar," as St. Paul did when his rights as a Roman citizen were under threat. The context of that threat was a religious context and not a

secular context. The Jewish leaders in Jerusalem were trying to silence Paul, specifically in regard to his apostolic calling to preach the gospel. They had been lying about him and even plotting to kill him. Paul did not expect Porcius Festus, the Roman governor before whom he stood in Caesarea, to sympathize personally with his religious convictions. But Paul did expect the governor to defend his right to believe what he wanted to believe and to preach what he wanted to preach, without being harassed and threatened. And so to Festus Paul said

> "I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well. If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar." Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, "To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go." (Acts 25:10-12, ESV)

Churches and other religious bodies in America, and their official representatives, can and should likewise "appeal to Caesar" by means of lawsuits and similar actions, when the guarantees of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution are ignored by government agencies; or when the right to "the free exercise of religion" as articulated in that amendment is arbitrarily redefined by a secularizing state apparatus to mean nothing more than a right to worship—so that it can claim control over the church's educational and human care institutions.

Christians in many other countries do not have the kind of constitutionally-enshrined religious protections that American Christians have (or are supposed to have). Others in Paul's time did not have the protections of *Roman citizenship*, either. But Paul did have those protections, and he made use of them for the sake of the gospel and the mission of the church. And we in the United States do, by divine providence, have the First Amendment, to which we can and should appeal when we are persecuted, threatened, or harassed on account of our faith and worldview. As followers of Christ who acknowledge his absolute sovereignty over our consciences, we are indeed *more* than American citizens. But we are *not less* than American citizens.

We expect others to obey those laws that do protect our rights under the Constitution, and other laws as well. And we also obey the laws of the land, with due respect for the government officials who make and

enforce them, and for the God who stands behind those officials and whom those officials represent, whether or not they realize it. But an exception to this is the principle that St. Peter and the other apostles articulated when they stood before the Sanhedrin, to answer for their disobedience of an earlier decree from these Jewish leaders that they may not preach about, or in the name of, Jesus:

> And the high priest questioned them, saying, "We strictly charged you not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring this man's blood upon us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him" (Acts 5:27-32, ESV).

So, when the civil authorities command something that God forbids, or when they forbid something that God commands, we must, without relish but with firmness, disobey. This is why totalitarian regimes never want to have Christians in their domains. Even though Christians, as a general rule, make the best citizens, they will not worship the state, and they will not sacrifice their consciences to the demands of the state. Christians will know that when the state commands what God forbids, or forbids what God commands, it is in that very moment defying its divine purpose, and is forfeiting its claim on the obedience of its subjects with respect to that particular matter. Christians are willing to put up and comply with many onerous rules that they would rather not have to deal with, as long as those rules do not reach the point of touching a matter of conscience as defined by God's Word. But God's Word does draw lines that we will not cross.

Where those lines are, in each case of moral and ethical deliberation, is not, however, always clear to all people in the same way or at the same time. When we sincerely believe that our conscience has been shaped and instructed by God's Word with respect to a certain troubling or controversial matter, and when we then follow our conscience in making a certain ethical decision on that matter, we may find that other conscientious Christians are making a different decision. God's Word is inherently clear in what it teaches, but our ability to perceive and apply what it teaches is not always clear, and in some cases is very

cloudy indeed, because of the effects of sin and human weakness on our minds and emotions.

An issue that conscientious young men in human history have often needed to wrestle with, when they were conscripted for military service in a controversial war, was whether or not they should go. Others, too, have often needed to wrestle with the question of whether they should support their government's decision to engage in a certain war or to involve itself in a certain military operation. In a way that might surprise many, Luther offers some helpful guidance on this matter when he writes that

> it is the duty of subjects to obey. They must diligently and carefully do or leave undone what their superiors desire of them, and not allow themselves to be dragged or driven from this task, regardless of what others do. Let no man think that he is living properly or that he is doing good works…if he does not earnestly and diligently discipline himself in this matter of obedience. But if, as often happens, the temporal power and authorities, or whatever they call themselves, would compel a subject to do something contrary to the command of God, or hinder him from doing what God commands, obedience ends and the obligation ceases. In such a case a man has to say what St. Peter said to the rulers of the Jews, "We must obey God rather than men" [Acts 5:29]. He did not say, "We must not obey men," for that would be wrong. He said, "God rather than men." [It is] as if a prince desired to go to war, and his cause was clearly unrighteous; we should neither follow nor help such a prince, because God has commanded us not to kill our neighbor or do him a wrong. Likewise, if the prince were to order us to bear false witness, steal, lie or deceive, and the like, [we should refuse]. In such cases we should indeed give up our property and honor, our life and limb, so that God's commandments remain.[35]

It is true, of course, that government officials often know more than ordinary citizens do about the circumstances of an international situation, and about the threats that are posed to our country by an enemy power. So, in reaching a judgment about the righteousness of a war, we would give the benefit of the doubt to the duly-constituted government which God has placed over us. We will support the war, or at least will acquiesce in it, if we know that it is righteous, or if we do not know that it is unrighteous. But if, as Luther says, we are called upon to be a

[35] Martin Luther, "Treatise on Good Works," LW 44: 100.

part of something that *is* "clearly unrighteous," we may, as a matter of conscience, decline to be a part of it, and accept the consequences that come with that decision.

A Russian friend of mine who was serving as a Lutheran pastor in Russia at the time of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and who in the recent past had served as a pastor also in Ukraine, knew from his own firsthand experience that Vladimir Putin's justifications for the invasion were bogus. He knew that Ukraine was not being run by Nazis. And he knew that the Ukrainian government was not oppressing Russian-speaking residents of Ukraine, because until recently he had been one. So, he risked his life and liberty by speaking out against the war, and by telling the truth about Ukraine and Ukrainian society. And before long he concluded that, in order to avoid arrest, he needed to flee with his family to another country. Here he is serving once again as a Lutheran pastor. Luther's counsel as cited was helpful to him in confirming the decisions he had made regarding his duty in this matter.

We recall Little's sobering observation that civil governments may sometimes "become vicious," so that a Christian citizen's "Subjection to them is therefore not absolute." Stump also explores what this might mean in difficult political times:

> The duty of obedience to the State is enjoined in Scripture (Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:13). Insurrection and rebellion are forbidden (Rom. 13:2). Changes in the forms and methods of government are to be obtained by legal means. Resistance is justifiable only when those in authority persist in violating the basic principles of the State, and when resistance therefore is really a defense of the State against those who are seeking to revolutionize it from above.[36]

It would no doubt be a challenging task to determine when a weak and flawed government that is still deserving of respect and obedience, has crossed over into becoming a revolutionary and tyrannical anti-government that is no longer deserving of respect and obedience. And it is certainly not a decision that would be reached easily or quickly.

Another principle that would come into play is the distinctly Lutheran conviction, articulated in the Magdeburg Confession of 1550, that such resistence is not the business of a mob; but that a lesser magistrate may resist a greater magistrate when the greater magistrate

[36] Stump, 267.

oversteps the boundary of his divinely-assigned authority.[37] This is what happened when Luther's princes refused to implement the imperial death sentence that had been issued against him. This is what happened during the Schmalkaldic War when the city of Magdeburg resisted the military onslaughts of Maurice, Elector of Saxony, who was at the time allied with Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

A compelling case can be made that something like this is what happened in the War for American Independence, when the colonial legislative assemblies resisted the British monarch, with whom they were supposed to rule in tandem, due to his collusion with the usurpations of the British Parliament, in its claim to have the right to rule and tax the colonies. Today we see milder versions of this in our country, when a state steps in to enforce federal immigration laws that the federal government will not enforce, against the protests of the federal government; and when the principal and school board in a conservative community refuse to obey a court order to allow a teenaged anatomical boy who identifies as a girl to use the girls' locker room, showers, and restroom, in the public high school.

These examples of ordered resistance can be contrasted with the chaotic upheavals of the French and Russian Revolutions; and with the various riots and incidents of mob violence that we have seen during the past few years in our own country. Actions taken by a mob against all authority are very different from actions taken by one aggrieved authority against another aggressive authority.

We also recall Stump's statement that "since the Church possesses an external organization, it is in temporal matters subject to the laws of the State; but in spiritual matters, in those which concern the sphere of the Church as such, the State has nothing to say." This needs to be teased out, especially in view of what happened in our country, and in the world, during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The state has a legitimate interest in promoting public health and safety, also in places that are dedicated to religious worship and instruction. Christians recognize this, so that in their worship spaces Christian congregations have therefore always been willing to comply with building and septic system codes, with occupancy limits, and with regulations that require illuminated exist signs, fully-charged fire extinguishers, and functioning fire suppression systems.

