

Classical Lutheran Education Journal

A JOURNAL OF THE CONSORTIUM FOR CLASSICAL AND LUTHERAN EDUCATION

www.ccle.org

VOL. VIII, 2014

The Consortium for Classical and Lutheran Education



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

Contents

In This Issue.....	2
The Humanists as Forerunners: The Reformation of Education <i>by Dr. Thomas Korcok</i>	3
What is “Lutheran” About Lutheran Education? <i>by Rev. James Woelmer</i>	11
Reclaiming the Education of Our Lutheran Heritage <i>by James M. Tallmon, Ph.D.</i>	19
Teaching the Lutheran Faith through Lutheran Hymnody <i>by Rev. Mark Preus</i>	26

+++

In This Issue

We begin this issue of the *Classical Lutheran Education Journal* with an article based on Dr. Thomas Korcok's CCLE XIV session at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Before the session concluded, we received a request for this paper! In this article, *The Humanists as Forerunners: The Reformation of Education*, Dr. Korcok dispels several myths, as he explores the foundations of Lutheran education during the time of the Reformation.

Rev. James Woelmer continues the discussion with an answer to this essential question: *What Is Lutheran about Lutheran Education?* Rev. Woelmer's opening CCLE XIV plenary session emphasized to all attendees the key tenets of our faith.

Next, Dr. James Tallmon examines aspects from both of the above topics, as he shares thoughts from his conference session, *Reclaiming the Education of our Lutheran Heritage*.

Finally, placing theory into practice, we conclude with excerpts from the standing-room-only CCLE XIV presentation by Rev. Mark Preus, *Teaching the Lutheran Faith Through Lutheran Hymnody*. During this session, Rev. Preus sang many stanzas

from the Lutheran tradition. While we cannot duplicate the uniquely musical impact of these hymns, we can share thoughts and teaching tips from his compelling presentation.

We thank each of these writers and speakers for their excellent contributions!

The CLEJ Editors
Cheryl Swope, M.Ed.
Rev. Paul J Cain

Cheryl Swope, M.Ed., is author of *Simply Classical: A Beautiful Education for Any Child*

Rev. Paul Cain, is headmaster of Martin Luther Grammar School, CCLE Secretary

The Consortium for Classical and Lutheran Education

www.ccle.org.



The Humanists as Forerunners: The Reformation of Education *by Dr. Thomas Korcok*

Introduction

There are many misconceptions regarding the Reformation and the development of Lutheran schools. The popular version of the story is that shortly after Luther posted the 95 Theses he realized that there was a need for schools, and so he set his pen to paper imploring parents and civic leaders to start schools. Almost out of nowhere there was a flourishing of Evangelical schools that were all based on a purified form of the liberal arts. The truth, however, is that the development of Evangelical schools with their liberal arts-centered pedagogy is far more complex. The educational reforms which Luther and other 15th- and 16th-century Evangelicals introduced were set in motion more than half a century before the Reformation, and Luther's pedagogy was a culmination of reforms to the liberal arts over that time.

Humanism and the Trivium

In a letter to Eobanus Hessus, the leading humanist poet at the University of Erfurt, Martin Luther acknowledged the work of the humanists as an indispensable precursor 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."¹ In order to understand the Evangelical's pedagogical reforms, one must also understand the preceding work of the humanists.

On the eve of the Reformation, the Trivium, consisting of grammar, dialectics, and rhetoric; and the Quadrivium, consisting of arithmetic, music, astronomy, and geometry continued to be the educational model that was employed in all European schools. This pedagogical model had an unbroken tradition stretching back to the ancient Romans and Greeks. The scholastics may have neglected these arts to varying degrees because, among other reasons, the pressing issues of the day were the epistemological questions raised as a result of the introduction of Aristotelian thought, but they always considered the arts to be the cornerstone of educational theory.

In response to the new ideas raised in the 12th and 13th centuries, the scholastics changed how the liberal arts were treated, but their goal remained the same. They may have treated grammar philosophically, placed Aristotelian logic at the center of studies, and disconnected rhetoric from eloquence, but their understanding of the divine origin of knowledge compelled the scholastic pedagogues, like Augustine, to view the

1 March 29, 1523 LW 49.32

liberal arts as the tool to enable men to come to an understanding of truth.

Despite the differing epistemological views that surfaced from the time of Augustine through to the 16th century, there was common agreement among almost all educators that all knowledge and wisdom was of a divine origin. Augustine may have pointed to a direct inner illumination and Aquinas may have made the instructor the mediating agent for this knowledge, but there was no disagreement as to who was the source and author; it was God.

Luther's exposure to alternative educational thought, particularly that of St. Augustine, would open his mind to a different approach to the liberal arts. He and the other Evangelicals recognized that their new theology demanded a new relationship between theology and education, and a recovery of eloquence through the teaching of the arts. Inspiration for the latter would come, in large part, from the humanist movement.

Early North European Humanism

Humanism, as it developed in the German lands, took a considerably different course than it did in Italy. As a result, the German humanists came to a unique understanding of the liberal arts. Italian humanism traces its roots to Petrarch (1304-74), who discovered some of Cicero's orations; and his associate, Boccaccio (1313-75), who translated Homer and promoted the *studia*

humanitatis – the phrase from which the term 'humanism' developed – in the Italian universities. In reading the ancient Roman authors, these early Italian humanists had found their own heritage, which had continued as a living part of their world. Unlike the universities of Northern Europe which were dominated by scholastic theology and methodology, the Italian universities had maintained many of the classical traditions. As a result, their humanism would never take on theological overtones as it would in Northern Europe, but would be much more concerned about reforms of a purely ethical and moral nature.

German humanism grew up in a different environment. German universities were quite new and had been established according to mature scholastic pedagogical and theological principles.² While humanist learning and ideals flourished in Italy throughout the 14th century, by the early part of the 15th century, humanism had yet to make an impact in the German territories.

Humanism began arriving quietly in the German territories in the first half of the 15th century until Pflazgraf Frederick of the Palatinate – who was influenced by the humanists chancellor Ludwig von Ast, Matthias Ramung and Johann Wildenhertz – decided to hire Peter Luder (1415-1474) as poet and lecturer in the faculty of arts at the University of

² The University of Heidelberg, established in 1385 was the first of thirteen German universities that would be established over the next 121 years.

Heidelberg. Luder had developed an appreciation for the *studia humanitatis* while in Italy where he spent over 20 years studying in centers such as Rome, Venice, and Padua. With Luder's arrival, the *studia humanitatis* became an item for vigorous debate within academic circles.³ On July 15, 1456, Luder gave an oration to students at the university which laid out a system of education, culture, and principles that German humanism would follow for the rest of the century. He called for a recovery of rhetoric, poetry and history. In Luder's view, the University of Heidelberg was in need of Latin restoration, having been "completely twisted and turned into barbarism."⁴ This restoration could only be accomplished if the students were taught using the illustrious examples of Latin eloquence found in the ancient authors. As radical as Luder's suggestions were, he did not call for a revision of what formed the heart and core of scholastic education and theology – dialectics. Believing that scholastic dialectics and humanistic principles could coexist, he praised the use of dialectics and took care not to discard the time-honoured methods of the scholastics.⁵

Luder's efforts to alter the university's curriculum according to humanistic principles were continued by his student, Stephan Hoest, who would, in turn,

influence a whole new generation of humanists through his disciples Jacob Wimpfeling, Agricola, Erasmus, Reuchlin, and Philip Melanchthon.⁶ According to Hoest, a student properly trained in the liberal arts would not only have mastered rhetoric, poetry and history, but would also be eloquent. To achieve this, the liberal arts student should be taught the Latin and Greek masters, the teachings of St. Jerome and Holy Scriptures, and Aristotle in that order. Aristotle, whom the scholastics held to be of primary importance, was viewed only as one of many sources of equal importance.⁷

Luder and Hoest are representative of the 15th century German humanists who sought a new approach to the Trivium which recognized the need for a return to eloquence. Eloquence demanded a mastery of rhetoric. If, however, one were to master the art of rhetoric, one would first have to master the art of grammar. As a result, the humanists desired, first and foremost, to replace the speculative, philosophical grammar of the late scholastic teachers with a purified, pedagogical approach to the teaching of language and literature.⁸ Referring to the scholastic conception of grammar, Westphalian humanist, Alexander Hegius, wrote, "No one is to be denied the name grammarian because he is ignorant of the essential and accidental, material and

3 Schwiebert, E. G. (1996). The Reformation. Minneapolis, Fortress Press.

4 Quoted by Overfield, J. (1984). Humanism and Scholasticism in Late Medieval Germany. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

5 Ibid.

6 Schwiebert, E. G. (1996). The Reformation. Minneapolis, Fortress Press.

7 Ibid.

8 Overfield, J. (1984). Humanism and Scholasticism in Late Medieval Germany. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

formal, absolute and respective modes of signification of the parts of speech.” One “who knows how to speak and write Latin” is a true grammarian. In this one area above all others, the early German humanists were in complete agreement.⁹ Whereas the scholastic pedagogues had inextricably linked the art of grammar with dialectics, the humanists wedded this art with rhetoric. This new understanding of the relationship between grammar and rhetoric was put forth most clearly by Rudolph Agricola (1444 – 1485). In his influential *De inventione dialectica libri tres*, he discusses dialectics at length; however, instead of the traditional scholastic definition of dialectics, it is a “rhetorized” dialectics which is defined according to the traditional rhetorical terms of “teaching”, “delighting” and “awakening belief by means of speech”. According to Agricola the goal of the grammarian is to “explicate the story of a poet, review history or interpret words” while the goal of the dialectic is to “speak in a plausible manner about the subject proposed.”¹⁰

The scholastics had tied the liberal arts almost exclusively to theology; the German humanists searched for a new goal. Conrad Celtis (1459-1508), sometimes called the “German arch-humanist”, believed that a humanistic training in the seven liberal arts could revitalize the German nation and build a

9 *Invectiva 306* quoted by Ibid.

