

The CLASSICAL LUTHERAN EDUCATION JOURNAL is dedicated to providing a variety of helpful resources for Lutheran educators and parents who are labouring in the noble enterprise of nurturing and educating God's children.

This issue discusses the fundamentals of classical education and what is Lutheran about it in Dr. Tallmon's article, *What is Classical Lutheran Education, How Does it Differ From Classical Christian Education, and Why Does it Matter?*

Dr. Thomas J. Korcok discusses the origins and evolution of the liberal arts in his article *Aperture to the Past: A Starting Point for Understanding the Arts*. Beginning with the Greeks and Romans, continuing through Augustine, Scholasticism, Humanism, and Luther, he brings us down the historical path to help us understand the rich legacy we have inherited.

Rev. Steve Kieser addresses language as taught through the progymnasmata, a series of writing exercises for the purpose of developing eloquent writers and speakers. He gives us an excellent breakdown of the exercises used and some of the materials used to complete these in his article, *The Progymnasmata*.

Rev. Paul J. Cain has written book reviews for *Here We Stand: A Confessional Christian Study of Worldviews* ed. Curtis A. Jahn, and *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog, Fifth Edition* by James W. Sire. These books address how we are to stand firm against the competing philosophies of this world. They outline both the usefulness and the boundaries of apologetics, logic, and worldview studies.

And finally in this issue we are introducing *The Lutheran Homeschool*, a guide for educating classically in the homeschool setting. Rev. Kieser has written a piece extolling the virtues of catechesis in the home, what catechesis is, and how it is to be done. Please enjoy!

Kathrine E. Bischof ed.

*If we want qualified and capable men for both civil and spiritual leadership, we must spare no effort, time, and expense in teaching and educating our children to serve God and mankind. ...If this were done, God would richly bless us and give us grace so that men might be trained who would be a benefit to the nation and the people. We would also have soundly instructed citizens, virtuous and home-loving wives who would faithfully bring up their children and servants to be godly.*

---Martin Luther

### ...IN THIS ISSUE

**WHAT IS CLASSICAL LUTHERAN EDUCATION, HOW DOES IT DIFFER FROM CLASSICAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?**

BY DR. JAMES TALLMON PAGE 1

**APERTURE TO THE PAST: A STARTING POINT FOR UNDERSTANDING THE ARTS**

BY DR. THOMAS J. KORCOK PAGE 5

**THE PROGYMNASMATA**

BY REV. STEPHEN KIESER PAGE 6

**BOOK REVIEWS**

BY REV. PAUL J. CAIN PAGE 9

**HOME EDUCATION AND LUTHERAN CATECHESIS**

BY REV. STEPHEN KIESER PAGE 10

### **What is Classical Lutheran Education, How Does it Differ From Classical Christian Education, and Why Does it Matter?**

BY DR. JAMES TALLMON

CCLE's "The Marks of a Classical Lutheran School" prescribes, in Section II, that, "The school demonstrates a commitment to a classical approach to curriculum and instruction within the framework of its confessional, Lutheran character." But one finds there precious little guidance as to what, precisely, constitutes the classical approach! Continuing in Section II one reads:

The school's curriculum and instruction is shaped on all levels by a pedagogy that nurtures the basic language skills - grammar, logic, rhetoric - to progressively equip learners to carry out successfully their own inquiries into what is true, good, and beautiful.

These skills are taught and exemplified by instructional strategies that are informed and shaped by levels of student intellectual maturity and aptitude - grammar in the lower grades; logic, and rhetoric added at learning-appropriate higher grades levels.

What does this mean? What is a liberal arts education? \*

The Greeks had three divisions of education:

- Industrial Arts
- Productive Arts
- Liberal Arts

The industrial and productive arts are where slaves learned to use and maintain tools and to make things. The third branch of education involved the knowledge apropos of a free person (hence, "liberal"). This was education for citizens, in which they learned to be good judges, make good laws, exercise leadership, and, generally, be at home in the realm of ideas.

\* I use both "classical" and "liberal arts" loosely to stand for the pedagogical approach discussed in these pages. Thomas Korcok, in his doctoral dissertation, makes a good case for

a “toned down” approach for the semantics of this approach to education. The term “classical” is intimidating and it does have connotations, today, that parallel “confessional and liturgical.” That being said, I utilize the term “classical” throughout, out of deference to the Classical Lutheran Education movement, which is disinclined to tone down its rhetoric because the leadership is interested in accentuating precisely those standards that distinguish the classical approach from ordinary ones. Some wish to elevate, others wish to build bridges. Both are important.

They were equipped to exercise their freedom, and it was felt that, in exercising freedom, they would achieve excellence. For the Greeks, excellence went something like this: Every creature has something it does uniquely and better than any other creature. So, the excellence of the cheetah is its speed, and it realizes its excellence in running. They identified an excellence for each creature: the excellence of the ant is its organization, the excellence of the elephant is its size, and so on. What do you suppose the excellence of the “rational animal” would be? Right! To think, to reason, to analyze and to argue. In short, to be at home in the realm of ideas. Dorothy L. Sayers' "The Lost Tools of Learning" helped launch the revival of classical education among homeschoolers. Sayers there points out how, in the medieval schools, the curriculum included seven “artes liberales,” divided into the trivium and quadrivium.

7 Classical Liberal Arts

Trivium	Quadrivium
Grammar	Astronomy
Dialectic	Geometry
Rhetoric	Arithmetic
	Music

Sayers teaches that the trivium were taught as tools, the quadrivium were as subjects. The trivium helped form, discipline, and order the mind; to cultivate the intellectual virtues that equipped students to be at home in the realm of ideas, to both learn and discuss them. In addition to Sayers’ tidy distinction, there are two additional aspects one must bear in mind to appreciate the importance of the trivium in the liberal arts: they are taught in a way that is “age-appropriate” and each subject may be approached according to its grammar, its dialectic, and its rhetorical components. That is, the earliest stage of education is known, traditionally, as the “grammar stage” (hence, “grammar school”). This is the stage at which children learn the basic parts of language, how to write, and how to read. Once they have developed the cognitive abilities to understand more complex knowledge, they enter the dialectical phase of education; they learn the logic of the body of knowledge, along with rules of thought and disputation. Interestingly, in the medieval classroom, children were not allowed to dispute with their classmates or tutor. They were expected to memorize, listen, learn, and keep quiet, not having yet cultivated the ability to engage in abstraction. When they were ready, in the upper grades, they entered the rhetoric phase, where they were invited to study the oratorical excellence of past masters, compose their own arguments, and engage in disputations with their peers and even their teachers.

Second, as previously mentioned, there is a grammar (basic components or constituents) of any body of knowledge. Any given body of knowledge has a logic that one may master in pursuit of fully grasping that body of knowledge. In the rhetoric stage, one applies knowledge learned in service to one’s neighbor,

for the life of the world. Any more discussion of the technical dimension of the pedagogical application of knowledge regarding the trivium will make this essay too technical to be of much practical utility. I have written elsewhere about the relationship of dialectic and rhetoric and am passionate about helping classical educators understand how to teach them, in tandem, to help students cultivate the arts of wisdom and eloquence. But, for the sake of brevity, let us move on.