[37] See *The Magdeburg Confession, 13 of April 1550 AD*, trans. Matthew Colvin (privately printed, 2012). See also David Mark Whitford, *Tyranny and Resistence: The Magdeburg Confession and the Lutheran Tradition* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001).

The state also has a legitimate interest in restricting or controlling the personal behavior of its citizens, when that personal behavior, if not regulated, might pose a danger to others. So, there are speed limits on the roads and highways, so that a driver will not lose control of his vehicle through going too fast and cause injury or death to his passengers, to other drivers and their passengers, or to pedestrians. A driver may think that he can drive safely at 70 miles per hour in a 30 mile-per-hour zone, but if he were to drive that fast, he would not only be putting himself at risk but would be a public menace. For the sake of the well-being of others, his personal behavior is therefore properly restricted. This is also why drivers are required to wear seat belts, and why they are prohibited from driving while under the influence of intoxicants or while texting on their cell phones.

Christians consider it to be a necessary part of their religious practice to gather regularly for public worship and instruction. And Jesus said "This do" in regard to a sacred action that cannot be carried out apart from a physical gathering involving at least two or three persons in the same place at the same time. In principle, then, we do not recognize the state as having an authority from God to prohibit such gatherings.

Yet we also recognize that external circumstances sometimes exist that would prompt us to modify or temporarily curtail our implementation of this divine obligation to worship. So, we do not lay upon the consciences of sick or elderly parishioners, an obligation to go to church when they are not physically able to do so. Instead, their pastors bring church to them, through hospital and shut-in visits. As Lutherans we do ordinarily follow the longstanding Christian custom of gathering for worship on every Sunday morning. Yet we also recognize that God has not directly commanded us to comply with a strict Sabbath observance obligation on a particular day each week. Article 41 of the 1932 *Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod* speaks also for us:

> We teach that in the New Testament God has abrogated the Sabbath and all the holy days prescribed for the Church of the Old Covenant, so that neither "the keeping of the Sabbath nor any other day" nor the observance of at least one specific day of the seven days of the week is ordained or commanded by God, Col. 2:16; Rom. 14:5.

Sometimes the external circumstances in which we find ourselves do not allow us to follow our usual custom of worshiping on a certain day

or in a certain place. When weather conditions make driving to church on a Sunday morning dangerous, services are canceled.

During the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic, many states and cities ordered all organizations and venues that normally hold or host public gatherings to refrain from doing so for a certain period of time, or to do so with certain restrictions (such as the wearing of a cloth mask over the nose and mouth), in order to curtail the spreading of the disease. Most churches, including most Lutheran churches, complied with these requirements, especially when they saw that they were being applied evenly and fairly to all public gatherings in the society and not just to religious gatherings. But they were also not happy about these restrictions, and wanted them to be lifted as soon as possible. The way this played out in the District of Columbia can be seen as typical:

> In the District of Columbia, an order was issued requesting that clergy not hold services. Numerous groups of pastors, ministers, and church representatives approved the request and agreed not to hold services. Several churches received permits to meet outdoors in front of their buildings or in public parks to comply with the request. However, the health department quickly banned outdoor gatherings as well.
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> It was not until the number of new cases began to decline that the ministers began to openly resist the closure of the churches. In a letter to the editor, one pastor wrote that "nothing has so contributed to that state of panic which has gripped this community as the fact that the normal religious life of our city has been disorganized." Despite the complaints, the church leaders obeyed the order.
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> On the first Sunday after the ban was lifted, Reverend J. Francis Grimke noted in his sermon: "The fact that the churches were places of religious gathering, and the others not, would not affect in the least the health question involved. If avoiding crowds lessens the danger of being infected, it was wise to take the precaution and not needlessly run in danger, and expect God to protect us."[38]

When Christians are required by circumstances to refrain for a time from something that is so very important to them, they are—in love for their neighbor—guided by two key Biblical principles:

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[38] Matthew Brown, "How Did Churches Respond to the 1918 Spanish Flu Pandemic?," July 7, 2020. matthewbrown.blog/2020/07/07/howdidchurchesrespondtothe1918spanishflupandemic/.

> Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2, ESV).

> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others (Phil. 2:3–4, ESV).

Our church's decisions on certain occasions not to hold public worship services—whether because of a dangerous storm or because of a dangerous virus—do lay a spiritual burden upon us. It is a burden that we share with our fellow congregants. But in love for them and for others we bear that burden, and we bear it together with them, because we are not thinking only of ourselves and of the risks that we are personally willing to take, but are thinking also of those who may be weaker in their faith or bodily health, or who may be more cautious in their emotional constitution. We are our brother's keeper.

Especially in regard to the sharp controversies that raged among Americans and also among American Christians during the COVID-19 pandemic, Carl P. E. Sprunger offers some sage insights:

> It is true, Christians are not to live in fear of anything, including death by COVID. After all, "perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). But such godly fearlessness is not at all the same as the denial of what is true. Deliberately ignoring the reality of this most recent epidemic, refusing to believe reliable statistics, downplaying the danger of COVID—all of this not only makes those who do so look foolish and out of touch but also callous in regard to the concerns of others and heedless of the real suffering close to home and around the world.[39]

Refraining from our normal Christian gatherings for a time may seem to be a violation of the Third Commandment, which obligates us to hear and learn God's Word gladly. But we also need to consider that under certain unusual circumstances, gathering as usual, or in the usual way, could also be seen as a violation of the Fifth Commandment, which obligates us to have a care for the health and bodily well-being of our neighbor. And if the civil authorities have directed us not to gather, or have directed us to gather only with certain restrictions in

[39] Carl P. E. Sprunger, "Death as Friend: The Consolation of Philosophy," *Logia* 31:2 (Eastertide 2022), 40.

place—such as masking and social distancing—then a lack of compliance could be seen as a violation of the Fourth Commandment, which obligates us to honor and obey the superiors whom God has placed over us. This is a typical example of casuistry, where competing Biblical principles converge on a particular situation with directives that seem to be contradicting each other, so that a careful and prayerful consideration of all pertinent factors needs to take place before a decision on how to proceed is made.

During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the civil authorities acted in ways that were similar to how they acted during the 1918 pandemic. But the reaction of many churches and individuals was not similar. This can be attributed to several factors.

First, due to a general societal malaise that has been with us for many years, the citizenry in general had already largely lost its confidence in government, especially at the national level. Government spokespersons were simply not trusted or respected. And that did not change when new government spokespersons emerged from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and from the National Institutes of Health, wearing white lab coats.

Second, government decisions about curtailing the liberty of Americans that should have been made with great circumspection on the basis of inviolable Constitutional principles and objective scientific facts, were often made instead on the basis of other much less noble data, and in ways that often seemed thoughtless and arbitrary. Almost everything was politicized, and dissenting voices were censored: not just the voices of conspiracy theorists, but the voices of credentialed scientists and medical school professors whose competency in medicine and epidemiology rivaled and often surpassed that of the government-employed scientists who were making the decisions and advising the elected leaders. So, alternate approaches, and alternate treatments, with arguments and evidence to back them, were—with few exceptions—not a part of the public discussion.

And third, unlike the approach of the civil authorities in 1918, there were many examples of uneven application of the restrictions that were imposed, with churches almost always being treated with less respect and less leniency than other similar organizations and venues. A particularly egregious example of this was the situation in Nevada, when tight restrictions and a near total shut-down of the state were lifted somewhat by Governor Steve Sisolak at the beginning of June 2020. At that time,

> Instead of prioritizing religious freedom, Gov. Sisolak continued to restrict church meetings while providing exceptions for "nonessential" businesses—such as casinos, restaurants, bars, theme parks, and gyms. While these secular organizations could reopen at half capacity, churches faced criminal and civil penalties if they opened their doors to 50 or more attendees—no matter how large their buildings or the safety precautions in place.[40]

In its explicit guarantees of freedom of the press and the free exercise of religion, the First Amendment gives special guarantees to two specific kinds of organizations in the United States: organizations dedicated to gathering and reporting the news, and organizations dedicated to worshiping and serving a deity. During the pandemic, no newspapers or television news networks were shut down or severely curtailed in their operations. But in many states there was no special regard for churches and synagogues at all, and in some states—such as Nevada—government officials showed what seemed to be a special disdain for houses of worship and for their Constitutionally-guaranteed right to function in the United States. If church members might have wondered where the line was, between a well-intentioned fair-minded government imposing temporary restrictions that require religious organizations to make the same kinds of sacrifices that everyone else was being asked to make, and a hostile secularist government singling out churches for persecution, they did not need to wonder any more when things like this were done.