10 Agricola, R. (2000). *De inventione dialectica libri tres*. *Renaissance Debates on Rhetoric*. W. Reborn. London, Cornell University Press: 42-56.

new sense of national identity. In his *Inaugural Oration* (1492) at the University of Ingolstadt, he made an impassioned plea to his audience reminding them that there was no subject of greater worth than “the study of the liberal arts”. If these arts were studied purely, the “unconquerable strength of Germany” would be brought to light.¹¹ Celtis had a much broader application of the arts in mind than what the earlier humanists had envisioned. The grammatical instruction of Latin and Greek formed the heart and core of education and students were exposed to a broad spectrum of ancient literature. But Celtis’s understanding of the arts also included topics of nationalistic interest such as German history, poetry and music. Responding to a rising sense of nationalism, Celtis envisioned the arts as a tool to build a noble German nation based on the ideals of ancient Rome.

Within Celtis’s oration, there is hardly a word about theology. This was not unusual because the 15th century German humanists devoted their energies toward advancing the grammatical and rhetorical arts for the purpose of building a sense of nationalism. Dialectics and theology were the realm of the scholastics and the humanists showed little interest in trying to change that. Except for a brief passage by Rudolph Agricola about the detrimental effects of scholastic logic on theology, humanists preferred to refrain

11 *Inaugural Oration* reproduced in Spitz, L. W. (1957). *Conrad Celtis: The German Arch-Humanist*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

from commenting on theology and the metaphysical discussions of the scholastics. Unlike their Italian counterparts, these early German humanists showed little interest in using the arts to advance men's ethics or morality. They were more interested in developing erudite and cultured men through a renaissance of the liberal arts. Agricola personified this ideal. He was an accomplished organist, painter, and sculptor, and even learned gymnastics. He learned Greek, read the classics, translated many works from Greek into Latin, and was a skilled orator. In addition to this, he lectured on rhetoric, physics, astronomy, Aristotle, and Pliny at the University of Heidelberg.¹² In short, he was the type of man the humanists hoped to achieve through their reforms: someone who could participate fully and eloquently in all areas of culture and education. Indeed the humanists saw little conflict between their humanistic reforms and scholastic teaching and theology. They believed that the two could in some way co-exist and that humanist ideals could only strengthen and improve scholastic thinking. Thus they were content to let the scholastic curriculum remain in place in most of the universities. James Overfield comments, "Indeed, most intellectual activities and assumptions we identify today as

12 Overfield, J. (1984). Humanism and Scholasticism in Late Medieval Germany. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

'scholastic' elicited a response of 'no comment' from the humanists."¹³

An illustration contained in Gregory de Reisch's *Margarita Philosophica* of 1508 provides an interesting example of the evolving nature of the liberal arts during this period.¹⁴ The illustration depicts a young child who, after first learning the basics of spelling and reading, enters a six-story-high tower of learning in which he would progress through the various arts as he moves up the tower. On the first and second levels, he would encounter Donatus and Prisan teaching grammar. On the third floor, Aristotle teaches logic, Tully teaches poetry and rhetoric, and Boethius teaches arithmetic. Moving up to the fourth floor, he would learn music from Pythagoras, geometry from Euclid, and astronomy from Ptolemy. On the fifth level, he would learn physics from Plato and morals from Seneca. At the very top of the tower, he would arrive at theology, the "queen of sciences". Up to this point, the illustration represents a thoroughly humanistic curriculum; but for the pinnacle of all learning, theology, de Reisch shows Peter Lombard teaching his *Book of Sentences* – the scholastics' favoured commentary on theology. The illustration reveals the humanists' understanding that their "new" approach to the seven liberal arts could co-exist

13 Ibid.

14 Reproduced in Cubberly, E. P. (1920). The History of Education: Educational Practice and Progress Considered as a Phase of the Development and Spread of Western Civilization. Boston, Houghton, Mifflin.

with scholastic theology. Over the next two decades, this understanding would change, as the incompatibility between such a view of the arts and theology became apparent.

Late North European Humanism

Toward the late 15th century and early 16th century, the humanists' benign view of scholastic education began to change. A new generation of humanists such as Willibald Pirckheimer, Heinrich Bebel and Johannes Reuchlin were arriving in the German universities. They came to the realization that there were fundamental differences in the ways in which the scholastics and humanists viewed the arts. These new humanists were, therefore, much more vocal about their objections to scholasticism. They were not content with modifying scholastic education so that humanism could exist alongside it.¹⁵ While they continued to avoid theological disputes, they became more concerned with the ethics and morality of the church. In 1513, Pirckheimer wrote to Johannes Cochlaeus complaining of the scholastics' moral shortcomings and concluding that they

were ignorant and depraved. Not only were they unable to show Christ's gentleness, but they were unable to assist the laity in leading good and pious lives.¹⁶ Ethical reform was needed. The

new humanists saw the liberal arts, specifically grammar and rhetoric, as the means of achieving this ethical reform. Rather than get bogged down in what they believed to be arcane scholastic disputes of metaphysics, epistemology and Aristotelian logic, these humanists sought rhetoric – replacing scholastic debates with humanistic eloquence – as the means by which men's hearts could be moved to a morally higher life. But, as already stated, in order to achieve this eloquence, they first had to master grammar.

The value which the 15th and 16th century humanists placed on the teaching of grammar and the written and spoken word cannot be overstated. The ancient languages were rigorously studied with the rhetorical goal of eloquence in mind, not for the mere intellectual exercise of it. In fact, one of the humanists' greatest criticisms of the scholastics was that much of their study and debate was nothing more than pointless intellectual gymnastics. According to the humanists, grammar was the means of bringing men into contact with the ethical writings of the ancient authors who were the greatest teachers of all time. The value of the masterpieces of ancient literature were apparent to the humanists; they possessed the ability to speak to the timeless issues which confronted men.¹⁷ When one was able to understand the

15 Overfield, J. (1984). Humanism and Scholasticism in Late Medieval Germany. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

16 Ibid.

17 Gray, H. H. (1992). Renaissance Humanism: The Pursuit of Eloquence. Renaissance essays. From the Journal of the History of Ideas. P. O. Kristeller, and Philip P. Wiener. Rochester, University of Rochester Press. IX: p. 381 ; 321 cm.

original language of the author, one was able to enter into their world to be taught by them.

The humanists' greatest desire was to approach the authors directly using the medium of their own language, bypassing the many commentaries and glosses of the scholastics. This understanding extended to all areas of literature including the Old and New Testaments. McGrath states:

The New Testament was read with the idea of encountering the risen Christ (*Christus renascens*) through faith, and recapturing the vitality of the experience of the early church. The slogan, *ad fontes*, was more than simply a call to return to ancient sources – it was a call to return to the essential realities of human existence as reported in these literary sources.¹⁸

For moral and ethical reform to be achieved in the church, it was essential that the theologians of the church be trained in the humanistic approach to grammar. According to Pirckheimer, a theologian should master the three ancient languages: Latin, so he did not sound barbaric in his speech; Greek, so that he might properly understand Aristotle; and Hebrew, so that he could

understand the mysteries of the Old and New Testaments.¹⁹

Whereas many of the earlier German humanists believed that their curricular reforms could be instituted without altering scholastic theology, it became apparent to many by the early 1500's that this was an impossibility. Some, however, would never concede that. Erasmus, for example, continued to believe that humanism and scholastic theology were not mutually exclusive. In 1529 he was still willing to say, "As far as scholastic theology, it has not been my wish to abolish it, but that it may be more authentic and more serious; in this unless I am mistaken, I am promoting and not hurting it."²⁰ He was in the minority by that time. Scholastic theology was intimately bound together with the scholastic education which, in turn, rested upon the complicated system of scholastic logic. If students were to learn that system of logic, they first had to be trained in the philosophical grammar that was a part of that logic. But, according to the humanists, the students' first priority was to learn literary, not philosophical, grammar and to master the ancient languages with a view to eloquence.²¹ Such a liberal arts education would make

18 McGrath, A. E. (1987). The intellectual origins of the European Reformation. Oxford, Basil Blackwell.

19 Overfield, J. (1984). Humanism and Scholasticism in Late Medieval Germany. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

20 *Letter to Louis Ber* March 20, 1529 quoted by Ozement, S. (1979). The Intellectual Origins of the Reformation. Continuity and discontinuity in church history : essays presented to F. F. Church, H. Williams George and T. George. Leiden, Brill.

21 For a discussion of "literary grammar" and "philosophical grammar" see page 17.

it difficult, if not impossible, for them to progress further in scholastic education and consequently to master scholastic theology.²²

In this sense the Reformation was inevitable. Minds had already been shaped in such a way as to make them receptive to a different theology: the theology of Luther. Agricola's threefold intent of "teaching," "delighting," and "awakening belief by means of speech" found its fulfillment. Reformation theology offered mercy, truth, and righteousness in Christ; the scholastics' system could not accomplish this.

Summary

The early reform to the arts in the universities made possible the many educational changes that the Evangelicals instituted. It made it possible to plant liberal arts schools throughout the Evangelical lands to the extent that, within a few decades, there was near universal literacy. This flourishing was only made possible because the ground had first been ploughed by the humanists of the 14th and early 15th centuries.

Dr. Korcok is associate professor of theology at Concordia University Chicago. He teaches the spiritual nurture courses for the Lutheran Teacher Students. He is the author of Lutheran Education: From Wittenberg to Future, Concordia Publishing House.