Luther urged that we first point our children to God, then equip them to serve in the world. By means of liberal arts education he and Melancthon expected to address both needs; equipping young Christians for service in both God’s kingdom and in man’s, or, as the Reformers put it, “The aim of education is a wise and eloquent piety.” Luther also wrote: Now if (as we have assumed) there were no souls, and there were no need at all of schools and languages for the sake of the Scriptures and of God, this one consideration alone would be sufficient to justify the establishment everywhere of the very best schools for both boys and girls, namely, that in order to maintain its temporal estate outwardly the world must have good and capable men and women, men able to rule well over land and people, women able to manage the household and train children and servants aright. Now such men must come from our boys, and such women from our girls. Therefore, it is a matter of properly educating and training our boys and girls to that end. (Martin Luther, *AE*, vol. 45, pp. 367-8.)

*“The aim of education is a wise and eloquent piety.”*

Statements like these, easy to come by, indicate the importance Doctor Luther placed on education. Reading further, it is clear Luther considers “the very best schools” to be those based on a classical liberal arts curriculum, to educate boys and girls for two ends: for growth in the faith (“for the sake of the Scriptures and God”) and to cultivate good leaders for both the maintenance of the “temporal estate” and for families. The trivium equips especially for handling well God’s truth and for leadership; not mastering their content, in a theoretical way, but applying them so as to cultivate wise judgment. The trivium works in tandem, *under* the content of the classical liberal arts education. In a wonderful and peculiar fashion, grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric shape the character of the student as he or she pursues excellence *in* the arts. As the teacher of insight walks students through the exercises that entail K-12 classical learning, balancing acquisition of theoretical knowledge with practical application, the student grows in mental dexterity, develops aesthetic sensibilities, and ultimately, is equipped to be a good Christian person who approaches the business of life *with* practical wisdom.

Robert Littlejohn and Charles Evans assert that liberal arts schooling always seeks to educate the conscience and that, combining the classical paradigm with Christian theology “promises the greatest opportunity for genuine character education” (Littlejohn and Evans, *Wisdom and Eloquence*, 133). Littlejohn and Evans got it right. It is imperative to note, however, for success in this endeavor, that liberal education holds in constructive tension two competing aims: contemplation and right action. How can our teacher “nourish the soul” of our Christian pupil in the manner here sought? The “Great Books” approach alone will not accomplish this. Most are familiar with that approach: it is obvious and natural: read great

thinkers, talk about them, take exams over their thought, and write papers. If the highest good for humans were contemplation of principles, a “Great Books” approach would suffice. But where right action is the aim, where character formation is also sought, (and, in a manner consistent with Luther’s own view,) a classical liberal arts curriculum that aims to equip students to both understand right principles and to apply them rightly in the practical arena, the “Great Books” approach must be combined with an understanding of (and methodologies for) cultivating character, good judgment, discernment, eloquence, in short, dialectical and rhetorical arts.

Teaching students to cultivate mental habits that help them excel in the practical arts must be approached in a manner different from mastery of subject matter. In short, such pedagogy features praxis and backgrounds theory; mastery of content features contemplation and foregrounds theory. Theory informs practice, to be sure, but the seminar-style discussion of readings (the “Great Books” approach) will not help students hone rhetorical or dialectical skills as much as getting in front of an audience and making arguments or engaging in debate about contemporary controversies. Consider the manner in which one masters piano. One does not immerse oneself in music theory, or read the lives of great musicians, only. One learns to read notes, and practices, every day, until the skill becomes “second nature.” Theory is then tackled as one matures in one’s art. Theory follows practice. Again, theory is vital, but it is not age-appropriate to “lead” with volumes of theory. The above suggests a well-rounded approach to classical liberal arts teaching. This is the education upon which Luther and Melancthon insisted for our parish schools and those inclined to teach their own at home.

Let us now consider what makes Classical Lutheran Education distinctively Lutheran. We’ve already established that character formation is a central aim of liberal arts education. I think Lutheran educators understand, on an intuitive level, that there is a right way and a wrong way to cultivate character. Examining the “distinctives” of a Lutheran classical education will afford the reader an opportunity to consciously reflect on precisely what is so right about a distinctively Lutheran approach to Christian classical education. This will, in turn, better inform our practice, through the ability to articulate the reasons why we do what we do the way we do it. Because the approach is based on central pillars of Lutheran theology, the tenor, conduct, and disposition of both teaching, and especially discipline, in a Lutheran school will be significantly different from what one would find in a Catholic, Evangelical, or fundamentalist parochial school. (Approaches amongst home educators are so diverse, comparisons are impracticable.)

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Gene Edward Veith’s *The Spirituality of the Cross* establishes useful categories by which one may understand the fundamental difference between Lutheran and other approaches to “spirituality” (i.e., the search for spiritual substance in one’s everyday faith life). Veith’s categories, not surprisingly, generalize well to approaches to education. Veith posits (borrowing from Adolf Koeberle) that the three dominant approaches to Christian spirituality in America are: moralism, speculation, and mysticism. When it comes to character formation, moralism is the most relevant of the three, so, for the sake of brevity, let us focus exclusively on Veith’s treatment of it. Moralism, writes Veith, seeks to earn God’s favor, or a satisfying life, through the achievement of moral perfection—always doing what is right, avoiding wrongdoing of every kind, keeping oneself under control by sheer willpower and a scrupulous conscience. Certainly, the desire to be good is a laudable sentiment—if it only could be accomplished. Many people assume that moralism is, in fact, what Christianity is all about (*Spirituality*, 18). One key problem inherent to this approach to spirituality, Veith continues, in a manner that will position us to then explore what is distinctively Lutheran about Lutheran Classical Education, . . . is that righteousness has a way of twisting itself into self-righteousness, a feeling of pride and superiority that undoes the virtue that is achieved. The problem is not only that people of the highest morals slip up. It seems that the very effort to be moralistic tends to breed harshness, pride, and even cruelty, hardly signs of being “a good person” (*Spirituality*, 20). So, as we contemplate how to, and how not to, cultivate character in our students, it is important to realize how the approach, influenced and shaped, by the home/school’s theological orientation, builds the crucible within which the individual soul is “enculturated,” and suggests the dynamics that will build, or, on the other hand, check, undesirable character traits. One final, elegant, thought from Veith before I delineate the “Lutheran distinctives”:

Certainly, “being good” is a laudable goal. The problem, if we are honest, is that no one seems able fully to achieve that goal. We don’t really have the willpower, or the inner motivation, or the inner purity to achieve moral perfection (*Spirituality*, 20).

What makes a Lutheran Classical Education Lutheran?

The curriculum in a classical Lutheran school may look nearly identical to that of a classical Christian school, but it is the theological orientation that distinguishes the classical Lutheran school from others and should distinguish any Lutheran school, regardless of whether or not they adhere to a classical model, BUT, it is clear, from Luther’s own writings on education, among others of the Reformers, that liberal arts education is the paradigm most suitable for sons and daughters of God. Theology of the Cross, Law and Gospel, Christology, and a catechetical basis for character development all combine to create an environment in the classroom, as well as in the principal’s office, (to say nothing of the board room,) that really sets apart the Lutheran school. Students will be more inclined to look to Christ’s abundance rather than their own efforts. They will be more apt to exercise grace one toward another, and less likely to look at themselves as “overcomers” and full of “happy, happy, joy, joy” than students educated within a matrix that teaches glory theology and breeds moralism. The catechetical approach to faith builds a more intellectual, less subjective and emotion-based, foundation. The doctrine of the two kingdoms has broader application and, once children reach the age where putting their

faith into action, dare I say, becoming “activists” for Christ, is especially useful. Anyone who has worked with ambitious young college Christians who have been raised to be “culture shapers” will recognize that attempting to make every citizen conform to Christian morality is a quick road to fascism. These all shape the approach to teaching in specific ways.