When the government in effect tells everyone, "Please make some sacrifices for the common good and for the health and safety of your neighbors," Christians and Christian churches should not see themselves as being exempt from this request. Complying with it would be in keeping with the Fourth and Fifth Commandments. But when the government allows other organizations to function in a normal or nearly normal manner, while in effect telling churches, "You may not do what God has commanded you to do; you may not gather according to Christ's Word around his gospel and sacraments for the sake of your souls' salvation," I think something else is afoot. I think something dark and evil is being snuck in, under the guise of public health. I think something diabolical and hateful is being imposed in the name of love. And I therefore think that complying with such a directive would not be in keeping with the Third Commandment.

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[40] Alliance Defending Freedom, "Casinos Are Open, But Churches Are Closed?," June 8, 2020. adflegal.org/article/casinosareopenchurchesareclosed.

Christians and Christian churches could rightly and fairly conclude that they must obey God rather than man in such a case, because in such a case the government would be overstepping its God-given bounds. It would effectively be putting itself in the place of the Sanhedrin, when the Sanhedrin forbade the apostles to preach in the name of Jesus and to carry out the ministry and mission that Jesus had entrusted to them.

Within the family, children are obligated by the Fourth Commandment to honor and obey their parents—even if they have flawed and imperfect parents—while exercising forbearance and forgiveness as needed in their relationship with those parents. Everyone does not have Ward and June Cleaver or Ozzie and Harriet Nelson as parents. Sometimes is it not easy to obey the Fourth Commandment at home. But it is still to be done.

And sometimes it is not easy to obey the Fourth Commandment in the civil society, either, when the civil authorities impose foolish and unnecessary burdens upon us; when they require us to do stupid things that we do not want to do; and when they seem to be neglecting important duties that God has entrusted to them for the public good. But if the foolishness and stupidity of the government do not rise to the level of violating God's Word, then this foolishness and stupidity do not involve matters of conscience, and we must obey. Unless I am sincerely persuaded that complying with something foolish and stupid would violate not only my pride but also the principles of my faith, and would insult not only my intelligence but also the authority of my God, then I, as a citizen of my country and state, must do foolish and stupid things.

> Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people (1 Pet 2:13-15, ESV). LSQ

God Builds His Church

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Editor's Note: On Sunday, September 8, 2024, an outdoor, grand opening service was held in Eagle Lake, Minnesota. The congregation of Peace Lutheran, North Mankato, Minnesota, is beginning this preaching station as a daughter. This sermon by Pastor Matthew Moldstad was preached at the grand opening service and remarks were delivered by the Evangelism and Missions Counselor of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Rev. Brad Kerkow, following the service.

Text: *[8] Indeed, it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— [9] not by works, so that no one can boast. [10] For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared in advance so that we would walk in them.… [19] So then, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household. [20] You have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the Cornerstone. [21] In him the whole building is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord. [22] In him you too are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (Eph. 2:8–10, 19–22, EHV).*

DEAR FELLOW REDEEMED,

I'm sure that most everyone here today is familiar with the old cartoon: *How the Grinch stole Christmas*. Do you remember the plot of that movie? The Grinch was mad about the people in Whoville being so happy and joyful about Christmas, and so he tries

to steal it. He thought if he just took away their trees and decorations, food and gifts they would all be sad, and there would be no Christmas. But what happened when Christmas came? The people still gathered together in joy to sing Christmas songs and celebration and the Grinch realized Christmas wasn't just about trees and decorations and food and gifts, but something more.

Look at where we are today, we're not in our nice beautiful church building in North Mankato. We're outside, you're sitting on grass. Even next week when we go inside City Hall for our services, they will be much different than at Peace in North Mankato. It's much smaller, we are going to feel a little squished. The space isn't decorated like a church. There is no organ or choir. Yet will that make it any less "church"?

Is this "church" here outside today or our gathering inside city hall next week? Yes. Why is that? Because church isn't really about the building, its people gathered together to hear God's Word and sing his praises. We don't need a beautiful building to do that. We can still be joyful as we gather together as God's church. For this first service of our new mission campus in Eagle Lake let us then consider this truth: God Builds His Church: Gathering It Together, Founding It Upon His Word, and Creating It for Good Works.

A. Gathered It Together (v. 8–9, 19, 20–21)

Why are you here? Maybe you're part of our core group that has committed to worship at our new campus regularly. Maybe you've come because you are curious to see what this new mission campus will be and want to tour the new space we plan to use for our services? Maybe you just want to be a part of our first service out here in Eagle Lake, thinking that perhaps it's a historic event. Maybe you simply love outdoor services. Maybe it's a combination of those things.

But for many, the reason you are here, the reason you gather together with fellow believers on a Sunday morning, whether in Eagle Lake or elsewhere is because of God. God brought you here. Now you might say, "No, he didn't pastor I drove myself, my car is right over there. I can see it. I brought the chair I'm sitting in as well." But he did. He has given you faith and led to find value in gathering together with fellow Christians on Sunday mornings.

Our text begins, "Indeed, it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast." These verses are cherished in the Lutheran church, reminding us that our salvation—our rescue from

sin, death, and hell, is not because of us or anything we have done, but because of Him.

Our world today views mankind through rose-colored glasses, and that all people are by nature good and that with all things equal, people would choose to do good over bad. It says, people are by nature good, it's only the government or our culture or society that is broken and needs fixing.

But the truth is that it isn't so much society or our culture or the government that's the problem, it's us. We all by nature are not good, but evil. As we heard in our gospel lesson from last week: "out of people's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual sins, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit…" (Mark 7:22) and so forth. We are by nature selfish and self-seeking. The damage and much of the trouble that exists in our own lives is primarily not the fault of others, but our own, because we are broken, we are corrupt, we are sinful.

So what is the solution? God in his love has rescued us from the destruction that we cause. And how has he done it? Through Christ. He sent His son to live a holy life and die an innocent death for us and for our sins, to make payment for our corruption and sin, to bring us to God and to give us the sure hope of heaven.

And all of this is a free gift. And it isn't just the grace, it's not just the payment for sins on the cross, but the faith as well. The scripture tells us, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sin" (Eph. 2:1, EHV). It wasn't because you are so smart to figure it out. It wasn't because you made a decision for Christ. It was God the Holy Spirit through his word and sacrament who worked on your hearts to see the reality of your sin but also to believe that you have a Savior in Jesus.

And Paul goes on to say something incredible, "you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household." Fellow citizens with saints? We think of saints as holy people. God says that you are numbered with the saints. That's crazy to think that I, Matt Moldstad, am numbered among the saints. And you individually are numbered among the saints as well. That's the way God thinks of you. He thinks of you as he does Christ, "who was tempted in every way we are yet was without sin" (Heb. 4:15). As his word declares, "you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Indeed, as many of you as were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27, EHV).

And those who know Christ by faith are part of his household, his family, and he gathers them as his church. We may look different, young and old, male and female, native Minnesotan or transplant, people of

different backgrounds and jobs, but we are united into one fellowship, one church.

B. Founded them upon His Word (v. 20)

And this church he builds must have a foundation. Paul tells us, it isn't a concrete slab or a basement or footing driven deep in the ground, but "You have been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the Cornerstone." What does he mean we are founded on the apostles and the prophets? Those are the writers of Bible, right?—individuals God used to pen the holy Scriptures through the power of the Holy Spirit.

St. Paul testifies in another place: "From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, and for training in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:15-16, EHV). All scripture is God breathed. All Scripture is useful. It is our solid foundation.

Sad to say there are many who don't regard it as such. There are many who like much of Jesus moral teaching or they like the forgiveness of sins won for them on the cross, but they don't agree with what the Bible calls sin or has to say about the creation, or miracles, or the way of salvation, that it is found only in Christ. But to pick and choose what we want to believe from Scripture undermines the whole thing. Imagine a new foundation being poured, perfectly flat and solid, but then the owner comes and drills holes through the concrete, hundreds and thousands of holes. The foundation will not be so solid, but will soon crumble. How important it is then to regard all of Scripture as God's Word and to hold to all of it as true. What it says about sin, is true, even if it is unpopular. What it says about miracles is true, even if people call us fools.

But what else is that we must recognize Christ is our cornerstone. In today's buildings a cornerstone is often merely symbolic. Maybe it's a brick that's put in toward the end of the project that has the year of construction chiseled into it. But cornerstones back in Jesus' day were essential. The cornerstone determined the entire structure of the building. The stone that was chosen for the cornerstone had to be perfectly square so that the walls built according to its angles would be sound and solid. So what does it mean that our foundation is the Holy Scriptures, but Christ is our cornerstone? It means that we always remember that he is the center of it all.