22 Overfield, J. (1984). Humanism and Scholasticism in Late Medieval Germany. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

What is “Lutheran” About Lutheran Education? by Rev. James Woelmer

Introduction: Theology and Education

Does theology matter when it comes to education? Theology does matter, and we should do everything to preserve and extend our confession of the faith in home and school. Children who are well catechized by Scripture and by Luther’s Small Catechism can preserve and extend sound teaching in the future.

Theology was first called “The Queen of the Sciences” in the thirteen century. During this time, the sciences were considered natural, moral, and theological. The most important of these three was theology, and it was considered the capstone to education.

In his book *Lutheran Education: From Wittenberg to the Future*,²³ Thomas Korcok makes a strong case that theology and education go together. He stated that Luther, Melancthon, and Bugenhagen advanced the Reformation by starting schools. Similarly, Walther and others in the nineteenth century opened schools as a way to advance the Gospel and to preserve our confession of the faith.

An education that cultivates the mind to think will help the student understand Scripture. Scripture then shapes what is learned in education. The two go hand in hand. Each one assists the other. Theology is the most important content of education because it helps us view history

23 Korcok, T. *Lutheran education: From Wittenberg to the future*. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 2011.

and literature through the lens of God’s Word. It reveals our salvation in Christ and guides us on how to love one another.

In 1520 Martin Luther wrote a treatise, *The Freedom of a Christian*. He summarized it by saying this:

We conclude therefore that a Christian man does not live in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor. Otherwise he is not a Christian. He lives in Christ by faith, and in his neighbor by love. By faith he is carried upwards above himself to God. By love he descends beneath himself into his neighbor.”²⁴

Notice that the Christian calling is twofold – it is a calling of faith toward God and, at the same time, a life of love that flows from faith. Faith receives the gifts of God through the Gospel, and it moves us to love our neighbor.

Five areas of Lutheran theology assist us in our faith toward God and in our love toward one another. With Scripture and the Augsburg Confession²⁵ as the basis, let us examine these five essential elements: Christology, Justification, Law and Gospel, Good Works (i.e. vocation), and the Two Kingdoms.

24 Martin Luther, “The Freedom of a Christian,” in *Career of the Reformer: I* (edited by Harold J. Grimm); vol 31 of *Luther’s Works*, American Edition, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann; (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1957), 371.

25 *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

I. Foundations

Christology

Who is Jesus? The Augsburg Confession teaches that the Son of God existed before the foundation of the world and from eternity. The second person of the Holy Trinity, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is one God and one Lord (Jn 1:1). He assumed a human nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Both the divine and the human natures are united in Christ. Jesus is both true God and true man. They are united in such a way that they cannot be separated or divided. The divine and the human natures constitute a single person, the God-Man, Jesus Christ.

Jesus himself said, "The Scriptures ... testify about me" (Jn 5:39). Both the Old Testament and the New Testament bear witness about Jesus. Jesus is the heart and the center of Scripture and therefore the key to its true meaning. Especially throughout Scripture, God clearly reveals himself and His gift of salvation in Christ.

While the resurrected Christ was walking on the road to Emmaus, he spoke to the two disciples on how the writings of Moses and all the Prophets were about Himself – His death and His resurrection (Lk 24:27). At the end of the Gospel of John it reads, "These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (Jn 20:31). The message of Scripture is the Good News that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Scripture teaches that Christ suffered great agony of body and soul under Pontius Pilate (Isaiah 53:3). It also teaches that He died in excruciating agony

on the cross and that His body was buried in the tomb (Jn 19:1-30).

The Augsburg Confession says that Jesus voluntarily humbled Himself by means of death upon the cross "in order to be a sacrifice for all sin" and "to appease God's wrath" (AC III, 3). In other words, He was the sin bearer for the whole world, the true Passover Lamb, and the One to whom all the bloody sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed. He died as a payment for the sins of the whole world and He died in the place of sinful man. His death purchased our release from sin, death, and the power of the devil.

On the third day Christ victoriously rose from the grave and showed Himself alive to His disciples. Christ rose from the dead "in order to justify believers" (Ap III, 1). The resurrection declares that the sinner is not guilty, but righteous for Christ's sake. The resurrection proves that Christ's death upon the cross paid the price for sin (Rom 4:25).

Unfortunately some parts of Christianity misunderstand the person and work of Christ. They see him merely as a moral example or as a coach; that he died for some and not others. The death and resurrection of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins is not important or central to their teaching. However, a Lutheran education will center on Jesus and will focus on the cross as a payment of sin for the whole world.

Justification

The Apology says that the article on justification is "the most important topic of Christian teaching" (Ap IV, 2). Martin Luther even calls it the "chief article" (SA II, ii, 25; SA II, iii, 2). When justification is misunderstood, the entire body of

doctrine is off balance. Justification is the core of all Christian truth and gives form and shape to all other biblical articles.

The term “justify” means that God declares the sinner “not guilty.” It is a verdict in which the sinner is “pronounced or regarded as righteous” (Ap IV, 72). Therefore, justification is the same thing as the forgiveness of sins (Ap IV, 76) and as being reconciled to God (Ap IV, 158, 252; FC Ep III, 7). God has declared the whole world to be righteous for Christ’s sake prior to and in no way dependent upon man’s response to it (Ap IV, 40-41).

Justification does not mean “to make right” as if the sinner makes himself righteous before God. The sinner is not able to bring about his own justification. Justification is not an internal transformation of the believer or a “process” whereby the soul is progressively transformed and made more and more righteous.

How do we obtain the forgiveness of sins? We obtain forgiveness of sins and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ’s sake, through faith (AC IV, 1-2). We cannot obtain forgiveness of sins and righteousness before God through our merit, work, or satisfactions (AC IV, 1-2).

What is the basis of the sinner’s justification before God? The sinner is declared righteous by God’s grace alone (AC IV, 2). Grace is a loving attitude of God toward us sinners even though we don’t deserve it. The sinner contributes nothing at all toward his salvation. Therefore, God gets all the credit and glory.

Grace is not something that we gain by our good works nor is it given on account of what we do. Grace is not a substance which is poured or “infused” into the soul

that enables one to love God and merit salvation. Grace is not something good that God sees in us nor is it a quality or a virtue in our soul.

Grace and works are clearly mutually exclusive. Justification is by grace. We are not saved on the basis of our own efforts (Rom 11:6; Eph 1:7, 2:8-9; Rom 3:22-24).

What is the cause of the sinner’s justification before God? The sinner is declared righteous because of what Christ did upon the cross. God has declared the whole world to be righteous “on account of Christ, who by his death made satisfaction for our sins” (AC IV 2, Latin version). God forgives sin because of the righteous and perfect obedience of Jesus. This is why God can justify the ungodly.

God does not forgive sin because we become more and more sinless. God does not forgive sin because we complete the salvation which He began in us. If our salvation was based on our own righteousness, then we would never know whether we have done enough.

Nothing inside of us and nothing we do can merit the verdict of justification. But Christ most certainly does merit that verdict. We are justified because of Christ alone. Therefore, our salvation is certain, solid, and complete (Rom 4:25; 5:19; 2 Cor 5:19).

How is this justification applied to the sinner? The sinner receives the forgiveness of sins through faith alone. The sinner is justified through faith, apart from any merit or works of the law. Faith is the instrument or the means by which justification comes to the sinner. Faith embraces what Christ has done for the sinner. Faith rests secure in the truth of the gospel. Faith has as its object Christ alone.

Christ paid for the sins of the whole world, but this does not mean that everyone will benefit from it. The lack of faith causes damnation. Only those who believe receive the forgiveness of sins. For God will regard and reckon this faith as righteous in his sight (AC IV, 3).

Faith is not merely an emotional feeling. It is not merely having a knowledge of God (Ap IV, 48). It is not a religious virtue that helps people gain eternal life. Faith does not contribute anything toward our salvation, but it simply receives it (Rom 4:3; 5:1; John 3:16).

Unfortunately some parts of Christianity do not place a high emphasis on the article of justification. According to them justification merely becomes one topic among others. However, a Lutheran education will center on the sinner's justification through faith in Christ.

Law and Gospel

The Apology says that all Scripture should be divided into the Law and the Gospel (Ap IV, 5). In order to understand the Bible and especially the article of justification, we must distinguish between the Law and the Gospel (Jn 1:7; 2 Cor 3:6).

When the law is discussed in this article, it refers to the Ten Commandments (Ap IV 6, 8). In the Small Catechism Luther does a beautiful job of listing the commandments and their meanings. Every Lutheran education should teach Luther's Small Catechism and have the students memorize it.

Does God want us to keep His commandments perfectly? Yes; we ought to keep the law (Ap IV, 124, 136). The law teaches us what we are to do and not to do. The law requires good works and our own perfection (Ap IV, 44). However,

because of our sinful nature, "no one ever lives up to the law" (Ap IV, 18).

The Apology mentions two ways in which God uses the Law. First, the law is like a curb which restrains evil (Ap IV, 22). In order to preserve civil discipline, God "has given laws, learning, teaching, governments, and penalties" (Ap IV, 22-23). St. Paul calls the law "our guardian" (Gal 3:24).

Second, the law accuses us of our sin. "The law always accuses and terrifies consciences. It always shows that God is angry" (Ap IV, 38, 128). The law is like a mirror that shows us our sin and the wrath of God. "Through the law sin is recognized" (Ap IV, 103). St. Paul says, "through the law comes knowledge of sin" (Rom 3:20).

Can anyone be saved by the law? No one can be saved by the law. No one can merit the forgiveness of sins by the law, because the law condemns everyone (Ap IV, 179). Many opponents to Lutheranism suppose that they can satisfy the law of God.

What is the Gospel? The Gospel is the saving message of the forgiveness of sins because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Jn 3:16, 6:63-68; Rom 1:16). The Gospel is the "good news" of what God has done for us and is still doing for our salvation, primarily through preaching, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper (Ap IV, 73). God offers the forgiveness of sins, justification, and eternal life only in the Gospel (Ap IV, 5, 43).