The Doctrine of Vocation, on the other hand, is an architectonic concept in Classical Lutheran Education. How so? As Luther writes, in “On Christian Liberty,” because Christians live in Christ through faith and in one’s neighbor through love. If this article had examined how rationalism influences character development, we would have no doubt discussed how the “paradoxes of Lutheranism” cultivate in the Christian student a healthy appreciation for mystery (whereas rationalism conditions one to attempt, habitually, to explain the unexplainable). The paradox, that we are simultaneously sons of the King and slaves of all, is a sobering, humbling, approach to all of the Christian life, that has the potential to align all learning and activity. This is a reality we acknowledge in our prayers, each time we ask the “Source of all abiding knowledge” to give us grace to “use that knowledge in humble, faithful, diligent service to our neighbor.” In short, education conducted in the spirit of Christian Liberty will, of necessity, produce a different sort of student than education based on moralism. The above does not serve as an exhaustive treatment of Lutheran distinctives in classical liberal arts education. A more fully elucidated discussion will no doubt take place in these pages in coming issues.

#### Theoretical and Ethical Implications

Our students DO HAVE SOULS. AND that is the ultimate justification for teaching them this way! In this postmodern age, they need to be educated in this fashion, simply to hold onto the faith we confess. What sort of faith is that? Confessional. Look at the confessions! “This is most certainly true!” “Unless one believe this, one shall surely perish.” This is unequivocal. Luther’s *Small Catechism*, in keeping with the author’s classical training in the rhetorical arts, employs devices to facilitate learning and memorization. Take, for example, the section on The Creed. The ubiquitous, “What does this mean?” the rhetorical question begins each explanation, and the repetition of “This is most certainly true” acts as a hammer of God, driving the lesson deeper and deeper into the soul of the beloved student. Consider the rhythm of the words: “He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. . . . For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.” Of course this use of couplets is deliberate. These rhetorical schemes aid memorization; the rhythm established thereby helps the various lessons penetrate; the dialectical treatment of each chief part, by sheer force of method, aids memorization. Why is this important to know? Cultivating in our young charges appreciation of these forms aids in memorization, first, but also develops in them habits of mind that make them more receptive to truth, better equipped for learning, and inclined to think in a principled, methodical fashion.

*Our own children will not learn to think like Lutherans unless they are educated along the lines of the classical liberal arts.*

Beyond the *Small Catechism*, Luther

and Melancthon spearheaded a revival of classical liberal arts learning in Europe. In a sense, classical education is our gift to the civilized world. So what? Our own children will not learn to think like Lutherans unless they are educated along the lines of the classical liberal arts. Why? The seminal works of Lutheranism are cast up in terms that speak to the classically educated mind. This approach provides the framework upon which hangs the furnishings of the mind which make it a beautiful, spacious, edifice. Neglecting these “appointments,” this education, imperils our heritage, because our heritage is based on cultivating not only certain truths, but also truth based on certainties. Progressive education (the default alternative to classical education) is based on questioning certainties; critical method. If our children are not taught to grasp, think about, and be comfortable with certain, absolute truth, if they are not placed in that state of mind where they can receive it, it will have little effect on them, long term. The truth taught will not take root; they will fall away. Secular and post-modern education simply does not cultivate the habits of mind one needs to grasp and defend a sacramental, patristic, and confessional worldview. We need to educate our kids in this fashion for two vital reasons: their souls are at stake and the perpetuation of our confession is at stake. About the former concern, there is no question that action is imperative. Regarding the latter, we must decide how much we are willing to sacrifice to continue the work begun by our Reformation forebears. At any rate, the post-modern worldview is antithetical to a traditional, Christian confessional worldview. This is most certainly true.

Liberal arts education is, at its core, about educating for freedom. The benefit to society of educating our children for freedom is obvious; as is the detriment to society of neglecting right education. Given more time, I could hold forth about the relation of the approach here elucidated and vocation. But I think this readership understands well that herein lies our cultural imperative. (For a fuller discussion see Luther’s *To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that they Establish and Maintain Christian Schools* and Veith’s *God at Work*). Readers of this journal are keenly aware, also, of our responsibility, before God to our children.

Liberal arts education equips one to understand better God’s Word in two ways: enhanced ability to follow protracted lines of analysis (recall Paul’s tendency to use really long sentences [parenthetical ones, at that!]) and to “decode” figurative language: parables, allegories, metaphors. Approaching learning in this way literally gives one “ears to hear” better the rhythms of Scripture; eyes to see better truths expressed by means of images. Learning rhetoric, dialectic, and syllogistic logic, in the context provided above, help one “rightly divide the truth” with more clarity, confidence, and precision than one educated otherwise. God designed our mental faculties such that dialectic and rhetoric work together to equip one to resolve thorny, practical questions, about things that matter, but about which easy answers are unavailable; and this, in turn, demands the exercise of imagination in order to help the audience see new possibilities.

Finally, unlike the preponderance of thought regarding ethics in the Western tradition, rhetoric aims to persuade the *other*; rhetorical ethics addresses *both* “I and thou.” It involves us in both the thought life and passions of other children of the Heavenly Father. In other words, rhetoric, working hand-in-hand with dialectic, to craft powerful arguments, nourishing the soul with the nectar of love of truth, the manna of aesthetic sensibility, and the sweet meat of moral imagination. These help rightly align the soul; inclining it toward heaven,

helping it “sprout wings,” setting it in motion.

Using dialectic, coupled with rhetoric, the appeal to both the head and the heart, is then, in a most profound sense, a means of loving my neighbor as myself.

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## **APERTURE TO THE PAST: A STARTING POINT FOR UNDERSTANDING THE ARTS**

**BY DR. THOMAS J. KORCOK**  
(*Dr. Korcok presented his research in plenary sessions at CCLE X in Concordia, Missouri.*)

*For more reading on this topic, Dr. Korcok's book will be available soon through Concordia Publishing House.*

Where is the best place to start a discussion about the liberal arts? Perhaps we could start with our current era – a time in which there is something of a liberal arts renaissance. Maybe it would be better to go back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century—a time before men like John Dewey introduced Progressive Education to the world. Perhaps it would be better to take a giant running mental leap back over a couple of millennia to Rome or Greece and recapture the golden age of the liberal arts when all spoke with eloquent words and reasoned with impeccable logic. “But, wait!” you are saying to yourself, “any real Lutheran educator knows that all educational history started in 1524 with Luther writing his famous Letter to the Councilmen that they Established and Maintain Christian Schools.”

Of course, this is all tongue in cheek, but we do have a tendency to interpret the liberal arts by picking a particular era—one that we believe was the consummate “good ol’ days”—and then using that narrow time period to define a liberal arts model of education. The problem with this approach is that it doesn’t allow for an accurate understanding of the liberal arts. A broad historical view of the liberal arts shows that they are constantly being adapted to new circumstances and new theological challenges.

Furthermore, throughout history, the arts have been a faithful ally in the church’s holy mission. With this in mind, contemporary Christian educators should see themselves not as innovators, but inheritors of a rich and living tradition.

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In the 16th century, the early Evangelicals adapted the liberal arts to fit their circumstances. This wasn’t a unique concept. The first Lutherans were only following a tradition that had been established by Augustine of Hippo (354-430). The influence of this church father continually surfaces in the Evangelicals’ treatment of the liberal arts. Augustine’s pragmatic approach to the subject, his flexible understanding of the arrangement of the arts, and his understanding of their pedagogical limitations were all reflected in the Evangelicals’ understanding of the liberal arts. As an educator, Augustine himself was part of a continuing tradition of the liberal arts which traced its roots back to late 5th-century B.C. Athenian society.