The Pharisees in Jesus' day, regarded all of the Scriptures as true as well, yet they missed the point. They forgot the central message of the Bible—the Messiah, the Christ, is Savior. Instead they tried to use the Bible as a rule book that if they did what it said they could earn heaven. How important to remember Christ at the center of it all. In John 5:39 (EHV), Jesus said to the Jewish people in front of him, "You search the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them." And they were right to study the Bible for this purpose. But Jesus goes on: "They testify about me!" All of it points to Christ as our Savior from sin. Yes, God builds his church by founding it on his Word, with Christ as the cornerstone.

C. Created for Good Works (v. 10)

Finally, God builds his church, which is created for good works. Paul gets to the "why" of the church's existence on earth. Yes, we are saved by grace through faith…not by works so that no one can boast. Why then doesn't God immediately take us home to heaven when we come to know Jesus Christ as our Savior? "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared in advance so that we would walk in them…." God has saved you for a purpose, and that purpose isn't just to be with him forever in heaven, but that you live for him now. He has created you for good works, good works that he has prepared in advance for you to do. And what are those?

Good works are "God-pleasing actions done in faith, according to his commands." It's not a mystery how God would have us live and what he wants us to do with our lives. He wants us to live for him; we do that by remembering what he has done for us. As the Scriptures declare: "He died for all, so that those who live would no longer live for themselves but for him, who died in their place and was raised again" (2 Cor. 5:15, EHV).

So how do we do that? He's given us a list in His ten commandments. He has given us an overarching principal, "love your neighbor as yourself." Start with those things. And don't just think that these good works can be done in soup kitchens, in homeless shelters, or in church buildings, but in your home, with your spouse, with your parents, with your kids. They can be done at school with your teacher, and principal and fellow students. They can be done at work with your boss, co-workers, and customers.

And remember furthermore what Jesus informs us He will say to us on the last day, "Just as you did it for one of the least of these brothers

of mine, you did it for me" (Matt. 25:40). Whenever we act in love and kindness according to God's command, we are carrying out good works that glorify Him out of thanksgiving for what he has done for us. He has also commanded his church to share the good news of salvation. And as we share Christ in our community we also act in love, wanting more to know their Savior, that they too might live for Him and have life in His name. Yes, God is building his church, which is created for good works.

Conclusion

It's been said that the goals of the church should be nurture, fellowship, and service. Sadly, the default goals of many churches often become: numbers, money, and buildings instead. That if you have enough people attending, that should bring in enough in offerings, so that you can build buildings for the church.

As we embark today on this new mission campus in Eagle Lake there will be a great temptation for us to focus on those default goals. After all, we are planning to worship in rented space. There will be a danger for us to focus on numbers, money, and buildings. But that's not what the church is all about. Instead, we should be about nurture, fellowship, and service. Nurture—wanting be fed and wanting others to be fed by the pure word of God, which is our foundation, gathering and inviting others to gather around His word and sacrament. Fellowship—joining in and rejoicing in fellowship with one another, that God has made us brothers and sisters in Christ and heirs of eternal life. Service—desiring to serve God and our fellow man that many might benefit from our service and that God's name might be praised. We serve out of gratitude for all he has done for us. Yes, God is building something here in Eagle Lake, but it isn't a church building, rather it is his church, a gathering of believers, founded on God's Word, and desiring to serve God and their neighbor for His glory. May God bless our new mission campus. Amen. LSQ

Greeting after the service by ELS Evangelism and Missions Counselor, Rev. Brad Kerkow.

GOOD MORNING, IT IS SO EXCITING TO BE HERE today. Thanks be to God! I was happy to sing our opening hymn, *Beautiful Savior*, and the line "fair is the sunshine" while enjoying the sun shining on my face. [It was a brisk Minnesota morning with temperatures in the high 50s.]

It is good that you are here on this historic day. It is an historic day, not only for Peace Lutheran Church and the Board for Home Outreach, but also for the Christian Church on earth. Today a new mission for Christ has been planted. It is only a sapling, but it is a new congregation for the Lord.

Some may ask "Why do we need another church?" Well, Jesus said, "Go and make disciples." He also said, "I have come to seek and to save the lost," and "Let your light shine." He also told us the scope of the task, "the harvest is plentiful." Jesus' saving mission is not fulfilled when we hide our light, when we keep the Gospel to ourselves. That doesn't mean that we must always go far off to foreign countries. No, it can be that just down the road in the next town there is a field ripe for the harvest.

There is an interesting coincidence today. Our church body, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod traces its origins to Norwegian immigrants settling in the USA. One Norwegian pastor held a memorable outdoor service under an oak tree in September 1844 at a place called Koshkonong, near Madison, Wisconsin. And here we are 180 years later almost to the day, their spiritual children starting a church with an outdoor service. We do not have oak trees, but I see some apple trees right there. Think of the differences between 180 years ago and today! For one thing our pastor preached the sermon in English, not Norwegian (Thank you for that, Pastor Moldstad!). But the most important similarity is that just like that first church service, God's word was proclaimed today in its truth and purity, God's Law and Gospel, sin and grace, and the forgiveness of sins through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Eagle Lake is a community that will greatly benefit from this pure word of God being proclaimed in its midst.

Whether you are here today as someone who is a part of the core group of the mission, or a visitor checking things out, or friends and family, I ask you would keep updated on the mission, pray for the mission, and support it however you can. Pray that the Holy Spirit

would bless the preaching and teaching, and that this sapling would grow into a thriving, healthy congregation. In Jesus' Name. LSQ

Yeah, But...: Sermon on Ephesians 5:21–6:4

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Text: *22 Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he himself is the Savior. 24 Moreover, as the church submits to Christ, so also wives are to submit to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, in the same way as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, by cleansing her with the washing of water in connection with the Word. 27 He did this so that he could present her to himself as a glorious church, having no stain or wrinkle or any such thing, but so that she would be holy and blameless. 28 In the same way, husbands have an obligation to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 To be sure, no one has ever hated his own body, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. 31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will be one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 In any case, each one of you also is to love his wife as himself, and each wife is to respect her husband. 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with a promise: 3 "that it may go well with you and that you may live a long life on the earth." 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 5:21–6:4, EHV).*

AS IS THE CASE EACH WEEK, ALL OF OUR READings for this morning are connected. And yes, they're connected because they talk about marriage and the family, but they're also connected because they're pretty offensive. And it seems to me that it'd be easy to have the same reaction to each of them—to read them and respond with, "Yeah, but…" Look at our first lesson, clearly stating that God created Eve from Adam's rib on the same day He created man from the dust of the earth. "Yeah, but that goes totally against accepted scientific explanations of how humans came to be."

We read in our Gospel lesson Jesus talk about the permanency of marriage and hear, "What God has brought together, let man not separate" (Mark 10:9). "Yeah, but—sometimes relationships just don't work out, people change and sometimes grow apart."

Then in our sermon text, "Wives submit to your husbands." Yeah, but that was then and this is now—that is such a backwards way of looking at men and women in a relationship and as a society we've moved beyond this. So put all these together and what are we looking at? A pretty bad day to be a first-time visitor here at Peace, right? If you are, don't worry—it's never a bad day to be here, to hear God's Word—even if sometimes hearing that Word isn't very easy or comfortable.

God does not apologize for what He has said in His Word, He doesn't regret any of it, and none of it was a mistake. And really, this is one of the two main points of the Bible—to offend, to correct, to point out error. The Bible is there not to support what we already think is right or good. The Bible is there to tell us what is actually, really, truly right and good. I think we all realize that the bible doesn't tell us what we want to hear, but what we need to hear. And these readings for our service today are a prime example of this. Generally speaking, our society would look at these and laugh and say, "Yeah, but we know better than that!" And, to be fair, does society have a point? Has our culture here in United States figured out a better system than the one God lays out here? Would you say that the typical American home is the example of what a peaceful, happy, home looks like? A place where children know they're loved and are nurtured and brought up in a safe place filled with forgiveness and understanding? Where husband and wife work in harmony for the betterment of everyone in the house—each using their gifts and abilities? I think we're safe in saying that isn't the case. God's Word tells us the *best* way and every time we try to change that, or create a new way, it backfires and leads to heartache and complications. And so

we can see why it's good God's Word tells us the hard truth, and doesn't let us walk down whatever disastrous road we find for ourselves.