The Gospel does not include laws or demands. The Gospel does not merely inform people of blessings that God has done for them, but it actually imparts forgiveness and salvation. The Gospel is not proclaimed if there is no mention of

Christ's work of redemption. The Gospel has nothing to do with physical healing, material prosperity, or political freedom.

Sinners who are troubled because of their sin should not be further afflicted with the law, but should be comforted by the Gospel. In other words, those who are oppressed by sin and terrified by the law should be consoled with the Gospel (Ap IV, 43, 62). On the other hand, the person who is not sorry for his sin needs the law in order to bring him to repentance. The Gospel should be preached to all. But the impenitent should not be falsely comforted with the Gospel (Matt 19:16-22; and LC II, 38).

Unfortunately some parts of Christianity do not see in Scripture the teaching of Law and Gospel, and therefore, they misinterpret Scripture. However, a Lutheran education will teach that we are all sinners saved by God's grace in Christ Jesus.

Good Works

The natural result of saving faith is good works. The Augsburg Confession article V says, "such faith should yield good fruit and good works" (AC VI, 1). The Latin version says that such faith is "bound" to yield good fruits. As the Holy Spirit works through the gospel and the sacraments, fruits of faith will naturally follow. Good works are the result of faith.

The Holy Spirit works in and through us to produce good works. The Law does not provide the means to love God and the neighbor. Rather, the gospel and the sacraments are the only means to love God and perform good works (Matt 25:34-40; Lk 19:1-9; Jn 15:5; Gal 5:22-23).

The Augsburg Confession says that "a person must do such good works as God has commanded for God's sake" (AC VI, 1). God's will is clearly stated in the Ten Commandments. The Christian is to love God and the neighbor. This article emphasizes that we must do the good works that are only in accordance with God's Word (i.e. "commanded by God") and not from man-made rules.

Good works are not done for God, but for the benefit of other people. God does not need the Christian's good works; rather God needs the Christian to serve the neighbor (Matt 5:16; 22:37; Jn 14:15; Eph 2:10).

Are we to place our trust in good works? This article says that a person is not to "place trust in good works as if thereby to earn grace before God. For we receive forgiveness of sin and righteousness through faith in Christ" (AC VI, 2). Good works are important, for the sake of the neighbor, but they do not merit the forgiveness of sins.

What is your vocation in life? Is it a husband or wife, father or mother, son or daughter? Are you an employer or an employee? We freely serve and love the neighbor by taking care of their needs through the gifts which God gave us. We live out our vocation in life by loving the neighbor.

Unfortunately some parts of Christianity misunderstand good works and one's vocation toward the neighbor. They see good works as done to earn favor with God. However, a Lutheran education will focus on a person's vocation as the way to serve and love the neighbor.

The Two Kingdoms

The Augsburg Confession article XVI says that it is important to distinguish between Christ's kingdom (i.e. the church) and the civil realm (i.e. the state). What are the differences between these two realms?

The church is spiritual, whereas the state is civil. The church is of grace, whereas the state is of power and reason. The church is holy whereas the state is political. The church aims at faith, love and eternal peace, whereas the state aims at outward obedience and worldly peace.

Why has God established the church? God has established His church on earth in order to bring salvation to all the world, to create and preserve faith in the Gospel, and to dispense the forgiveness of sins. God uses the holy Gospel and the sacraments to bring the gift and blessings of the cross to sinners.

The Apology says that the church is spiritual, that is, "it is the heart's knowledge of God, fear of God, faith in God, and the beginning of eternal righteousness and eternal life" (Ap XVI, 2).

The church is not a power structure to rule the world. The task of the church is not to bring order to the world. "The Gospel does not overthrow civil authority, the state, and marriage" (AC XVI, 5). "The Gospel does not legislate for the civil estate nor does it introduce new laws for the civil realm (AP XVI, 6, 3). Rather, the Gospel is the forgiveness of sins and the beginning of eternal life.

Why has God established governments and rulers? God has established governments and rulers in order to preserve and protect man's life on earth and society. They are to defend and commend those who do what is right and

punish criminals. The state is simply the arm of the law and is not concerned about the Gospel.

This article says that "all political authority, orderly government, laws, and good order in the world are created and instituted by God" (AC XVI, 1). The Apology says that "legitimate civil ordinances are good creations of God (Ap XVI, 1). Therefore, the government is a divine institution (Rom 13:1-4; 1 Tim 2:1-2; 1 Peter 2:13-14).

This article says that "Christians are obliged to be subject to civil authority and obey its commands and laws in all that can be done without sin. But when commands of the civil authority cannot be obeyed without sin, we must obey God rather than men" (AC XVI, 6-7). Jesus said to Pilate, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above" (Jn 19:11).

So, the Christian is a citizen of the church and the state at the same time.

Unfortunately, some parts of Christianity envision a kingdom of God here on earth. Specifically, some think that the church's role is to Christianize America. They are primarily concerned about the moral improvement of society. However, a Lutheran education will understand the proper role of the state and the church.

II. Distinctions

Classical vs. Progressive

There is a difference between classical education and progressive education. Classical education is based on grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. It emphasizes the importance of memory, facts, and

objective truth. Progressive education, on the other hand, is based on the student's experience. The student must find his or her own knowledge.

Christian Classical vs. Non-Christian Classical

There is also a difference between classical Christian education and classical non-Christian education. They both subscribe to the method of classical education. They study the ancient Greek and Roman languages and sources, and they teach the seven liberal arts. However, a classical Christian education believes that God is the source of all truth as revealed in Scripture, whereas a classical non-Christian education searches for truth apart from Scripture.

Many parents subscribe to the classical education model yet reject Christianity's teaching. For example, a mother writes on a classical education forum, "Hello, I'm planning on homeschooling my daughter. Are there any resources out there for non-Christian parents who intend to follow the classical model? I'm very attracted to the method and the idea of the trivium. I love the idea of immersion in world history and thought... but not so much to the primarily Christian underpinning of most reading lists, etc. I see no need for her to become intimate with Augustine and company."²⁶ Another parent replies, "Our family is somewhere between Pagan and Buddhist, and we have loved 'The Well Trained Mind.' I've added a fairly heavy

²⁶ <http://www.mothering.com/forum/50-learning-home-beyond/41060-classical-education-non-christians.html>

dose of Waldorf and a bit of Ambleside also."²⁷

Classical Lutheran vs. Classical Reformed

There is also a difference between classical Lutheran education and classical Reformed education. While both subscribe to a classical approach to education, there are differences in theology. Martin Luther was primarily concerned about the justification of the sinner through faith in Christ, whereas John Calvin was primarily concerned about the moral improvement of the Christian and of society. This difference influences curriculum development and book selection.

Much of classical education today is Reformed. Douglas Wilson, for example, is the author of "Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning" and "The Case for Classical Christian Education." A conservative Reformed theologian and pastor, he serves on the governing boards of [Logos School](#) and the [Association of Classical and Christian Schools](#). Wilson and others have done much to advance the cause of classical education. However, as Lutherans we are concerned about the proper confession of the truth in both theology and in educational materials.

Examining Worldview

If there is not a classical Lutheran school in the area do we send our children to a classical Reformed school or to a non-Lutheran school? What curriculum do we use for school or for home education? Who do we want teaching our children?

²⁷ Ibid.

Does theology matter when it comes to education?

Every teacher and method of education has a worldview. It might be a pagan worldview or a Christian worldview. It might be a classical Reformed view or a classical Lutheran view. A Reformed and a Lutheran will read the same literature and yet come away with different conclusions. Why? Because they see Scripture and its message differently. Theology does matter when it comes to education.

Conclusion

God has richly blessed our Lutheran heritage. The Lutheran Confessions are a correct interpretation of Scripture, as these five elements make a classical education uniquely Lutheran: Christology, Justification, Law and Gospel, Good Works (i.e. vocation), and the Two Kingdoms.. The pure Gospel gives us comfort and peace in Christ.

Faith looks at Christ alone for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. From these gifts flow love toward one another. This proper understanding of Scripture, therefore, shapes our understanding of history, literature, music, and of education in general. It will also help us to discern what is right and wrong, what is good and bad, and what is true and false.

May God give us the ability to faithfully teach our children. May Scripture, the Small Catechism, hymns, and liturgy be a regular part of our life. May education at our schools and in our homes preserve and support the faith confessed in Scripture and in our Lutheran Confessions. Theology matters when it

comes to education. May God bless us with a faithful “Lutheran” education.

Rev James Woelmer is senior pastor at Faith Lutheran Church and School in Plano, Texas. He teaches Old and New Testament at Faith Lutheran High School. Rev. Woelmer is married to Rachel, and they have five children.

Reclaiming the Education of Our Lutheran Heritage

by James M. Tallmon, Ph.D.

Introduction

The education of our Lutheran Heritage is inextricably bound to our theology, and the theology of our Lutheran heritage is utterly, inherently, and to its core, dialectical. Dialectic dominates the documents of our confession. It is evident in the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Solid Declaration*, and, in a quite overt fashion, the *Epitome of the Formula of Concord* (organized as it is into negative and positive theses). It gives form to the catechisms of Luther. The certainty in the “this is most certainly true” is a product of the dialectic by which such conclusions are drawn. The prominence of the “both/ands” of Lutheran theology attest to the primacy of dialectic in our theology, and Classical Lutheran education, since it is deeply catechetical, is positively teeming with our theology.

Dialectic is not easily reduced to rational formulae, so it is imperative that, as we attempt to understand its ubiquitous role in our Lutheran pedagogical heritage, the approach be simultaneously methodical and nuanced. Lutheranism is utterly dialectical but not rationalistic. It is important here to point out that not being given to rationalism must be distinguished from “being non-rational.” This is an important reason to prefer, following Dorothy L. Sayers’ lead in “The

Lost Tools of Learning,” the second stage of the trivium as “dialectic” and not logic. Logic, approached exclusively from a formal perspective, will not bear the same fruit, in terms of practical wisdom, that can be realized through training in dialectic.