Although not the first Christian educator to see the value of the ancient writers, Augustine was one of the first who was able to integrate the classics into a system of Christian education. Prior to Augustine, most of the church fathers recognized the intellectual depth and beauty in the ancient writings, but they struggled with how “pagan” classical learning could be incorporated into Christian pedagogy. Augustine was not afraid of the pre-Christian authors because he believed that all truth, even if contained in the writings of pagan authors, was still to be considered the truth and therefore to be received as from God. The very best of secular culture could be used by the Christian in service to Christ. He said, “Let every good and true Christian understand that wherever truth may be found, it belongs to his Master.” This imbued learning with a certain sacred quality, and compelled the Christian not just to learn what was in Scripture, but what other thinkers had said as well.

Augustine viewed the church as the natural heir of the liberal arts tradition. He maintained that God had preserved this tradition to enable the church to grasp the sum total of divine wisdom and proclaim it in an eloquent and persuasive manner to the world around her. Grammar and logic enabled the Christian to properly understand Scripture, and rhetoric facilitated the effective proclamation of Scripture. The higher arts—such as arithmetic, astronomy and geometry—placed the Scriptures in the context of the wisdom of God revealed in creation. Thus Scripture, when combined with the arts, placed into man’s grasp the totality of the wisdom and truth revealed by God. By immersing the student in the liberal arts, the teacher could engage the student in this inward process. To accomplish this, Augustine returned to the Greek conception of an all-encompassing education. He believed that the student was not so much to be taught various subjects as to be led on a journey through the humanities.

*Thus Scripture, when combined with the arts, placed into man's grasp the totality of the wisdom and truth revealed by God.*

Augustine also understood the liberal arts not as a fixed, immutable curriculum, but rather as a malleable structure that could be changed to suit

the theological needs of the day. While he generally speaks of seven different arts, he freely changes what was included in the list. Sometimes he places arithmetic as part of grammar. Sometimes he includes astrology but omits philosophy and other times he includes philosophy but omits astrology.

For the next seven centuries, Augustine's view of the liberal arts dominated Western education. Later pedagogues, such as the great educational reformer Rhabanus Maurus (780-856), made valuable contributions to how the arts were used, but they still continued in the Augustinian paradigm.

While Augustine certainly set the pattern for how the arts would be used in the church, it was the humanists of the 15th- and 16th centuries who breathed new life into the liberal arts. It is difficult to overestimate the influence that the humanists had on the Evangelicals' understanding of the liberal arts. Martin Luther acknowledged the work of the humanists as that of indispensable forerunners to the Reformation. He said that there would never have been "a great revelation of God's Word unless God had first prepared the way by the rise and flourishing of languages and learning, as though these were forerunners, a sort of John the Baptist."

There is one humanist who had a greater impact on the liberal arts in the 16<sup>th</sup> century more than any other: Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536). Like Luther, Erasmus had considerable exposure to Augustine. As an Augustinian canon at Steyn near Gouda, Erasmus discovered the works of Augustine and was so engrossed by them that he would take his writings into his cell at night to study them.

Perhaps Erasmus' most dramatic contribution to education was his work in broadening liberal education to include children. He brought the trivium down out of the universities and applied it to young children. Grammar—beginning with Latin and then Greek—should be taught to children almost as soon as they were born. Parents should consider this even before a child was born. Men were to select a wife based on what type of early education she might be able to provide for his children. He warned against the dangers of conceiving a child while drunk. He suggested that a child be nursed by his own mother and that nurses, teachers, and even playmates should be selected for the child based on their pure speech. In short, every part of a child's life was to be arranged so as to provide the best possible faculties for entry into the world of the liberal arts through the door of grammar.

Under the humanists, rhetoric became the goal of trivial studies and grammar was treated in a literary fashion; but such changes could not be done in isolation from theology. Education and theology were inextricably linked. Late Medieval scholastic theology, with its four-fold interpretation of Scriptural texts and syllogistic doctrinal formulations, was dependent on the scholastic approach to the liberal arts which considered Aristotelian logic to be of prime importance. Without this interpretation scholastic theology would be difficult to master. Erasmus and most of the early humanists failed to see this. They believed that the *studia humanitatis* could co-exist with scholastic theology. But this was an impossibility. According to the humanists, the student's first priority was to learn literary grammar and master the ancient languages. Such an education would make it difficult, if not impossible, to progress further in scholastic education and consequently to master scholastic theology. The humanists may not

have realized it, but their educational reforms were a death knell to medieval scholastic theology. Students educated according to the humanist interpretation of the arts would grow up predisposed to a different theology—one that would connect with their understanding of grammar and rhetoric. In a sense, theirs was a pedagogy in search of a theology. Many of the German humanists would find such a theology in Martin Luther.

In the early years of the Reformation, Luther approved of many of the humanist ideals and was quick to use their work in aid of his quest. In these years there was "a productive misunderstanding" between the Evangelicals and the humanists with each assuming that they were working toward the same goal. But there were clear differences between the humanists and the Evangelicals with respect to their understanding of the arts. The humanists saw the arts as an agent for moral change—the starting point for a progressive life of moral improvement. Erasmus' contention that there was still a "scintilla of perfection" in a child led him to believe that the arts had the ability to spiritually reform a person. Luther couldn't accept that. For Luther, the corruption of the human soul was complete. For the Evangelicals, the primary function of the arts was to serve the same purpose as it had for the scholastics: that is, to enable one to understand Evangelical theology.

While Luther, Melancthon, Bugenhagen, and other Evangelicals certainly made original contributions to education, it is best to view them as inheritors of a living tradition. They saw themselves as being part of a continuum of pedagogues stretching back to Augustine, and they understood the liberal arts not as a static model, but as one that had changed and could be changed to fit the circumstances of their age.

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## THE PROGYMNASMATA

(modified from a presentation made at CCLE X, June 22-24, 2010)

BY THE REV. STEPHEN KIESER- CHAIRMAN OF CCLE

A Roman education consisted of the acquisition of the most basic language skills (especially reading and writing), a period of exercises with the teacher of grammar (grammaticus), and when the boy was ready, training would continue under a teacher of rhetoric (rhetor). Special emphasis was made on *when* the boy was ready. No one was to be passed on to the rhetor before he was deemed well-prepared. This kind of education was insistent that *students* were to be taught, not *subjects*.<sup>i</sup>

Marcus Fabius Quintilian wrote of an educational system with the purpose of *facilitas*, that is, the capacity to produce appropriate and effective language in any situation. His method for accomplishing *facilitas* included five stages: Precept, Imitation, Progymnasmata, Declamation, and Sequencing.<sup>ii</sup> Writing and rhetoric were to go hand in hand, since writing was viewed as a major means to oral eloquence.<sup>iii</sup> Quintilian's five stages trained the hand that would influence the tongue.

*This kind of education was insistent that students were to be taught, not subjects.*

Progymnasmata is the focus of this essay. Quite woodenly, "progymnasmata" means "before naked." In the sports arena, the gymnasium was the place where one went nude in participation of athletic events.<sup>iv</sup> In the rhetorical progymnasmata, the language of physical education was applied to intellectual studies.<sup>v</sup> They were academic exercises that were preliminary and necessary before receiving instruction from a rhetor where the student would begin his official studies in prose. Under the grammaticus the student would study the basics of language and literature but little to no prose was undertaken, that was left for the rhetor. Boys usually began progymnasmata sometime between the ages of 12 and 15.<sup>vi</sup> Progymnasmata was preliminary in the sense that they would lead the student to full-scale mock deliberative and mock-legal speeches known as *hypotheses* by the Greeks and *suasoriae* and *controversiae* by the Romans.