Now these passages for today aren't just offensive to the outside world—to those people out there, but they're offensive to us! To mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, and even to children. Children, obey your parents. Not sometimes. Not with reluctance, not only when you agree with them, and not with sarcastic comments said under your breath**.** The standard God sets here is *perfect* obedience. So, to anyone in here who has or has had parents, this command is offensive, because we can't do this perfectly. We've all failed.

And for us as parents, it's offensive to look at our Gospel lesson today and to see Jesus' anger as the disciples tried to keep kids out of His hair. "Let the little children come to me" (Matt. 19:14, EHV)! It's offensive when we see that anger and know how it connects with the responsibility that he gives parents, and especially fathers to bring up our children in the instruction and training of the Lord and how God has made parents a conduit through which our children learn about and know Jesus. And then we assess ourselves and ask, *Am I functioning as that bridge between my children and their Savior? Have I been bringing my kids to Jesus every day? Have I been paying more attention to their sports schedules, social calendars, and school grades than to the care of their souls?* When we as parents really think about the responsibility God puts on us here, the "Yeah, buts" start up quickly.

"Yeah, but an hour in church is enough each week."

"Yeah, but they go to a Christian school—so I don't really need to do it too."

"Yeah, but they're really good at that sport and we have to devote time to their development."

And the big one from our sermon text in Ephesians 5, the really offensive one. Wives submit to your husbands. That's offensive enough, but then it goes on—Husbands love your wives, *just* as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her**.** There's nothing there about forcing your wife into submission. Husbands, your command is simple and should be unconditional: *love your wife just as Jesus loves you.* That's a love that includes *perfect* forgiveness. That's a love that is totally self-denying and self-sacrificing for the good of your wife. It's a love that includes the willingness to not only die for your spouse, but to live for her, today and every single day until death parts you. That's a command that says- don't just be the head of your family, be the servant of your family by putting every single person in your home before yourself.

And we as God's people can look at all these commands and say with our lips—God's right. His way is the best way and His Word is always true. But maybe when He was saying these things, He didn't really have my family in mind or really know my situation. I know Husbands should love their wives, wives submit to their husbands, children honor their parents, but:

"But my wife doesn't respect me so how can I possibly be loving to her?"

"But my husband is a bit of a fool and if I submitted to him, our whole home would fall apart! I need to be in control."

"But my parents don't know me at all—they don't understand what I'm going through and they can't see what I need and why I need it."

"But my children are snotty little stinkers who don't listen to anything I say! How can I do what God tells me, when no one else in my family is holding up their end of the bargain?"

And so while we might not ever say it or even think, "God is wrong." We can easily fall into this idea that maybe He's talking past us. That he doesn't really understand *my* family. And by doing this, understand what that means. It means we're dismissing the sin we commit by blaming the other members of our family. Or, even by blaming God for not making it easier, for not giving us family members who perfectly fulfil their roles so that we can then fulfill ours.

And so we have here an excellent example of God telling us what we need to hear. And what's so awesome is how He straightens us out. He doesn't just tell us to do better, he doesn't threaten us—He points us to another relationship as an example, as motivation. But it's so much more than that as well, it's a relationship that brings forgiveness and restoration—He points us His own relationship with us. Paul quotes Genesis and says, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." And we think of our marriages, but then Paul throws a curveball and says, "This is a profound mystery but I'm talking about Christ and the church." Jesus is married to His church. He is one flesh with His people. Paul points us to what Jesus did for His bride, "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless." This is the most pure and perfect picture of love you could ever hope to find. That Jesus lived for you perfectly, paid for your sin on the cross, cleansed you through the water and word in baptism—so

now this is who you are. This right here is your identity. Despite all the times we've failed or fallen short as children, parents, or spouses—God says you are radiant. There is no stain or wrinkle or any other blemish- you are holy. You are blameless because of what Jesus has done for you. You have been united with your God in a very real way and because of that you get to live with absolute certainty of your salvation, absolute certainty that because of Christ's continued acts of love for you—you will be in heaven.

Now, with that Gospel truth firmly in your mind and in your heart, with the love and grace of Jesus for you clearly in focus, now look at your family. Look at them in light of what Jesus has done for you and you see them in a totally different perspective. You won't see a nagging wife, an incompetent husband, ungrateful, spoiled children, or parents who don't have a clue. You see people that are exactly like you—people for whom Jesus paid a great price, people that God sees as holy and blameless despite their faults and weaknesses.

You will see people that He put in your life for a very specific reason. It was not an accident that you ended up with the parents or children that you have. It was not chance, it was part of God's perfect plan. He put these people in your life because God needs you to love them in the unique ways that God equipped you to love. He needs you to serve them in the unique way that God has equipped you to serve. You see people to whom you have been called to show the same love and forgiveness that you've experienced yourself. People that give you the opportunity to glorify, praise, and worship God by fulfilling your vocation in your family: husbands by loving and giving yourselves for your wives, wives by respecting your husbands, children by honoring your father and mother. Parents by raising your children with the One Thing Needful being the priority and at the heart of all that you do.

God's Word isn't always easy to hear because it shows us where we fall short. But, once that sin is exposed once we turn away from what we want to hear, and listen to what we need to hear, we find that God also responds with that same phrase, "Yeah, but..." He tells us, "Yeah, you're sinful, yes you don't deserve heaven, yes you do fail over and over again. Yes, all that's true- but I still love you. But I sent my Son for You to win your victory over sin and death and earn your forgiveness. Yes, but you're still coming to heaven to be with me forever, because you are still seen as radiant and holy and blameless in my sight because I have made you part of *my* family."

As we seek to fulfill our individual roles in our families, the love and servant-heart and what Jesus has done for us is our example and our motivation- it's what we aim to emulate and it's the power source behind our desire to do that. But again, it's so much more than that- it's what we fall back when we inevitably fall short and stumble, because it's through Him that we are forgiven, restored, and saved. Amen. LSQ

Thursday of the Third Last Sunday of the Church Year

Glenn R. Obenberger
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LSQ Vol. 64, No. 4 (December 2024)

Text: *While [Jesus] was saying these things to them, behold, a ruler came in and knelt before Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live." And Jesus rose and followed him, with His disciples... And when Jesus came to the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, He said, "Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at Him. But when the crowd had been put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. (Mt. 9:18–19; 23–25, ESV)*

IN CHRIST JESUS, WHO FELL ASLEEP INTO DEATH named as the Righteous Sinner in your place and mine only to rise again as the holy living One to give us life, dear fellow redeemed:

What was the first lie to the human race by the father of lies, Satan? "You will not surely die" (Gn. 3:4, ESV). As the Apostle Paul wrote, "Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people (Rom. 5:12, NIV), so we could picture Satan clap his hands in delight and laugh when sin entered our race, because that lie was believed and there were eternal consequences. So, it was in out text when Jesus said "'the girl is not dead but sleeping.'—they laughed at Him." The human race has come to know the reality of death, any other suggestion is too ridiculous to consider.

The father of lies has been laughing, so to speak, at the human race ever since that first lie. When Adam and Eve's eyes were filled with tears at the death of their son Able, no doubt the devil found great joy. When

Job, who had seven sons and three daughters, learned from a messenger who said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead" (Job 1:17–19, NIV). Oh, what demonic glee was surely expressed in the spirit realm on that day because God allowed this tragedy to occur! Or when Salome, brought the platter with the head of the prophet of the most-high God, John the Baptizer, before Herodias, her mother—the great deceiver certainly could hardly contain himself. "You will surely not die"—Ha!

No doubt the greatest time of mirth for Satan was in the hours between Jesus breathing His last on the cross and when Jesus descended, body and soul, into hell to proclaim victory over death, hell and Satan. Sin and death had done its worse, God in the person of the Son died. But now He lives and with that act the lie, "You will surely not die" has been made into a divine promise to all who believe in God's Son as Savior.

This was the faith of Jairus when he came to Jesus, his living Lord and said, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live." It was not the faith of the loud crowd of mourners in Jairus' house. When Jesus told them to go away their mourning was not needed, she was not dead but sleeping, they laughed at such a thought. But the Lord of Life, our Lord of Life, took the girl by the hand and we are told by Mark and Luke he said, "Little girl, arise" (Mk. 5:41, Lk. 8:54). And immediately she rose, got up and walk about. Before the Lord death is but a sleep for the body.

So it is with you, my fellow believers in Christ. When your body dies, it will fall asleep awaiting the command of our Lord to arise. You may have some mourners gathered around your lifeless appearing body shedding tears before it is tucked away for that last great day of Jesus' return. But your confession of Jesus as the Lord of Life will no doubt be spoken by your Pastor in his sermon and in the rite of Christian burial. Those who mourn your death will be told to depart with the same confidence with which Jesus spoke in Jairus' house.