In this paper, I will provide an overview of Aristotelian dialectic with differences between Aristotle's and Hegel's approaches. Second, I will explore various ways in which that dialectical method shapes our theology. Finally, I will suggest strategies for teaching dialectically, so that our heritage will bring forth fruit in the next generation. We are here because God has given us the solemn charge of equipping the next generation of Lutherans for two things: to embrace our creedal and confessional faith and to serve our neighbor!

Aristotelian Dialectic

Dialectic should be, according to Aristotle, understood also as “A process of criticism wherein lies the path to the principles of all inquiries.” The process of criticism involves a means of defining key terms, consulting experience, and ferreting out the premises in which are rooted propositions under examination. By following those lines of inquiry one “reasons down to” the level of presupposition. Therein lies the path that leads to the domain where ideas connect; where unity of knowledge resides, waiting to be discovered. To cultivate such mental abilities is a vital fruit of classical liberal arts learning. For the

Lutheran, this mental equipment is doubly important. More on that to come.

Aristotle's *Topics* is explicitly concerned with formalizing the first set of rules for disputations, so the label "dialectician" is ascribed almost exclusively to competitors in mental gymnastics. However, a close reading of the text discloses Aristotle's interest in applying dialectic to philosophical inquiry as well as to competitive debate. One learns there of the distinction between argument for intellectual sport and argument for the sake of learning. Aristotle's final exhortation to the would-be disputant indicates his concern with the development of *intellectual integrity*: "Moreover, as contributing to knowledge and to philosophic wisdom the power of discerning and holding in one view the results of either of two hypotheses is no mean instrument; for it only remains to make a right choice of one of them." Remember this clause, "... making a right choice of one of them," as this will underscore the distinction between Hegel's brand of dialectic and Aristotle's.

Classical, Aristotelian dialectic is exemplified by the Socratic method. As one reflects on the Platonic dialogues, two things are clear: Socrates was serious about the pursuit of truth, and the method by which Socrates pursues truth can be explicated. The Socratic method may be reduced to this process: having a proposition, pushing the proposition to its conclusion and drawing out implications by means of question and

answer; and, finally, applying the law of contradiction. The law of contradiction is what I. A. Richards calls a "rule of mind," first observed in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, 1011^b:13, when he writes, "The most undisputable of all beliefs is that contradictory statements are not at the same time true." The law of contradiction is a statement about the manner in which the mind operates in the meaning-making process and is at the operational core of dialectical reasoning. Aristotelian dialectic is Socratic dialectic. Our picture of Aristotelian (i.e., Socratic or Platonic) dialectic is now developed.

Hegelian Dialectic

Hegel (1770-1811), a German philosopher influenced by Kant and Rousseau, developed his own comprehensive philosophical system and a consequent variation on classical dialectic. Hegelian dialectic does not reject contraries; it melds them. Consisting of three basic parts: thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, Hegel's system asserts that synthesis arises out of the resolution between the extremes: thesis and antithesis. This difference is vital. While classical dialectic is useful for establishing foundational truth, Hegelian thought tends to be used for challenging tradition. Indeed, his writings became important precursors to Marxism. When our contemporaries speak of dialectic, they are likely referring to Hegelian, not Aristotelian, because the former has much more currency today than the latter.

“But what about the ubiquitous ‘both/ands’ of Lutheranism? Aren’t they congruent with the Hegelian model?” Although the “both/and” of Lutheranism may *sound* Hegelian, Hegelian dialectic is more related to social construction of knowledge or reality (i.e., “truth is what we perceive it to be”) than to the Lutheran proclamation, “this is *most certainly* true.” The Lutheran “both/and” appreciation of paradox actually upholds the law of contradiction beautifully! Take for example our signature refrain, “simul justus et peccator.” Lutherans underscore the truth that while we are yet sinners in ourselves, we are justified before God in Christ. Though it may initially appear to do so, this does *not* violate the law of contradiction; rather, it highlights the distinction between our standing in Christ, versus a reliance on self. The contraries are not “resolved” or “melded” into a new synthesis. They remain unresolved, but held in constructive tension. Luther’s *Small Catechism* also affords a ready example, not only of dialectic in our Lutheran theological heritage, but of grammar and rhetoric as well. This brings us to the trivium.

Dialectic within the Trivium

There are two important aspects one must bear in mind to appreciate the tools that constitute the trivium: they are taught when appropriate to the student’s age, and each subject may be approached according to its grammar, its dialectic, and its rhetorical components. Hence, in

“grammar school” children learn the basic parts of language, how to write, and how to read. In the medieval classroom, according to Sayers, young 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. Once children develop the cognitive abilities to understand more complex knowledge, they enter the dialectical phase of education in which they learn the logic of the body of knowledge, along with rules of thought and disputation. In grades 5-8, they learn how to engage ideas. When ready, in the upper grades, they enter the rhetoric phase, where they study the oratorical excellence of past masters, compose their own arguments, and engage in disputations with their peers and even their teachers. This is the stage in education where students are equipped to cultivate practical wisdom. They apply what they have learned to “prune” their positions and, mixed with imagination and skill, defend them in persuasive eloquence. The teacher focuses on giving young minds the tools for building intellectual structures, so they will be at home in the realm of ideas, able to ferret out assumptions and respond with insight, intelligently and eloquently, to the arguments encountered in the course of the life lived well. Classical learning equips for lifelong learning. Contrary to postmodern education, classical learning provides ample certainties that can be dialectically secured, giving confidence

through eradicating contradictions in one's thought life.

Classical Dialectic and Lutheran Theology

Luther's *Small Catechism* is at first a grammar. In it Luther identifies the "six chief parts" of our confession. In other words, these are for him the six basic constituents of the Christian faith. Mastering them is a threshold to full participation in the one true faith. Grammar is about breaking knowledge down into its fundamental parts, to facilitate learning. In the process of mastering those parts, the mind is "well ordered": Habits of systematic thought are cultivated.

Aristotelian dialectic is highly implicated in that process of mental growth. Dialectic, as has been said, is a search for truth based on rooting out contradictions. It establishes a class by means of definition and partition, and it examines knowledge by beginning with a proposition, drawing out implications, then, spotting contradictions. The point is to reject contradictory elements and embrace that truth which withstands dialectical scrutiny.

Consider how most every clause in the explanations are divided into contrary elements by Luther's interjection of "but." Why is this? This holds in constructive tension the contrary elements. It is a methodology derived from disputations; from dialectic, and we see evidences of

classical dialectic throughout *Luther's Small Catechism*.

Luther, in keeping with his classical training in the rhetorical arts, employs devices to facilitate learning and memorization. Doing so would come naturally for him. Take, for example, the explanations. "What does this mean?" the ubiquitous rhetorical question begins each explanation. 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: "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 devices aid memorization. The established rhythm helps the various lessons penetrate. It is a grammar, it employs rhetorical devices, and it is formed by dialectic.

Why is this important to know? Cultivating in our young charges appreciation of these forms, elements, and devices aid in memorization, first, but also develops in them habits of mind that make them more receptive to truth, better equipped for learning, and more inclined to think in a principled, methodical fashion. (Dialectic is ". . . a process of criticism wherein lies the path to the principles of all inquiries.") When our junior high and high school age students learn to engage in dialectical

inference, to “parse out” arguments, and to ferret out assumptions, they will be placed in that state of mind where they can reason with precision, think quickly on their feet, and follow an argument to its logical conclusion. In short, they will possess the mental discipline and perspicuity, the fruit of the dialectic phase of the classical liberal arts, that orders the mind and enables one to embrace our creedal and confessional faith.

Consider the words of *The Athanasian Creed*: “Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly” (emphasis mine). Or this: “He, therefore, that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity. Finally: except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved.” This dialectical verbiage (because it presupposes the law of contradiction) upholds definitions, which imply essences and mutual exclusivity. This is inherently distasteful to the postmodern mind. Its treatment of the basic pillars “of the catholic faith” attests to its standing as a grammar. The *Athanasian Creed* exemplifies amplification, a key rhetorical device. So, again, a liberal arts education assists full appreciation of the dimensions of our creedal and confessional heritage.

The Socratic method is evident as well in Pauline epistles! (Remember: Paul was a Hellene.) Take *Romans 2 & 3* for instance. The “movement,” as it were, throughout Paul’s extended argument regarding the

gospel (Jew versus Gentile under the Law, the purpose of the Law, Law versus Gospel, justification by faith versus by keeping the law) is a textbook example of dialectic. The author begins with this proposition: “...all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law” 2:12. He then raises a series of rhetorical questions (vv. 17-24) in order to draw out implications (vv. 25-27). He identifies a contradiction, and then he resolves it (vv. 28-29). Chapter three begins with more rhetorical questions! (Take a moment to identify these elements in Romans 3.) If one recognizes these dimensions of rhetorical and dialectical reasoning in scripture, along with the basics of biblical hermeneutics, one can follow the train of thought throughout an entire book!

Thus far we have overviewed Aristotelian dialectic, contrasted it with Hegelian, and examined examples of it in our creeds, confessions, and now, in the Bible itself. Without hearing and seeing and embracing, there can be no reclamation. So we need to learn to teach dialectic, and dialectically.