Some of the exercises (i.e. Thesis) date back to classical Greece. A standard set of exercises developed during the Hellenistic Age. During these 300 years, Greek culture dominated most of the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. The exercises were fairly complete by the first century BC. Four Greek treatises, or textbooks, were written on progymnasmata during the time of the Roman Empire and studied throughout the Byzantine period. They are by, or are attributed to Theon, Hermogenes, Aphthonius, and Nicolaus. The only Latin account was Quintilian's "Training on Oratory." (94 AD)

### The Exercises: A General Overview

The easiest exercises were at the beginning of the course, as one would expect: The Instructive Saying (chreia), the Maxim (sententia), the Fable (apologus, fable, and mythos) and the mythological Narrative (narration). In previous grammar, many sayings and stories had been written and rewritten via drills in copying and dictation so that they were known by heart. The first of the progymnasmatae challenged students to reproduce these in their own words, explain, and expand them into short essays. The grammaticus or rhetor focused on the individual student and employed half a dozen methods in each exercise. The instructor was never satisfied with mere explanations and expansions, but

regarded the boy successful when he proceeded to a confirmation and refutation of the saying, fable or narrative and argued that it was sound and plausible, or the reverse.<sup>vii</sup>

After these initial exercises, the oratory exercise became more practical. Boys developed Commonplaces, themes involving Praise and Denunciation; and Comparisons, all of which involved amplification. These were then followed by exercises which demanded a student's imagination, as well as a range of expression. The speech in character was a favorite. The student impersonated some well-known character in myth or history and was to speak as the character might have spoken in some dire crisis or dilemma. Next was the full-scale Description. This proved to be a valuable asset to an orator keen on showmanship. Finally, the student was to argue a case both pro and con, in the Thesis and Discussion of a Law. Having completed these preliminary writing exercises, the student was ready for the *suasoria* and *controversia* in Declamation.<sup>viii</sup>

*In each exercise, the fodder was the classical authors of antiquity. Students were expected to know them well.*

The order of the parts of the progymnasmata were not adhered to strictly, but were adapted somewhat as the grammaticus or rhetor thought would be best for each student. Two important notes must be made. First, although the exercises were to be written, they were to be expressed orally. Writing was a means toward rhetoric. And second, while the exercises were directed toward oratorical excellence, they were also regarded as the foundation for a wider sphere of literary activity, and they exerted a considerable influence on the methods of composition for both prose writers and poets. In each exercise, the fodder was the classical authors of antiquity. Students were expected to know them well.<sup>ix</sup>

### The Progymnasmata: A Closer Look

#### Fables:

Often Aesop was used. For younger students, Aesop Fables were amusing and enjoyable to learn. First, the student orally retold the story. Then the story would be written down, and it was to be more than a simple verbatim recitation of the fable. The fable was to be expanded, with details developed. The writer, for example, was encouraged to have animals give short speeches in keeping with the story line and characters, not to depart in a new or different direction. Because Fables taught a moral lesson, teachers emphasized it. Sometimes the student was given a Fable and then asked to determine what the moral lesson was. Other times, the student was asked to illustrate a Fable from a historical occurrence. While paraphrase was not listed as a separate exercise, paraphrased retelling played a primary role in every exercise.<sup>x</sup>

#### Anecdote or The Saying:

These exercises focused on a useful Saying (chreia), for example: Isocrates said that the root of education is bitter, its fruit sweet. One of the drills used with Anecdote was to have students "decline" the saying by placing the subject in different cases. For example:

Nominative—Isocrates said, ...

Genitive—There is a story of Isocrates having said...

Dative—It occurred to Isocrates to remark...

Accusative—They say that Isocrates observed...

Vocative—You once said, Isocrates...

Another exercise of Anecdote was to

paraphrase a saying, provide an explanation to show how it was true, then an example, and finally a quotation from the poets that supported the saying and reinforced the argument of why it was true.<sup>xi</sup>

#### Narration:

Boys were given narrative themes which were closely related to their own studies. The simplest form was myth. Rhetorical embellishment was not expected, but each student should become very familiar with the subject matter of each myth. In Greek, it was not uncommon for the rhetor to be involved in these exercises. Most teachers expected that their students would write in a manner that was clear, succinct, and convincing – the traditional virtues of the narrative style.

Another form of Narration was the historical narrative. For this exercise, Quintilian insisted that the rhetor take over, which followed the practice that the reading of historians began at the rhetoric school. The narrative was to record strictly the events that actually occurred. The boy was to become completely familiar with the narrative, and he was to retell it orally before writing it out. The teacher would then require the boy to retell the story from different starting points, beginning in the middle or at some other point, while finding a way to include all the events of the story. It was a test of the memory and proved whether or not the students had a grasp on the historical event. When writing or speaking, care was to be taken to avoid the use of poetic, archaic, or unfamiliar words, and especially phrases that could be ambiguous.<sup>xii</sup>

#### Refutation and Confirmation:

The writer had to examine a given story from the point of view of its general credibility and then write an essay either arguing that it was lacking likelihood, or supporting it as quite feasible. The material used was poetry. Guidelines were laid down for procedure: after setting out the alleged facts, the student was to determine whether to substantiate or refute; and whether the account was clear or obscure, possible or impossible, seemly or unseemly, consistent or inconsistent, expedient or inexpedient. His argument was to include the person, the act, the place, time, manner, and motive.<sup>xiii</sup>

#### Commonplace:

This exercise was a form of amplification that could prove extremely effective in court. Commonplace was an exposure, both reasoned and emotional, of various types of evil-doers. It also had its converse, dilation, the merits and services of various types of benefactors. All kinds of vice were denounced. Cicero mentions commonplaces against an embezzler and a traitor. Quintilian instances commonplaces against an adulterer and a gambler. Other exercises were directed against a tyrant, a murderer, a traitor, and a temple-robber. The Commonplace was very similar to that of an advocate's speech in court, the main difference being that no specific individual was attacked or defended.<sup>xiv</sup>

#### Enconium and Denunciation:

Closely tied to Commonplace, some also placed Enconium before Commonplace. These exercises were concerned with either praise or blame, and they dealt specifically with historical or legendary persons. Just as Commonplace had a direct use in court speeches, so also did Enconium and Denunciation have practical use in actual speeches. A major difference was that while a Commonplace might be inserted as a section of a speech, Enconium and Denunciation could take up an entire oration.

In these preliminary exercises in the rhetorical schools, attention was given to topics to be used when praising famous men or denouncing evils doers. The subjects were drawn from Greek and

Roman history, though in Greek schools the praise

or censure of Homeric heroes was also favored.