It is not a sin to shed tears at the death of a Christian, but they should not be shed without hope. Because of the holy life lived in your place by Jesus producing the holiness you so desperately need, His suffering and death in payment for all your sins, and His resurrection unto life granting you life everlasting, you will get the last laugh on the day of resurrection.

Satan will not trouble you ever again, his lies and laughter will be heard no longer. Jesus, your Lord of Life holds the keys to the gates of hell and they will be locked securely forevermore.

The mourners gathered around your grave, when your body is about to be buried, will hear something like this, "May God the Father, Who has created this body; + May God the Son, Who by His blood has redeemed this body + together with the soul; May God the Holy Spirit, Who by Baptism has sanctified this body + to be His Temple,—keep these remains unto the day of the resurrection of all flesh."

Then having been safely tucked away in the bed of your grave, on that great *gettin' up mornin'*, when the final trumpet blasts and with a shout Jesus declares "Arise, my children!" you will arise experiencing firsthand how Jesus made the lie of Satan into the eternal truth for us all—"You will not surely die." The last laugh is ours my fellow redeemed for Jesus' sake. Amen. LSQ

Monday after the Last Sunday of the Church Year

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Text: *For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. [18] But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness. [19] I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress (Isaiah 65:17–19, ESV).*

COME ON, ISAIAH? NEW HEAVENS AND A NEW earth? Really! I mean REALLY?! Haven't we been sold that utopian bill of goods so many times before? Haven't individuals (of far greater means) promised us the world only to make it so much worse? Fool me once, shame on you; but fool me twice, shame on me! For utopia literally means "no place." The sooner people get that, the better we'll all be for it. So then what should we make of Isaiah's theme, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth"?

Former thing shall not be remembered or come into mind. How did we get so cynical and jaded? Too many wannabe messiahs have tried to impose their versions of paradise already. And too many people have become the collateral damage of their social-engineering experiments. The Enlightenment only compounded these efforts when it dethroned God in western culture. Thereafter, mankind was only too happy to assume God's throne on a more permanent basis. But what happens when man, who was supposed to be the steward of creation, attempts to assume the role of Creator (Gen 1:28)?

The seventeenth-century Frenchman Blaise Pascal (1623–62) once remarked that whenever man attempts to play God, he only becomes a beast. Sad to say, the French Revolution made his words prophetic. What began as a quest to create liberty, fraternity, and equality for all became a secularizing reign of terror that murdered priests in mass, turned Notre Dame into a Temple of Reason, and cut off the heads of those who set this horror in motion. Since then both conservatives and liberals have committed genocides all in name of a new world order. Nazi Germany killed six million Jews, while Marxist Russia killed up to seven and half million Ukrainians just under Stalin alone. Lest we think Americans are immune to utopianism, just observe how the media and pundits have often cast presidential administrations in messianic terms. We still haven't learned St. Augustine's warning not to confuse the kingdoms of this world with the kingdom of God.

At bottom, we have become so cynical because we have forgotten that we are sinful creatures and not the holy Creator. Only God has a truth that can bring peace to all people without marginalizing a single soul. Still sin has spawned a God complex in each one us that won't be satisfied until it's the boss. Let's be honest, you wouldn't like me as God, any more than I would like you as God. For the only way I can usurp God's throne is to substitute my truth for God's truth and then impose it on you with all I got. For deep down, we all want to hold the puppet strings. I don't even need to point to LGBTQ legislation in America to make my point. Every time we condemn others for not suffering our entitlement we become a tyrant and false god to our neighbor.

This is why God is so furious when we sully his name. You see, we were supposed to bear his name to the world in all that we say and do. But instead of reflecting Christ to others, we have more often sown doubts about him, just like Satan did in Eden. Now we can disingenuously lay the entire blame on godless secularists for the rise of agnosticism. But if we want to be honest with ourselves, it's our continual unrepentant flirtation with sin that has chiefly caused our world to doubt God's promise of a new creation. Cheap grace Christianity has done far more to dechristianize our world than any atheist ever could. If we don't repent and amend our lives, then we can expect something far worse than a French guillotine.

But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create. Despite all of this, there is still hope for us. If we repent, we can be forgiven. Not only that, but we can then take comfort in God's promise of new heavens and a new earth. Our Creator God really will bring about something that

transcends all man-made utopias. The Hebrew verb בָּרָא which means "to create" drives this point home. Man can certainly fashion many things from God's creation. But only God can create something out of nothing. Consider once the heavens and earth above and below your feet. If God created the only tangible heavens and earth that mankind has ever known, then what possible reason do we have for doubting that he can create something even greater? Has he ever failed to keep his promises before?

If that were not enough, our text indicates that God has already begun to create new heavens and a new earth in us. One of the most beautiful parts of *The Passion of the Christ* film is when Christ collapses under the weight of his heavy cross. It's at that moment that his mother runs to him only to have her bloody son look up to her and say, "Behold, I am making all things new" (Rev 21:5, ESV). Now Jesus didn't say these words along the Via Dolorosa, but this film rightly puts them here. St. Paul explains, "[God] set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth (Eph 1:9–10, ESV). You see, recreation is not about executing a God complex on others. It's about God's gracious self-giving of himself to others. Jesus did exactly that when he absorbed all the disorder of this world to create it anew in himself. But to turn even sin and death into grace and life, he had to suffer, die, and then rise again (cf. Gen 50:20).

To be sure, this remains hidden to those without the eyes of faith. And it will not reach its consummation until the last day. Still the faith created in our hearts in holy baptism really is the glorious beginning of our full resurrection and transfiguration in Christ. St. Paul tells us, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he *is* a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor 5:17, ESV). We even know this from our vocations. While our holy life is never the cause of our salvation, we could never love and serve our neighbor in any genuine way, if new life in Christ weren't already pulsating through our veins.

Finally, we can be glad and rejoice because God doesn't promise us chinchy man-made utopias. Haven't you ever wondered why God doesn't provide more details about what the new heavens and earth will be like? This is because no human description can really capture how truly extraordinary they will be. But we do know that it will be so wonderful that even the most unthinkable human atrocities will be forgotten. God will so blot them out from existence that not even he will remember them (Isa 43:25). The sound of weeping and crying of distress that punctuates daily life will come to an end. We will genuinely

love one another and be a joy and gladness to each other. Yes, you will even become the best of friends with all those Christians that made life difficult on this earth! If that isn't a profound mystery, I don't know what is.

To be sure, we have seen many false messiahs already. And we will probably see many more before we bask in uncreated light. Until then, repent of your sins and hold fast to Christ. "Behold, [God is] creat[ing] new heavens and a new earth." I look forward to seeing you all there. Amen. LSQ

Book Reviews

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Book Review: The Common Service: The English Liturgy of the Church of the Augsburg Confession

James D. Heiser. *The Common Service: The English Liturgy of the Church of the Augsburg Confession*. Malone, Texas: Repristination Press, 2022. 324 pages. Price: $39.99

The Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Diocese of North America (ELDoNA), the Reverend James D. Heiser provides an interesting history of the Common Service which members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) know as Rite Two of the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*. The main theme of this book is that the Common Service of 1888 is the proper order of worship for English-speaking Lutherans and with the *Service Book and Hymnal* of 1958 there is a deterioration in the service.

The Common Service is seen by the author as a fulfillment of the dream of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, the father of American Lutheranism, who desired one order of worship for all American Lutherans. He prepared an order to be used by Lutheran congregations, but it was never universally used and where it was used it was soon altered. The publishing of the common order was the culmination of his goals for the liturgy (7–8).

The principle or rule by which the Common Service was prepared is the strongest argument in favor of the author's view that it is the correct and proper order of worship for English speaking Lutherans. The Common Service was the consensus of the pure Lutheran liturgies of the sixteenth century and where there were differences, the acceptance of what was found in the more important liturgies (87). Usually, the orders

from northern Germany carried more weight than those of southern Germany. A proper Lutheran service should follow the outline of the sixteenth century Lutheran orders which are a purification of the western medieval service. While Wilhelm Löhe (58) and Theodor Kliefoth (79) are mentioned in this history, they are probably more important to the development of the Common Service than noted here.

The man who did yeoman's work in preparing the Common Service was Beale Melanchthon Schmucker (47–48). He advocated the principle or rule by which the service was formed. It is ironic that he should promote an orthodox Lutheran service when his father, S. S. Schmucker, was one of the most notorious Lutherans of the times with his *Definite Platform*. This document rejected many of the basic doctrines of the Lutheran Church, conforming it to the American Protestant churches around it. The son definitely did not follow in his father's footsteps.