Teaching Dialectically

How does one teach in a manner that will help us reclaim our heritage? How can we help our students develop “ears to hear” the type of Truth we believe, teach, and confess? Thomas Korcok sums up the Lutheran distinctiveness in this way: Baptism, catechesis, and vocation (*Lutheran Education*, 285). Christian

liberal arts education equips one for Christian liberty. Scripture teaches that the Christian uses his liberty to serve others. Therefore, Christian liberal arts education equips one to serve others. In the final analysis, Christian liberal arts education forms wise and eloquent leaders for church and state as well as wise management of hearth and home. Or, as Korcok taught at CCLE XI, beginning with the Great Commission: "Growth in Baptism requires study of God's Word. Right understanding of God's Word requires right education. Therefore, growth in Baptism requires right education!" Right education, liberal arts education, is dialectical.

So, how does one teach dialectic? Consider any of these resources available at RhetoricRing.com: "Pre-modern Pedagogy for Postmodern Pupils," "Teaching it Old School," "Cultivating Wisdom and Eloquence." See also "Truth, Beauty, and Goodness in Thought, Word, and Deed." (*Logia*, Eastertide 2012, 56-9). With my own students in Logic instruction, we learned fallacies. We integrated logic into history, science, and literature. As Sayers notes in "The Lost Tools of Learning" instructs:

"Wherever the matter for Dialectic is found, it is, of course, highly important that attention should be focused upon the beauty and economy of a fine demonstration or a well-turned argument, lest veneration should wholly die. . . . at the same time both teacher and

pupils must be ready to detect fallacy, slipshod reasoning, ambiguity, irrelevance, and redundancy, and to pounce upon them like rats."

When I approached the teaching of dialectic in our unit on World War II this past school year, we planned a debate. In order to prepare my 6-8 graders for that debate, we spent three months investigating positions in conflict, points in dispute, and definitions at odds with one another. Students learned to write an affirmative case brief, and they crafted arguments to "practice debate" in anticipation of potential objections to their own points of view. (*Please teach your students to not confuse point of view with fact!*) I gave students a primer on logic; a smattering of rhetoric. *Clue them in without overloading them.* Have fun. Circle concepts. Connect the dots. When one's aim is the cultivation of mental habits, one employs different methods than when one's aim is mastery of content or grammar. One last quip from Sayers for the sheer joy of it:

'It will, doubtless, be objected that to encourage young persons at the Pert age to browbeat, correct, and argue with their elders will render them perfectly intolerable.

My answer is that children of that age are intolerable anyhow; and that their natural argumentativeness may just as well be canalized to good purpose as allowed to run away into the

sands. It may, indeed, be rather less obtrusive at home if it is disciplined in school; and anyhow, elders who have abandoned the wholesome principle that children should be seen and not heard have no one to blame but themselves.

<http://www.gbt.org/text/sayers.html>

Conclusion

A loving parent would never send a teenager across a desert, equipped with only a pair of tennis shoes, a walking stick, a baseball cap, and a power bar. No. We want our children to flourish, so we give them all they need to succeed in endeavors where much more is at stake than crossing a desert. Much more. For this charge, we must reclaim a traditional liberal arts education, an education that equips one to reason dialectically. Since we are called to teach a faith the confession of which requires specialized “gear,” our students must be provisioned accordingly.

Dr. Jim Tallmon is Headmaster Teacher at Trinity Lutheran School in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Prior to serving at TLS, he was Professor of Rhetoric and Director of Debate at Patrick Henry College, Purcellville, VA. Dr. Tallmon's www.RhetoricRing.com is a good place to learn how to teach dialectic and rhetoric in tandem, for the cultivation of wisdom and eloquence.

Teaching the Lutheran Faith through Lutheran Hymnody by Rev. Mark Preus

Learning to Sing a Hymn Devotionally

- The leader sings or says one line of *Salvation unto Us Has Come* or another suitable hymn.
- The family/group sings or says that line three times after.
- Repeat process with every line of the stanza.
- Then sing the whole hymn twice.

“Next to the word of God, music deserves the highest praise.”

Where does music deserve the highest praise? Next to the Word of God.²⁸ More correctly one could say “after the Word of God.” This means that wherever God’s Word is, there music should be. Music follows God’s Word. This is simply a confession that God’s Word brings heaven to earth, as we sing, “In yonder home shall never be silent music’s voice” (LSB 514, verse 4). Neither should music’s voice be

28 The Latin says, “Post verbum Dei merito celebrari debeat.” The German says, “Nach dem heiligen Wort Gottes nicht to billig und so hoch zu rühmen und zu loben, als eben die Musica.” WA 50, p. 370-371.

silent in your home here on earth. This means in your household.

Luther’s Small Catechism says, “As the head of the household should teach it in a simple way to his household.” If you bring the word of God into your home, you should necessarily also bring music to attend it. When you remove God’s word from your home, you remove heaven. When you remove music from God’s Word, you are stripping this heaven of some of its beauty. After God’s Word comes music.

It is an action not to bring the Church’s music into your home. I won’t call it a sin of omission, but it is really a thwarting of what the Bible describes man doing. When a Christian blesses the Lord he sings. The Psalms, which describe the church’s life, are meant to be sung. The Church’s life cannot be without music. You are members of this Christian church. Your life is bound inseparably to it. God also made it so that the best description of a Christian’s life – the Psalter – was meant to be sung.²⁹

You actively let secular music into your life through radio, iPods, movies, shows, your children’s music lessons, etc. You choose to let the world excite you, soothe you, move you, and even annoy you.

29 “In a word, if you would see the holy Christian Church painted in living color and shape, comprehended in one little picture, then take up the Psalter. There you have a fine, bright, pure mirror that will show you what Christendom is. Indeed you will find in it also yourself and the true *gnothi seauton* (know thyself), as well as God himself and all creatures.” Martin Luther, *Preface to the Psalter*, AE 35, 256-57

What does it mean when you choose not to allow the church's music into your life? One might simply claim ignorance and incompetence as excuses, summarized in a simple, "I don't know how or where to begin." Let us deal with these excuses, or at least render them weaker. Let us also consider the sobering reality that for the Church's music to have no place in your home shows a depravity and ignorance of God's gift to you and the church. This is precisely irresponsible, because no one claims he is responsible! Pastors shrug their shoulders and shove music off to the professionals. Laity do the same thing by handing it over to choirs and better singers. And the whole church does this while not considering what a cause of much misery and ignorance she is becoming to herself. This may sound harsh, but it is true. It is our fault the Lutheran chorale and its treasures are dying. It is our fault the music of the world and the theology of sectarians have overtaken our churches and the hearts of young and old. Next to establishing a family altar where God's Word is preached and prayed, it is our sacred responsibility to bring appropriate sacred music into our homes to adorn that Word and prayer. Anything short of this amounts to squandering treasures of the Church in favor of laziness and other distractions and pleasures of this world.

And this raises the question again of why music deserves the highest praise after the Word of God. We should know this to fortify ourselves against our indolence in singing God's Word. First, music deserves

the highest praise when and because it contains the word of God, specifically the Gospel. Second, music deserves the highest praise because it rules the emotions of man so powerfully. Third, music deserves the highest praise because its use gives honor to God its creator and preserver as it attends to the fruits of faith.

The Musical Word

First, music deserves the highest praise because it contains God's word. This applies to music as it holds up God's Word for the Christian's meditation and praise of God. God's word creates and sustains the church.

That we may obtain this faith [that justifies] God gave the Gospel and sacraments, through which, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit, who works faith, where and when he wants to, in those who hear the Gospel, which teaches that we have a gracious God through Christ's merit, not through our merit, when we believe it. (AC V)

Music attends the means of grace. It is therefore especially the duty of the pastor, to whom the ministry of the Gospel and sacraments is entrusted, to make sure that music attends the preaching of the Gospel and the sacraments. There is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety nine righteous who have no need of repentance. This joy is caused by the

word of God, and ought to be reflected in music.

Whatever attends God's Word then should be worthy of a reflected glory and honor. The way we treat what surrounds worship will show our attitude towards what is worship. True worship is simply faith in God and the fruits that come from that. This worship is effected alone by the Gospel and sacraments, through which the Holy Spirit creates faith in those who hear the Gospel. The fact that God wants music to attend this joy of the angels is a sign of its paramount importance in our lives.

This means that the first lesson in church music is one of doctrine. The pure Gospel is what the focus of every Christian should be. The music that attends the word is always secondary. Without the pure word of God the music's glory is gone, because it is no longer next to the word of God and therefore no longer deserves the highest praise.

If you want to learn a love of the Lutheran chorale, then begin by praying

"Hallowed be Thy name...God's name is hallowed when the word of God is taught in its truth and purity and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven. But anyone who teaches or lives contrary to God's word profanes the name of God among us. Protect us from this, heavenly Father."

You cannot develop a real love of the Lutheran chorale without at the same time having a healthy fear of false doctrine. False doctrine kills. It harms the soul. The devil murders souls by telling lies.

It is the greatest frustration and lament of orthodox Lutheran pastors when their members become Gospel reductionists. They stop caring that their friend or relative believes in false doctrine because "as long as they're Christians, they're going to heaven." Everything is torn down to the question of heaven or hell, as if the pure doctrine has nothing to do with heaven or hell. What they do not understand is something the late Robert Preus gave expression to when he once quipped, "Hell is having to listen to false doctrine." Because we don't see the immediate consequences of the false doctrine, we trivialize it. But it is in direct violation of the 2nd Commandment, "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God." And "The Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain."

If you have a healthy fear of false doctrine, then you will have a healthy fear of the music of false teachers. This doesn't mean that everything false teachers sing is bad any more than everything they teach is wrong. It does mean that we don't go to them first to get our music any more than we go to them first to get our theology. But the reason we go to them to get our music is because we are already going to them to get our theology.

We have examples of hymns that come from false teachers that we sing in our churches, but probably shouldn't. One example is the hymn, *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*. In the fourth stanza Robert Robinson writes,

O to grace how great a debtor /
Daily I'm constrained to be!

Let Thy goodness, like a fetter, /
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, /
Prone to leave the God I love;

Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
/ Seal it for Thy courts above.