The method included a threefold division of a person's praiseworthy feature classified as either physical properties, qualities of the mind and character, or extraneous accessions, whether inherited or acquired. Students were to write chronologically, considering first the origin and background of the person concerned. If of noble birth, he might be praised as having matched or surpassed the glory of his ancestors. If of humble origin, he might be praised for having risen in the world from a lowly beginning. His country was to be introduced as well. Any particular manifestations connected with his birth (e.g., an omen or prophecy) should be included. Next, extraneous circumstances were recorded--resources that he acquired such as wealth, power, influence, and friendships; and how these contributed to the reason for praise. After this, a closer look at the man himself. Perhaps his physical attributes (stature, vigor, handsomeness), but even more his quality of mind and character. Stress was to be given to attributes that were beneficial to the community, rather than to his own well-being. Finally, praise or censure was made based on his actions in his career.<sup>xv</sup>

#### Comparison:

This required students to make a balanced assessment by being given a pair of individuals whose merits or demerits appeared to have similarity. The object was to prove one superior over the other. The more evenly balanced the two beings compared, the more care and judgment required.<sup>xvi</sup>

#### Speech in Character or Impersonation:

So far, students would have learned a great deal about actual discourse, but they would not have been put in the position of a person making a speech. This exercise was a solid step in that direction. Here it was necessary for the student to imagine himself in the position of a historical or mythological person or creature who is at some critical point in life, and to attempt to speak as that person might have spoken in those circumstances. The style had to be appropriate to the speaker's character, time of life, status, and to the particular circumstances.<sup>xvii</sup>

#### Description:

This exercise had wide applicability. The student was to describe a place such as a meadow, harbor, island, seashore; a season such as spring or summer; an occasion, such as a festive gathering; a happening, such as a storm, famine, plague, or earthquake; a war scene, such as a land or sea battle; or a description of a person, animal, or activity such as the making of a shield or laying of fortifications. The writer was to describe the topic in a clear and graphic manner. It was to be written in such a way that you could see what was being described. If kept within reason, it was a means by which to encourage imagination and observation, and to develop the power of expression.<sup>xviii</sup>

#### Thesis and Discussion of a Law:

These were considered of particular importance, because they developed the student's ability to argue both sides of a debatable question. In earlier exercises, the student had learned the art of arguing both ways in limited scope, such as that of legends. Now the field widened, and additional topics were tackled. Themes included: Should one marry or not? Should one have children or not? Should one take to seafaring or not? Should a wise man engage in politics or not? Topics could take on a comparative form, such as: Is country life or town life preferable? Does the soldier deserve more credit than the lawyer?

When these exercises were combined with a short poem and an epilogue, they came very close

to becoming a fully developed speech. The topics were generally of two types: those that dealt with daily life, such as whether or not to marry, and others that were purely speculative, such as, "Do the gods care for humanity?"<sup>xix</sup>

#### Praise and Denunciation of Laws:

The last and most advanced of the progymnasmata, this exercise involved the selection of a law---an imaginative law, an existing law, or a piece of new legislation. The student discussed the law's merits and demerits by taking the position of one who offered reasoned advice on the subject. First, the student was to examine for possible obscurity (use of ambiguous words, synonymous words that might create confusion, syntactical ambiguity, or inadequate definitions). After review of the wording, the student was to show whether the law contained any conflict within itself, and whether the stipulation of the law should be limited to certain persons. Then the more important issues were stated. Was the law honorable? Just? Expedient? Practical? Necessary? Upon leaving the Progymnasmata, the student would endeavor to produce an even more detailed critique of laws in the Declamation Exercises.<sup>xx</sup>

#### Conclusion:

Progymnasmata, a series of writing exercises for the purpose of developing eloquent writers and speakers, was developed during the Greco-Roman period. Fully in use by the first centuries of the years of our Lord, these application and methods were the foundation of the education of boys and, later, also girls. The Progymnasmata instructed students in both written and oratory expression. They have stood the test of time as part and parcel to a classical education. For this reason alone, they at least deserve our attention, and perhaps at most a renewed and diligent use in today's classical and Lutheran classrooms.

i. Murphy, James J. *A Short History of Writing Instruction*. Hermagoras Press: Davis, CA. 1990. pg. 40.

ii. Murphy, pg. 40

iii. Murphy, pg. 19

iv. Spivey, Nigel and Micheal Squire. *Panorama of the Classical World*. Thames & Hudson Ltd: London. 2004. pg. 27

v. Bonner, Stanley F. *Education in Ancient Rome: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny*. University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA. 1977. pg. 250

vi. Bonner, pg. 250

vii. Bonner, pg. 253

viii. Bonner, pg. 253

ix. Bonner, pg. 253

x. Bonner, pg. 255

xi. Bonner, pg. 259

xii. Bonner, pg. 262

xiii. Bonner, pg. 263

xiv. Bonner, pg. 264

xv. Bonner, pg. 265

xvi. Bonner, pg. 267

xvii. Bonner, pg. 268

xviii. Bonner, pg. 270

xix. Bonner, pg. 271

xx. Bonner, pg. 271

### BOOK REVIEWS BY REV. PAUL J. CAIN

*Jahn, Curtis A., Editor. Here We Stand: A Confessional Christian Study of Worldviews. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2010. 350 Pages. Paper. \$20.50. <http://www.nph.net/> (LHP)*

*Sire, James W. The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog, Fifth Edition. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009. 293 Pages. Paper. \$22.00. <http://www.ivpress.com/> <http://www.ivpbooks.com/> <http://www.ivpacademic.com/> (LHP)*

*Christians are still confronted with faith-destroying teachings that now seem to come from every direction.*

A worldview, simply defined, consists of the lenses through which a person sees and interprets the world. Most people have never critically examined their own worldview and usually have plenty of inconsistencies. These two books will help readers to narrow the gap between Biblical faith and Christian life.

"Five hundred years ago, Martin Luther said, 'Here I stand!' when confronted with the heresies of his day. Not much has changed. Christians are still confronted with faith-destroying teachings that now seem to come from every direction. Today the entire Christian worldview is under attack. Even the notion of truth itself is denied. How is a Christian to respond in the face of such non-Christian worldviews? We need to understand those views as well as our own faith and worldview based on Scripture and firmly says, 'Here we stand!'

"In this Impact Series book, the authors use the truth of God's Word to examine such worldviews as Darwinism, Islam, New Age, atheism, pantheism (the view that everything is God--humans and all of nature), postmodernism, and the moral relativism that says anything and everything is 'OK.' By learning about other worldviews, Christians can better understand and witness to the people who hold those views. Readers will also see how such non-Christian worldviews influence their own beliefs, attitudes, and actions without their realizing it" (publisher's website).

Of the two books reviewed here, this is probably the most "friendly." I mean that with regard to a confessional Lutheran theology and worldview as well as vocabulary, reading, and reasoning level for the average lay reader. I recommend it for high school age and up.

Readers will get a great review of the basics of Christianity as well as Lutheran distinctives that have their source in Scripture and are sadly denied by much of Christianity. I particularly appreciated the denominational statistics in context (264-5, et al), the challenge of American Evangelicalism (276ff), and a review of the Muslim concept of "abrogated passages" where newer parts of the Koran replace older so-called "revelation."

This book reminds us that justification by grace through faith in Christ alone is at stake. The essay authors, presenters at a 2005 Worldview Conference, have AFLC, WELS, LCMS and ELS backgrounds, yet are united in their call for a confessional Christian Lutheran worldview. Views presented show a chasm between confessional Lutheran synods and the ELCA. Perhaps such discussions, conferences and future "free conferences" could result in the rebirth of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America.

Ready for what's next? Consider how your neighbors in this world perceive the world around them.

"For more than thirty years, *The Universe Next Door* has set the standard for a clear, readable introduction to worldviews. In this new fifth edition James Sire offers additional student-friendly features to his concise, easily understood introductions to theism, deism, naturalism, Marxism, nihilism, existentialism, Eastern monism, New Age philosophy and postmodernism. Included in this expanded format are a new chapter on Islam and informative sidebars throughout.

"The book continues to build on Sire's refined definition of worldviews from the fourth edition and includes other updates as well, keeping this standard text fresh and useful. In a world of ever-increasing diversity, *The Universe Next Door* offers

a unique resource for understanding the variety of worldviews that compete with Christianity for the allegiance of minds and hearts.