There were questions as to whether confession and absolution should be a part of the Common Service, since many of the sixteenth century orders did not include it. They had private absolution or a separate confessional service. This was also the case with many of the German orders used in America. However, it was included in some important sixteenth century orders such as the Brandenburg-Nürnberg Order of 1533. Therefore, confession and absolution were included in the Common Service (90). Also, the Lord's Prayer was placed before the *Verba* rather than after it (93).

At times the Common Service has been accused of borrowing a considerable amount from the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*. Yet it must be remembered that the 1549 prayer book of Edward VI is very much a translation of the Cologne order of 1543 (113). Thus, the formulators of the Common Service were simply retaking for English use what the Anglicans used from the German orders. "In supplying the English dress for much of the material common to both communions, the Prayer Book repaid in the nineteenth century the debt which its framers owed to the Lutheran Church Orders of the sixteenth century" (117).

Heiser points out that by the early twentieth century most of the Lutheran synods had a form of the Common Service. The service entered the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) through the English Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri and other States which would become the English District of the LCMS. This situation is interesting in that the Common Service was adopted rather than the English translation of the German order in Walther's *Gesangbuch* (145). The author also indicates that, although the Common Service was under copyright, the service was simply taken for public use by the English Synod and later by the LCMS and the Synodical Conference for *The Lutheran Hymnal* of 1941 (137–138). The Norwegians produced *The Lutheran Hymnary* in 1913 which had the Common Service as its second order. The first order was

the traditional Danish-Norwegian service (161). These orders are found in the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* of 1996 prepared by the ELS. The Common Service entered the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) with its adaption of *The Lutheran Hymnal* (204) and is found in *Christian Worship—A Lutheran Hymnal*.

Two men, August Crull (125) and William Polack (212), who were important for Lutheran hymnody in the Synodical Conference, are mentioned in the book. Crull was a distinguished hymnologist. Many of his translations of German hymns were in *The Lutheran Hymnal.* A number of Polack's hymns and translations of German hymns were also placed in *The Lutheran Hymnal.* But more importantly he organized the committee that produced this hymnal in 1941.

As noted above, with the *Service Book and Hymnal*, the author sees a decline in the Common Service. A new theological agenda arose with this book. Now the rule or the principle that formed the Common Service was considered obsolete. The outlook was ecumenical rather than narrowly confessional or provincial (226). This ecumenical agenda was connected with destructive higher criticism (227). The rise of this ecumenical agenda is evident in the second edition of Luther Reed's *The Lutheran Liturgy.* In the first edition in his earlier years, he generally follows the rule that formed the Common Service, but in the second edition the new theological agenda predominated (225).

When the *Service Book and Hymnal* was being planned, the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) was particularly adamant that their liturgy, the Danish-Norwegian service, be published in a supplemental volume. This request was later withdrawn (228—229). In much the same way, the ELS requested that this service be included in *The Lutheran Hymnal*, but this request was vetoed by the other members of the Synodical Conference. As a result, a number of ELS congregations did not use *The Lutheran Hymnal.*

While the *Worship Supplement* of 1969 was appreciated for its Martin Franzmann hymns, its ecumenical outlook was apparent. Here the eucharistic prayer is present in material produced by the LCMS. In its Holy Eucharist II, one finds the fourfold shape of the liturgy of Dom Gregory Dix. The fourfold shape or action of the liturgy was to be taking, blessing, breaking, and sharing. This was advocated through the modern Liturgical Movement. The third action in the order is the breaking of the bread (260). Lutherans have traditionally refused to break the bread in the Supper as a confessional stand against the Reformed. Now Holy Eucharist II stood in agreement with the Reformed and Roman orders, as well as the new ecumenical movement. The *Lutheran Book of Worship* of 1979 continued on this same path so much so that the LCMS refused to accept this book. The LCMS produced their own purified form of this book in 1982. The author gives an interesting account of how the LCMS became involved in

the planning of the *Lutheran Book of Worship* of 1978 (261–266).

One of the main objections to the new direction in the liturgy is the use of the eucharistic prayer. The eucharistic prayer is made up of the following: a. Thanksgiving—for creation and redemption, b. *Verba*—Words of Institution, c. Anamnesis—remembrance of Christ's death and resurrection, d. Epiclesis—calling down of the Holy Spirit. The Words of Institution embedded in a eucharistic prayer turns the meaning of the Sacrament upside down. The Words of Institution are no longer a proclamation of God's grace to the congregation and the effectual cause of the real presence, but a prayer man offers to God. The emphasis of the Sacrament is not God's presentation of Christ's free forgiveness but our offering of praise and thanks to God.[1] The Lutheran fathers rejected the canon of the mass and the idea of a eucharistic prayer (245).

Regarding the new direction in the liturgy, Heiser cites this quote from Walter Sundberg's *Worship as Repentance: Lutheran Liturgical Traditions and Catholic Consensus* approvingly:

> A sea change in Lutheran worship practice took hold beginning in the 1960s and gathering force thereafter. This is the change in understanding between worship as repentance and worship as ritual participation in the divine, the former now denigrated as "penitential piety" and shunned, the latter touted as "Eucharistic piety," the true, ecumenical vision of worship. Eucharistic piety motivates and informs the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978) and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (2006). It also influences the *Service Book and Hymnal* (1958) to an extent, but not on the matter of confession and absolution (246–247).

The best example of the Common Service today in the author's estimation it to be found in the *Lutheran Service Book*, Divine Service Setting Three (304). Later he writes concerning the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*, "In summary, after Setting Three in the *LSB,* Rite Two in the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* may truly be classified as a form of the 'Common Service,' albeit with more purported 'modernizations' than were incorporated into the more-widely used *LSB* service" (317).

The author is in favor of *ad orientam* celebration or east-facing worship (241–243). This means worship orientated toward liturgical east rather than worship in the round with a free standing altar. The three-year lectionary is regarded as papistic (283) and the author quotes Gene Edward Veith as saying that the language of the KJV was not strictly speaking the Jacobite language of the time but a ritual language set apart from the ordinary language to heighten the sense of the sacred (307).

[1] Gaylin R. Schmeling, *Bread of Life From Heaven: The Theology of the Means of Grace, the Public Ministry, and Church Fellowship* (Mankato: Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary Press, 2009), 217–220.

Heiser is quite extreme in his view that the Common Service of 1888 is the only proper order of worship for English-speaking Lutherans. He implies that it is the only right way to worship in America today. For example, he is very critical of the changes and updating made in the Common Service of *Christian Worship—A Lutheran Hymnal* (311–315). While Heiser's views are extreme, one must agree that the general outline of the Common Service is the correct form of the historic Western liturgy going all the way back to Justin Martyr (c. 150). The Common Service was the consensus of the pure Lutheran liturgies of the sixteenth century and where there were differences, the acceptance of what was found in the more important liturgies. The Lutheran liturgies of the sixteenth century were in turn a purification of the corruptions of the Middle Ages and the recovery of the worship forms of the Ancient Church. This book gives an interesting history of Lutheran worship in America centering on the Common Service. While one cannot agree with all the points of the author, his major premise is greatly appreciated.

– Gaylin R. Schmeling

Book Review: Jingjiao: The Earliest Christian Church in China

Glen L. Thompson. *Jingjiao: The Earliest Christian Church in China*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2024. 269 pages. Price: $22.43

When Americans think of Christian mission work in China, the first thought that usually comes to mind is the Protestant missions of the nineteenth century. Men like Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Inland Mission, are considered or possibly the earlier sixteenth century work of the Jesuits such as Matteo Ricci (30). If you are a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, your first thought will probably be the work of George Oliver Lillegard in China who later taught at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. However, the author, Glen Thompson points out that Christianity came much earlier in China through the Church of the East, also known as the Nestorian Church.

The Church of the East or the Nestorian Church is the *real* church of the East (10). From a Western viewpoint the Eastern Orthodox churches and the Oriental Orthodox churches are the churches of the East. But geographically they are really in the middle. The Nestorian Church is that church that developed to the east of the Roman Empire in Mesopotamia and Persia. This church faced periodic persecution under the Parthians and later under the Muslims, but continued to grow.

The church was a missionary church reaching Arabia, India, Ceylon, Indonesia, and Vietnam. The Saint Thomas Christians in India owe their origin to the zeal of this church. Nestorian monks followed the Silk Road (22), establishing churches in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Tibet, and Mongolia all the way to China. There were few places in the whole of Asia that were not reached at some time or another by the marvelous mission work of this church. The head or chief bishop of the church was the Catholicos-Patriarch who resided at Seleucia-Ctesiphon on the Tigris River (17). The church entered a period of decline after 1400 with the persecutions and massacres of the Mongol warlord Tamerlane. The church still exists today with about 300,000 members.