Besides the subtle reference to once saved always saved with the fetter of God's grace or goodness, this hymn presents another problem for the Lutheran. In this hymn, when the sinner is struggling with his natural inclination to sin, he is not directed outside of himself to the objective works of God or the sacraments where God comforts the conscience and liberates us from sin again and again; rather, the sinner is directed inwardly by saying, "Here's my heart, O take and seal it, Seal it for Thy courts above." A Lutheran would never write this, because he does not think this way. The Scriptures do not speak this way. They speak of being sealed by the Spirit through the objective promises of the Gospel.

Music deserves the highest praise, deserves to be cultivated by the Church only as it is placed after the pure doctrine.

What this means for the quality of the music, I leave for those more qualified. I don't deny that good tunes can come from false teachers; nevertheless, we should be more eager to adopt the music of true teachers and more reticent to adopt the music of false teachers. This is a general principle that bears repeating to ourselves when we feel the urge to adopt a song or some music from a sectarian church body. After the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. Apart from the word of God, music is just another art – a beautiful one, but not one deserving the highest praise.

Music, the Mistress of Emotions

Second, music deserves the highest praise because it governs the emotions of man so powerfully. Luther expresses this point very succinctly in his Preface to Georg Rhau's *Symphoniae Iucundae*,

...[N]ext to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise. She is a mistress and governess of those human emotions – to pass over animals – which as masters govern or more often overwhelm them. No greater commendation than this can be found – at least not by us. For whether you wish to comfort the sad, to terrify the happy, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate, or to appease those full of hate – and who could number all these

masters of the human hearts, namely, the emotions, inclinations, and affections that impel men to evil or good? – what more effective means than music could you find? The Holy Ghost himself honors her as an instrument for his proper work when in his Holy Scriptures he asserts that through her his gifts were instilled in the prophets, namely, the inclination to all virtues, as can be seen in Elisha [II Kings 3:15]. On the other hand, she serves to cast out Satan, the instigator of all sins, as is shown in Saul, the king of Israel [I Sam. 16:23].³⁰

Music rules the emotions. Proponents of revivalist music accuse advocates of traditional church music of being afraid of emotions. We had very well better have a healthy fear of emotions. Just as much evil is perpetrated through pleasant emotions as through distressing emotions.

Since my high school years, I have objected to music that gives me “involuntary goose bumps,” that is, an emotion that I do not want to feel because I have heard nothing in the song that should move me to feel that emotion. The message could even be false, and yet I would be feeling good. Such is the experience that music apart from truth can work on the hearts of men.

The point is not that emotions are inherently bad. It is that they need to be

trained. Attending music with God’s Word is not to induce or celebrate those emotions that feel most pleasant to us; rather, it is for the purpose of ruling and guiding the human emotions. Sometimes we should feel sad. There is a time to weep. Sometimes, we should feel angry. There is a time for war. Sometimes we should feel happy. There is a time to laugh. Sometimes we should feel at rest. There is a time for peace. Sometimes we should feel fear. There is a time to refrain from embracing. Sometimes we should feel compassion. There is a time to embrace. Sometimes we should feel assertive, sometimes plaintive; sometimes we can leap over a wall, sometimes God hides his face from us and we are in turmoil. Music has the power to effect these affections, but she ought never to take her stand above the Word of God. She must submit to her Lord who made her, or like any other idol, she will lead men astray.

Here is a parallel. Reason is a gift from God which He preserves along with all our senses. There is a magisterial use of reason and a ministerial use of reason. A magisterial use of reason is placing our own understanding above God’s Word, claiming there are contradictions in God’s Word where there are none. A ministerial use of reason is to understand the Word of God in the sense that it is spoken and letting paradoxes stand, for example, how we are saved by grace alone and that God loves all men at the same time. So also there is a magisterial use of music and there is a ministerial use. A magisterial

30 AE 53, p. 323.

use of music is to look at its effects on the heart of man apart from the truth. A ministerial use of music is to use music to attend the truth. Music is not simply to speak to people's experiences. People's experiences are usually wrong. Music is rather to speak to those experiences which the Word of God defines in the Holy Scriptures.

Thus when Luther speaks of comforting the sad and terrifying the happy, he is not suggesting that this power of music should be used willy-nilly. You should comfort those who are sad about their sins. You should terrify those who are happy about their sins. Music attends God's Word. God's Word is divided into two main doctrines, Law and Gospel. The music then should reflect the effects of God's Word on the human conscience. The Lutheran chorale is formed by this understanding, both with regard to the words and the music. The hymn, *Lord, to Thee I Make Confession*, is meant with both words and music to teach a certain somber sorrow over sin, as is the hymn *From Depths of Woe*, while hymns like *From Heav'n Above to Earth I Come* and *Dear Christians, One and All Rejoice* have a certain dance to them that lifts the heart with the words.

Music is never alone. It is always attending words, thoughts, sentiments, even if no words are expressly there. If music overwhelms the words, then something else is being said that isn't being explicitly expressed. It gives impressions, but the impressions depends

entirely on the context of its being played. So much of Bach's Cantatas have music without words, but they are always in the context of words, and they match the overall impression that the words give.

The main goal of music here is to give joy and thanksgiving. This is what David means when he sings in Psalm 30:11-12,

"You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;

you have loosed my sackcloth

and clothed me with gladness,

that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent.

O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever!

But this joy is not an incessant state of euphoria. It is the "Rejoice in the Lord always" of Paul, which allows for mourning and sackcloth for a proper time, while not losing this joy that is ours through faith in the Gospel. This is why in Luther's great hymn, *From Depths of Woe*, the same music that in the beginning sounds so dreary with the words of sorrow and repentance strikes a different tone when we come to sing of hope in the Lord, of waiting for his appearing.

A great example of the power of this hymn can be found in Christopher Boyd Brown's *Singing the Gospel*, where "a woman who had been in labor all day and had begun to despair of the birth...[i]n the evening...heard a schoolboy passing by

singing Luther's hymn *Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir*:

“And though it tarry till the night
And till the morning waken,
My heart shall never doubt His
might,
Nor count itself forsaken.

“Hearing the words of the song, the woman took heart, and giving thanks to God for sending ‘his baptized schoolboy to remind us of David’s comforting words,’ she gave birth to a healthy son.”³¹

This woman heard the singing of the schoolboy because it was a custom for the schoolboys to sing in front of the houses, as it was in Luther’s day. The children were given good music to sing that would edify their neighbor. This is what Luther himself desired for music, as he says in his preface to the Wittenberg Hymnal of 1524,

And these songs were arranged in four parts to give the young – who should at any rate be trained in music and other fine arts – something to wean them away from love ballads and carnal songs and to teach them something of value in their place, thus combining the good with the pleasing, as is proper for youth.³²

31 Brown, Christopher Boyd, *Singing the Gospel: Lutheran Hymns and the Success of the Reformation* (Harvard: 2005), 72-73.

32 Luther, Martin, *Preface to the Wittenberg Hymnal*, AE 53 (Concordia: 1965), 316.

The power of music over the emotions is something that we embrace not for the sake of simply inciting emotions, as love ballads and carnal songs do. This is a magisterial use of music. I have felt emotions in singing the words of Red Hot Chili Peppers Songs and Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd. Is there a single thing salutary that these bands have given to my soul?

I learned the faith by singing the faith. My dad recounts the story of me when I was four years old walking around the house singing, *Salvation unto Us Has Come*. I remember my emotions being affected by that hymn. I remember how it was so confident and assertive and strong. I didn’t even know what half the words meant yet, but my emotions grew into the meaning of the words which were confident, assertive and strong. My parents employed a ministerial use of music to teach their little boy the faith. My emotions were formed around not just the music, but music that was joined to words through which the Holy Spirit creates faith in my heart.

And this is why all excuses must die in the face of our need to sing. You are in some sense detaching your body from your soul when you don’t sing God’s Word. In this sense, I even dare to call it a kind of death. When there is no music adorning God’s Word, the body is left for a while unoccupied. I am not suggesting that a sermon does not have as much power as a song. I am saying that faith’s response to the sermon is a song. The emotions

cannot be left alone any more than the mind can when we are learning God's Word. The power of music to effect the proper emotions is a power that is more often mishandled than not. If your children can sing Disney songs they learned from watching a movie that has various themes that conflict with good Christian virtue, then you should be ready to teach your children to sing songs that come from a Church that teaches Christian virtue. It is easy to pop a DVD in and let your children be entertained. Much harder is it to educate your children with the Word of God and the music that attends it. Don't look to the masters of emotional manipulation to learn what music to attend God's Word. Look to the masters of the pure doctrine that gives not just new emotions, but a new spirit with you.

Music Giving Glory to God

Third, music deserves the highest praise because its use gives honor to God its creator and preserver as it attends to the fruits of faith. Sorrow over sin is a fruit of faith. I am speaking of the godly sorrow that leads to repentance, not the sorrow of the world where there is no hope. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit. It is not a fruit of Beethoven's 9th Symphony. Outwardly good works may look the same when done by a heathen or a Christian, but God accepts the works of his children and rejects the works of an

unbeliever. "Without faith it is impossible to please [God]."

And because through faith the Holy Ghost is received, hearts are renewed and endowed with new affections, so as to be able to bring forth good works. For Ambrose says: *Faith is the mother of a good will and right doing.* For man's powers without the Holy Ghost are full of ungodly affections, and are too weak to do works which are good in God's sight. (AC XX.29-31)

Therefore the fruits the music produces cannot be acceptable to God unless they are attended by faith. And since "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God," then music should attend the pure Word of God. Without the pure word of God, the emotions music effects cannot be attributed to God. With the Word of God, the emotions music effects should and ought to be attributed to the Spirit of God.