"*The Universe Next Door* has been translated into over a dozen languages and has been used as a text at over one hundred colleges and universities in courses ranging from apologetics and world religions to history and English literature.

"*Sire's Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept* provides a useful companion volume for those desiring a more in-depth discussion of the nature of a worldview" (publisher's website).

This volume has a more academic feel to it. That in itself should NOT put it out of reach for lay readers, but it is rich in detail, has abundant footnotes, and is pretty comprehensive in cataloging worldviews. Sire provides an expanded discussion of some philosophies/theologies presented in *Here We Stand* and would be a good book to read after that. As a confessional Lutheran Christian, I see *Here We Stand* as a necessary prequel/antidote to the confessional Reformed worldview Sire presents. Not everything in Christianity is reasonable. Some topics must be held by faith, like the Incarnation, Resurrection, baptismal regeneration, and the Real Presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the Sacrament of the Altar because God in Scripture says so!

One danger of apologetics, logic, and worldview studies is a temptation to make reason equal with Scripture or its master. Both must be avoided. I found this book particularly helpful in better understanding the philosophies and religious worldviews of the American founders. Some of the most influential men behind the Declaration and

Constitution were Deists or Unitarians depending upon your definition of those terms. Yes, there were many Christians involved, and their worldview shows in our founding documents. Yet, there is no explicit mention of the Gospel or Jesus Christ. Some contemporary commentators redefine as "Christian" founders who denied the divinity and exclusivity of Christ. Sire to the rescue!

*One danger of apologetics, logic, and worldview studies is a temptation to make reason equal with Scripture or its master. Both must be avoided.*

As Headmaster of a classical Lutheran grammar school, I am preparing text recommendations for beyond our current K-5 offerings. We will likely begin a study of worldview with Veith's *The Spirituality of the Cross*. Now I will add both *Here We Stand* and *The Universe Next Door* to our worldview curriculum. Once we have covered basic logic, I will add apologetics to the mix with Parton's *The Defense Never Rests* and *Religion on Trial* and then will review Jahn and Sire at the high school level.

Is that a lot to expect of teenagers? Yes. But they are already thinking about these concepts because of the cultural exposure they receive. This will give our classically-taught teens better tools to determine what is true and how to stand up as winsome advocates for God's truth.

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## THE LUTHERAN HOMESCHOOL

### HOME EDUCATION AND LUTHERAN CATECHESIS

BY REV. STEPHEN KIESER

*Drawn from a presentation made at CCLE X, June 22-24, 2010*

In spite of the great publishing success of Luther's Small Catechism, it has been estimated that only about 5% of the people in the empire could actually read it and even as educational reforms were made the literacy rate never achieved a rate higher than 30%. Along with a lack of literacy in reading, writing and arithmetic, basic knowledge of the Christian faith had also plundered. Luther saw first hand the miserable conditions in the Christian community when he took part in the "visitation" of congregations in Saxony in 1528:

The deplorable, miserable conditions which I have observed when visiting the parishes have constrained and pressed me to put this catechism of Christian doctrine into this brief, plain, and simple form. How pitiable, so help me God, were the things that I saw: the common man, especially in the villages, knows practically nothing of Christian doctrine, and many of the pastors are almost entirely incompetent to teach. Yet all the people are supposed to be Christians, have been baptized, and receive the Holy Sacrament even though they do not know the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments and live like poor animals of the barnyard and pigpen. What these people have mastered, however, is the fine art of tearing all Christian liberty to shreds." SC – preface

Upon Luther's return he preached on the five parts of the Catechism, and in early 1529 began writing the two catechisms. The Smaller catechism was intended for little children and ignorant people. Even so, Luther never outgrew it but daily meditated and prayed the parts of the Catechism daily. The Larger catechism was written particularly for preachers, teachers, and other enlightened men.

... a vicious and insidious plague has smitten us. A certain self-satisfaction and satiety lead many to think the Catechism embodies a doctrine of inferior character. They look upon it as a book to be read once and then thrown in the corner, undeserving of a second reading. Further, even among the nobility some runts and curmudgeons are found who advance the thought that henceforth pastors and preachers are needless. They say that all is taught in books, which each may easily learn for himself, and without reproof of conscience they let the pastorates decline and go to ruin. So pastors and preachers are allowed to famish.... As for myself, let me say that I am a doctor and a preacher. I am as learned and experienced as any of those who are presumptuous and confident. Yet I do as a child that is learning the Catechism. I read and repeat in the morning and whenever I have time, the Ten Commandments, Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Psalms, etc. I daily read and study the Catechism, and still I am not able to master it as thoroughly as I wish. I must remain a child and pupil of the Catechism, and this I do very willingly. LC – preface.

In the Explanation to Luther's Small Catechism it

is asked: What is Christianity? Answer: Christianity is the life and salvation given in and through Jesus Christ. The goal of catechesis is to be a member of Christianity. A Christian is one who by God's grace alone has received faith that trusts in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. "For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" 1 John 5:4

Through this gift of faith we live out the Christian life in our vocation as father, mother, teacher, student, pastor, laymen, and so forth serving our neighbor and in the corporate worship life which centers in Christ Who is the source of our life and salvation.

The beautiful post-communion prayer says it well: "We give thanks unto Thee Almighty God that Thou has refreshed us through this salutary gift. And we implore Thee that of Thy goodness thou wouldst strengthen us through the same in faith toward thee and in fervent love toward one another."

In Luther's "Warning to His Dear German people" he commends the catechesis accomplished through use of the catechisms:

"But now—praise be to God—it has come to pass that man and woman, young and old, know the catechism; they know how to believe, to live, to pray, to suffer, and to die. Consciences are well instructed about how to be Christians and how to recognize Christ. We preach the truth about faith and good works. In brief, the aforementioned items have again come to light, and pulpit, altar, and baptismal font have been restored to their proper place, so that—thank God—the form of a Christian church can again be recognized."<sup>1</sup>

One of Luther's students, Joachim Moerlin compared Luther and his catechism to a "busy little bee who has drawn forth saving honey from all the roses and other lovely flowers of God's paradise and poured it into the tiny jar of his Small Catechism."

For us Luther's Catechism is a way of life. It is the worldview out of which we live our Christian lives. It proclaims and delivers Jesus Christ and His forgiveness. It instructs us in the way. It is our defense against the Old Evil Foe in his guise as a false prophet, false writings, and the Antichrist.

The word "catechism" stems from the Greek (kat-ay-ke-oh). And is found in the Scriptures. He (Apollos) had been instructed (catechized) in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. Acts 18:25

One who is taught (catechumen) the word must share all good things with the one who teaches (catechist). Galatians 6:6

Within the word catechism, the word "echo" can be found. Catechism deals with sound. It means to recite or to echo back after another. Even more, it is to confess or proclaim. The Christian echoes what God says about Himself, about us, what He has and continues to do for us.

The Apostles Creed is a credal confession. In the early church, catechumens were given the Creed orally and they were to echo it back to the catechist. In his baptism, the candidate speaks back to God the three persons of the one God and His activity in the world and for us. Catechesis

might be called a verbal noun. Like doctrine it is always in action. "It is the power of God on the loose."

God's Word accomplishes what God desires for it to accomplish. so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. Isaiah 55:11

*Catechism deals with sound. It means to recite or to echo back after another. Even more, it is to confess or proclaim.*

Catechesis is more than simply passing on a body of information. Although it is certainly that, and more. Catechesis is all about crushing the stoney rock hard heart of unbelief and recreating a new heart of faith that trusts and believes the Word of God that crushed it and that made it alive again. Catechesis must be ongoing since the Old Adam in us, desires to reestablish the stoney heart, much like a beehive that is constantly trying to swarm no matter how diligently the beekeeper works to rid the hive of swarm cells. Our hearts must be daily crushed and daily renewed and restored by the Gospel.