While the church in the Roman Empire used Greek or Latin as its theological and liturgical language, the Church of the East used Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic (11). By the sixth century the standard Syriac version of the Bible was the Peshitta translation. Peshitta, from the Syriac word for "simple" or "plain," was a translation similar to the Byzantine text of the Greek manuscripts.

The Church of the East is often called the Nestorian Church because it rejected the condemnation of Nestorius and followed the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Ibas of Edessa which was condemned at the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553 (25). The Church of the East taught that Christ was incarnate in two natures (*kyane*), two hypostases (*qnome*), and one person (*parsopa*) (186), while Chalcedon in 451 proclaimed according to Scripture that Christ was incarnate with two natures in one hypostasis.[2] Although there is some confusion concerning the Syriac terms used, it seems that the definition of the Nestorian Church weakened the hypostatic union or personal union in Christ. This is the same tendency that is found in the theology of John Calvin and the Reformed.

The fact that Nestorian monks worked in China is confirmed by the Nestorian Stele of Xi'an, China which was discovered in 1623. The stele is of special interest to the author and is a major focus of this book. A translation of the stele's inscriptions both in Latin and French was prepared by Nicolas Trigault, a Jesuit missionary, by 1628 (31). The validity of the stele was at first questioned for a time, but today it accepted beyond doubt.

The stele stands nearly ten feet high, is about three feet wide, and around a foot thick which was typical of official monuments at the time in China (28). The text of the stele is written is Chinese and Syriac with a Christian cross. The heading or title of stele can be translated: Monument of the Spread of the Da Qin Luminous Teaching in China (29). "Da Qin" is a geographical term meaning a powerful kingdom in the west (35). In other documents from the period the term refers to the Roman Empire or another Middle Eastern country.

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[2] David Wilmshurst, *The Martyred Church: A History of the Church of the East* (London: East & West Publishing LTD), 31

The stele was erected in 781 and was composed by a Christian priest whose name is given as Jingjing in Chinese and Adam in Syriac. He was a monk of the Da Qin monastery (43). About sixty-five years later, Christianity was suppressed for a time and the stele was buried for safekeeping. It was assumed that the persecution would soon pass and the stele could be restored to its former location. The stele's text remains the most important source of information concerning the early Christian church in China (81).

> The text closes with two additional columns of supplementary material. Column 31 dates the erection of the stele to Sunday, the seventh day of the first month of the second year of the Jianzhong era. This was the period of Emperor Dezong's rule, which extended from 780 to 783. Thus, the stele was erected on Sunday, February 4, 781. It further names Mar Hananisho as the one in charge of the entire Church of the East at that time. To honor the patriarch, an honorary space is left before his name as well. Actually, Hananisho II had died the preceding year (AD 780) and been succeeded by Timothy I in May of 780. That news, however, had apparently not yet crossed the 3,600 miles from Persia to Chang'an when the stone was being carved. Column 31 ends with the repetition of the name and title of the patriarch in Syriac. Column 32 then provides the name of the man responsible for the beautiful calligraphy on the tablet: "Lu Xiuyan, minister and councilor of the court, formerly military commander for Tai Zhou district" (36).

On the monument, Jingjing or Adam gives an outline of the history of Christianity in China until the erection of the Nestorian Stele in 781. The arrival of missionary Alopen around 635 is seen as the beginning of Christianity in China. He wrote, "(At that time), the pure, bright Luminous Teaching [Jingjiao] was introduced to our Tang kingdom. Its scriptures were translated and temples built; the [spiritually] dead revived and boats gave passage [to heaven]" (56). Notice that Christianity was brought to China during the Tang dynasty and the teaching of Scripture is called the Luminous Teaching [Jingjiao]. Thus, Christianity became known as Jingjiao.

The Nestorian Stele presents the basic doctrines of the Jingjiao faith. God is referred to often as A-luo-he a translation of the Semitic Old Testament word for God (*Elohim*). He is called the Three-One to explain the Trinity (115). The first person of the Trinity is usually simply denoted as the Father, the second person as Messiah, royal Son, and the Promised One, and the third person as Spirit, Cool Wind, and Pure Wind (116). Concerning the incarnation this explanation is given: "Therefore, our Three-One divided being, the luminous and honorable Messiah, concealing his true majesty, appeared as a human being. God in heaven proclaimed a celebration; a virgin

gave birth to a sage in Da Qin. A luminous star announced the good news; in Persia they saw it shining and came with tribute" (210–211). Another document describes unambiguously the redemptive work of Christ. "The Messiah offered his body up to this evil, for the sake of all beings; he was sent into this world knowing that all people had lives as short as candles. He preached to the people in the world and died in their place. The Messiah gave his own body and received death willingly" (125–126). The teaching of the resurrection is also presented. The central teachings of the Christian faith were proclaimed among these Chinese Christians.

Glen Thompson offers a summary of the history of the Church of the East in China. The church had a presence in China during two main periods. The first period was from the seventh century through the tenth century in the Tang dynasty. The second period was in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries during the Yuan dynasty with the rise of the Mongols (1). The mission of Alopen arrives in the Chinese capital of Chang'an (Xi'an) in 635, during the reign of Taizong of the Tang dynasty. Taizong extended official tolerance to the mission and invited the Christians to translate their holy writing for the imperial library (214–215). This tolerance was followed by many in the Tang dynasty allowing the church to grow in China for over two hundred years. China became a metropolitan province of the Church of the East in the first quarter of the eighth century with the Syriac name, Beth Sinaye. Syriac records indicate that the Catholicos-Patriarch Slibazkha (714–728) appointed the first metropolitan for China (143). In 845, Emperor Wuzong decreed that foreign religions such as Buddhism, Christianity, and Manichaeism be abolished in the land. This persecution caused a decline in the Jingjiao faith in China (158).

Not long after this, a renewal of the church began in the steppe areas of northwestern China. In the succeeding centuries it spread under the Mongols reaching it high point during the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). There was even a mass conversion of a Turkic tribe with a baptism of two thousand with their leader (1, 164–165). Many of the Mongols and their leaders were Christians or at least sympathetic to Christianity. Christians were found in the imperial court of the Yuan dynasty. One empress of this dynasty who was a Christian was the mother of three great khans: Kublai, Möngke, and Hülagu (175). During this time, an Ongut monk named Mark in China made a pilgrimage to Mesopotamia and so impressed the leaders of the Church of the East that when the Catholicos-Patriarch died he was elected the new leader of the church (170). As the Catholicos-Patriarch he took the name Yahballaha III (1281–1317). As was the case with the whole Church of the East, the church in China entered a period of decline after 1400 with the persecutions and massacres of the Mongol warlord Tamerlane who referred to him as the "Sword of Islam" (191).

The epilogue of the book according to the author is an attempt to give a balanced account of what can be stated about the Syriac churches in China, and their relevance for today (7). Among other things, there can be no doubt that there was a thriving Christian church in China from the seventh century through the tenth century during the Tang dynasty and in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries during the Yuan dynasty (194–198). A second point is that Christianity is not a Western religion foreign to the Far East. Christianity first came to China from the Middle East, from Mesopotamia and Persia (200-201). Christianity is just as much the religion of China as it is the religion of Northern Europe. There were Christians in China before Christianity reached Northern Europe and Scandinavia. This is important to note for evangelism in China today. The Gospel is for China in the same way as it is for Minnesota.

In appendix 1, the author has provided a valuable tool for those interested in further study of the Nestorian Stele. The appendix has a readable and fairly literal translation of the entire monument. Not only is there an English translation of the text but in addition one will find the original Chinese and Syriac. The translation is laid out by the sense unit system used in the author's book so that the reader can better understand the nature of the Chinese literary format (207). The student who is familiar with the original languages will be able to evaluate the translation of the author and come to his own conclusions. Appendix 1 is definitely a significant addition to the book.

Glen Thompson has produced an excellent, readable history of the Nestorian Stele and Christianity in China during the Tang and Yuan dynasties. He makes use of primary sources, up-to-date scholarship, and excellent narration, causing the early history of Christianity in China to come alive for the reader. The book is an excellent history in the English language, which is sorely needed. It is extremely beneficial for anyone interested in or studying the Church of the East and its evangelism in China. Jingjiao is an indispensable resource for students of global Christianity and missiology. The author is to be commended for this valuable book.

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