What God desires for us in catechesis we do not want. We run from it. Hide from it. To get as far away from it as the east is from the west from. But that for which Christ has died pursues us.

Unlike the language of math or science, the language of catechesis is able to accomplish what it says. Faith is a miracle of the Holy Spirit, Who calls us by the Gospel, enlightens us with His gifts, and sanctifies and keeps us in true faith.

Luther wrote that the Catechism should be taught in this way,

In the first place, the preacher should take the utmost care to avoid changes or variations in the text and wording of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the sacraments, etc. On the contrary, he should adopt one form, adhere to it, and use it repeatedly year after year. Young and inexperienced people must be instructed on the basis of a uniform, fixed text and form. They are easily confused if a teacher employs one form now and another form — perhaps with the intention of making improvements — later on. In this way all the time and labor will be lost.

When you preach to intelligent and educated people, you are at liberty to exhibit your learning and to discuss these topics from different angles and in such a variety of ways as you may be capable of. But when you are teaching the young, adhere to a fixed and unchanging form and method. Begin by teaching them the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, etc., following the text word for word so that the young may repeat these things after you and retain them in their memory. If any refuse to receive your instructions, tell them that they deny Christ and are no Christians. They should not be admitted to the sacrament, be accepted as sponsors in Baptism, or be allowed to participate in any Christian privileges. In addition, parents and employers should refuse to furnish them with food and drink and should notify them that the prince is disposed to banish such

<sup>1</sup>Luther, M. 1999, c1971. Vol. 47: *Luther's works, vol. 47: The Christian in Society IV* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works. Fortress Press: Philadelphia

rude people from his land.

Although we cannot and should not compel anyone to believe, we should nevertheless insist that the people learn to know how to distinguish between right and wrong according to the standards of those among whom they live and make their living. For anyone who desires to reside in a city is bound to know and observe the laws under whose protection he lives, no matter whether he is a believer or, at heart, a scoundrel or knave.

In the second place, after the people have become familiar with the text, teach them what it means. For this purpose, take the explanations in this booklet, or choose any other brief and fixed explanations which you may prefer, and adhere to them without changing a single syllable, as stated above with reference to the text. Moreover, allow yourself ample time, for it is not necessary to take up all the parts at once. They can be presented one at a time. When the learners have a proper understanding of the First Commandment, proceed to the Second Commandment, and so on. Otherwise they will be so overwhelmed that they will hardly remember anything at all.

In the third place, after you have thus taught this brief catechism, take up a large catechism so that the people may have a richer and fuller understanding. Expound every commandment, petition, and part, pointing out their respective obligations, benefits, dangers, advantages, and disadvantages, as you will find all of this treated at length in the many books written for this purpose. Lay the greatest weight on those commandments or other parts which seem to require special attention among the people where you are. For example, the Seventh Commandment, which treats of stealing, must be emphasized when instructing laborers and shopkeepers, and even farmers and servants, for many of these are guilty of dishonesty and thievery. So, too, the Fourth Commandment must be stressed when instructing children and the common people in order that they may be encouraged to be orderly, faithful, obedient, and peaceful. Always adduce many examples from the Scriptures to show how God punished and blessed.

You should also take pains to urge governing authorities and parents to rule wisely and educate their children. They must be shown that they are obliged to do so, and that they are guilty of damnable sin if they do not do so, for by such neglect they undermine and lay waste both the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world and are the worst enemies of God and man. Make very plain to them the shocking evils they introduce when they refuse their aid in the training of children to become pastors, preachers, notaries, etc., and tell them that God will inflict awful punishments on them for these sins. It is necessary to preach about such things. The extent to which parents and governing authorities sin in this respect is beyond telling. The devil also has a horrible purpose in mind.

Finally, now that the people are freed from the tyranny of the pope, they are unwilling to receive the sacrament and

they treat it with contempt. Here, too, there is need of exhortation, but with this understanding: No one is to be compelled to believe or to receive the sacrament, no law is to be made concerning it, and no time or place should be appointed for it. We should so preach that, of their own accord and without any law, the people will desire the sacrament and, as it were, compel us pastors to administer it to them. This can be done by telling them: It is to be feared that anyone who does not desire to receive the sacrament at least three or four times a year despises the sacrament and is no Christian, just as he is no Christian who does not hear and believe the Gospel. Christ did not say, "Omit this," or "Despise this," but he said, "Do this, as often as you drink it," etc. Surely he wishes that this be done and not that it be omitted and despised. "Do this," he said.

Spend time in the catechism daily. Let the text be memorized word for word. Teach it in a simple and easy way. Some will say, I'll never use this! But The Catechism is not really learned until life happens. When crisis comes, catechesis kicks in. Teach with all the fervor that the Word of God is. Engage them by engaging Word of God.

As we catechize, we must take to heart the oft asked question, "What does this mean?" Apply it to the day. What does it mean for me? If the Catechism is prayed daily that task comes more naturally. As troubles and heartaches come our way, look to the Catechism and ask, "what does this mean for me in this trouble?"

Other great sources of TRUTH have also been given to us in addition to the catechism that cannot be overlooked.... Namely, the Bible itself, the hymns and liturgy. Several hymns can aid in teaching the catechism: *Here is the Tenfold Sure Command, We All believe in One True God, Our Father Who from heaven Above To Jordan Came the Christ, Our Lord, From Depths of Woe I cry to You, O Lord we praise You.*

Spend time especially on the First Commandment since the other proceed from it... it may even be said that all of the Scriptures proceed from it.

The Creed tells us about our God and what He has done for us and for all of creation. It is pure gift; everything is gift.

Our children need to know how to pray and the blessings of prayer. Cultivate a prayer life.

Memorize prayers by praying set prayer often. The sacraments are under attack today as they have been, since the devil desires for us to doubt that God would give to us such holy things in common water, bread and wine.

Parents should consider it a primary duty to find a congregation where the Catechism is faithfully taught and kept before the parish at all times. What is taught by the pastor should be reinforced at home as the family daily prays the catechism, sings hymns, and prays together.

Let us listen one more time to Luther:

*Therefore do not imagine that the parental office is a matter of your pleasure and whim. It is a strict commandment and injunction of God, who holds you accountable for it.*

*The trouble is that no one perceives or heeds this. Everybody acts as if God gave us children for our pleasure and amusement, gave us servants merely to put them to work like cows or asses, and gave us subjects to treat them as we please, as if it*

were no concern of ours what they learn or how they live. No one is willing to see that this is the command of the divine Majesty, who will solemnly call us to account and punish us for its neglect, nor is it recognized how very necessary it is to devote serious attention to the young. If we want qualified and capable men for both civil and spiritual leadership, we must spare no effort, time, and expense in teaching and educating our children to serve God and mankind. We must not think only of amassing money and property for them. God can provide for them and make them rich without our help, as indeed he does daily. But he has given and entrusted children to us with the command that we train and govern them according to his will; otherwise God would have no need of father and mother. Therefore let everybody know that it is his chief duty, on pain of losing divine grace, to bring up his children in the fear and knowledge of God, and if they are gifted to give them opportunity to learn and study so that they may be of service wherever they are needed.

If this were done, God would richly bless us and give us grace so that men might be trained who would be a benefit to the nation and the people. We would also have soundly instructed citizens, virtuous and home-loving wives who would faithfully bring up their children and servants to be godly.

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## CCLE XI

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