This is what is behind such Lutheran hymns as,

Awake my heart with gladness, /
See what the today has done,

Now after gloom and sadness /
Comes forth the glorious sun.

My Savior there was laid / Where
our bed must be made,

When to the realms of light / My
spirit wings its flight.

The gloom and sadness is the death of sin. It is not merely the way I'm feeling at the moment because my car broke down. So also the gladness is no gladness the world can give. It is the gladness of Christ's resurrection. The emotions are effected by the work of Christ, not by the music per se. The music attends it.

So also,

All my heart this night rejoices

As I hear / Far and near / Sweetest
angel voices.

Christ is born! their choirs are
singing

Till the air / Everywhere / Now
with joy is ringing.

The rejoicing, the joy, is based entirely on the fact of Christ's birth, his incarnation, God becoming flesh, as the rest of the hymn fleshes out so beautifully.

There are two hymns that speak to this point directly. The first is the second verse of "Blessed Jesus, at your Word."

All our knowledge, sense and sight
/ Lie in deepest darkness
shrouded

Till Your Spirit breaks our night /
With the beams of truth
unclouded.

You alone to God can win us; / You
must work all good within us!

And the sixth verse of "All Mankind Fell in Adam's Fall" teaches about the fruits of faith,

We thank You, Christ, new life is
ours,

New light, new hope, new strength,
new pow'rs.

We must maintain that the glory which our emotions give to God is a glory that originates in the salvation of man through the works of Jesus Christ. Otherwise we cannot give glory to God. Unless we receive the glory of God we cannot glorify God. This is the meaning of the great hymn, the Gloria in Excelsis, which we sing every Sunday,

We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we
worship Thee, We glorify Thee, We
give Thee thanks for Thy great
glory.

To assert that the emotions we receive from music that attends God's pure word is a dangerous assertion, and it requires some defense. What gives God glory is faith in Christ. The highest worship of God is to seek from Christ the forgiveness of sins.³³ It is possible that a person can receive emotions from music that attends God's Word and not believe the word that attends it. This must be granted. However, it should not on that account be

33 AP III. 33, "The woman came with the opinion concerning Christ that with Him the remission of sins should be sought. This worship is the highest worship of Christ. Nothing greater could she ascribe to Christ." AP III. 189, "...[T]he chief worship of the Gospel is to wish to receive remission of sins, grace, and righteousness."

denied that the emotions which attend the joy of receiving the Gospel should be questioned with the same scrutiny as those emotions which attend false doctrine or no doctrine.

The fruits of faith glorify God precisely because works these fruits of faith through his Word. When music attends the word of God it gives expression to and supplements those emotions which the Word of God originally creates. I remember being at a praise service of a church in Norman, OK on my vicarage. They began with a mood music song called Glorious by Chris Tomlin. The gist of the song can be summed up in these words,

And all You ever do
Is change the old for new
People, we believe that

God is bigger than
The air I breathe
The world we'll leave
God will save the day
And all will say
My Glorious

After this song, the pastor got up and said, "I really feel the Spirit here tonight." There was nothing in the words of the song that could have brought the Spirit. This statement came from a false view of

the Holy Spirit, the Gospel, man's sinful condition, etc. It claimed to be speaking glorifying God, but all it did was glorify man's emotions. I myself got goose bumps, involuntarily, mind you, but they were there. I felt something, but the Holy Spirit didn't cause it.

On the other hand, when I was by myself on the Elbe River when I was seventeen living in Germany with atheist host parents, I sang a hymn my father taught me at home, from "In Jesus I Find Rest and Peace,"

To me the preaching of the cross /
Is wisdom everlasting,

Thy death alone redeems my loss,
/ On Thee my burden casting;

I in the name / A refuge claim /
From sin and death and from all
shame,

Blest be Thy name, O Jesus.

I didn't just get goose bumps from singing that hymn. I got faith. I got the Holy Spirit. I got saved. And my joy came in praise to God. I saw all the beauty of Dresden all around me, but it was nothing compared to the beauty of that single verse of Lutheran hymnody. I glorified God with this hymn.

After the Word of God music deserves the highest praise because it accompanies the word that produces faith that rightly praises God. This praise is a use of God's creation by the new man, who is "created in Christ Jesus for good works which He

prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” It is not merely the objective beauty of music that deserves praise. If that were true we should put the works of heathen next to the Word of God. Music deserves praise because it is a creation of God that is used best by faith in the Lord who has redeemed his creation from its bondage to sin and decay. Our praises that come from our dying bodies are songs of triumph that come from a faith that knows that our Redeemer lives. The fruits of his resurrection, the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation, overflow into the fruits of faith, which praise and glorify God.

Basic Guidelines for Teaching Lutheran Hymns

Consider three basic principles on teaching the singing of Lutheran hymns in the Church, at home, and in the school.

1. There is always a teacher.

The teacher is not necessarily the best singer. In the home, the teacher is the head of the household. This is the father. The father should make every effort to sing with his family. Of course the mother should take up the task of singing if the father cannot carry a tune, and whichever parent puts the children to bed can sing hymns to them. But at the family devotion time, it is best that the father makes every effort to sing. Men often lack confidence in singing today, but if the

men do not sing, neither usually will their sons, especially if they realize that singing is something their dad does not do.

We can instill confidence in the men. I have witnessed men begin to sing who never sang before, simply because they sang in a group of men. A few years ago, I became frustrated when I was trying to teach my high school students to sing. Tim Merritt suggested that I separated the boys from the girls. I did so and behold! Young men singing.

Pastors can help. Only perhaps 10% of pastors truly cannot sing. The rest need to learn to sing. They must be leaders. Just as the pastor is an example to his flock in all good works, so in the good work of music, which deserves the highest praise after the Word of God, the pastor should try his best to be an example.

This means that whenever he gets men together, the pastor should sing with them, be it a men’s Bible Study, or a board meeting of trustees or elders, or the council. The pastor must open the hymnal and sing a good Lutheran hymn. This is a good hymn to start with (which is not a Lutheran hymn at all, but is a good doxological hymn): *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*. Continue with the hymns provided below.

If a school is available, find an able man who can take the older boys aside and teach them to sing. You must segregate them from the boys. Grouping boys and girls together may work in the younger

years, but it is deadly to singing once puberty hits. Coeducation has been a horrible detriment to music especially. I do not doubt that there are very pious women who can teach boys how to sing. Most men need men to lead them, especially in singing, and men sing best when they sing together.

So there must be a leader. We need the fathers to be leaders in their homes. The pastor is the leader of the fathers. He needs to teach them to sing. This does not require voice lessons. It requires opening the hymnal and singing, and encouraging them to sing. Just as the pastor teaching the men how to lead family devotions in their home leads to the children of the homes learning God's Word, so a pastor teaching men to sing leads to men singing in their homes. The cantor is a wonderful assistant to the pastor and the father in this if one is available.

2. Repetition is the mother of learning.

This is a simple rule. If a pastor meets with a group once a week, he should sing the same hymn for a couple of months or until they grow comfortable with it. If he meets with a group once a month, he should sing the same hymn for several months until they grow comfortable with it. A school should have a hymn of the month that they sing every week. They can also have a hymn of the week that they sing every day. When the pastor is singing a hymn with a group or teaching it

to the children, he should make sure to choose that hymn to sing in the divine service a few times during the time that he is teaching it.

A family should sing the same hymn every day during a season or month. For example, sing "Savior of the Nations, Come" during all of Advent at devotions. This is good for us, who too easily grow bored with things and desire novelty all the time. The longer you sing a hymn, the more you know it. It is not only children who need help with memorization. Sing the same hymn all season or month and supplement with other hymns that the family already knows.

3. Multum, non multa (much, not many)

If you or your child after ten years knows ten of the best hymns by heart, this is better than you barely knowing 100 hymns of varying quality. To this end, for home devotions and teaching groups in the Church:

a. Only teach 1-3 of the best stanzas of a hymn. There are practical reasons for this. First, there is only so much time a child can give his attention to during devotions. Second, the mind can more easily grasp less than more. Each hymn is like a gift wrapped in the memory of a child. If the hymn registers as a big box in his brain, it will be more difficult and cumbersome for his memory to open and ponder. If he recalls it as a little box, it will be more delightful and easy to open and examine its contents. This is true not

only for children, but for adults as well. I do not mean to do this for the divine service. I mean this only for devotional times. The divine service should include as often as possible all the fullness of a hymn.

b. Teach a limited number of hymns per year. Less is more. Children do not become bored as easily as adults with repetition. Choose first the easiest hymns from the list of Lutheran Chorales provided here. Use them during their seasons. In the home this can mean as few as 5 and as many as 12.

c. Continue to repeat the hymns that you have already learned as supplementary hymns.

A Short List of Hymns to Teach

1. Salvation unto Us Has Come, Stanza 1 (3 and 6) – Gospel/Salvation
2. On My Heart Imprint Your Image – Faith/Endurance
3. Christ Alone Is Our Salvation - Gospel
4. My Maker Now Be Nigh / My Maker Be Thou Nigh – Trinity/Creed
5. Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying (Church/Judgment/Heaven)
6. These are the Holy Ten Commands (Verses 1,2 and 11, and others as the occasion fits) (Law of God)

7. Let Me Be Thine Forever (Trinity/Endurance)

8. Jesus Sinners Doth Receive (Stanza 1, “O How Blest,” and Last Stanza) (Repentance/Confession/Faith)

9. From Heav’n Above (Stanzas 1,2, and 13) (Christmas)

10. We All Believe In One True God (metrical by Clausnitzer) (Creed)

11. Our Father, Who from Heaven Above (verses 1 and 9, and others as the occasion fits) (Prayer)

12. Awake, My Heart, with Gladness (verse 1,2 and 4) (Easter)

13. All Who Believe and Are Baptized (Baptism)

14. The Death of Jesus Christ our Lord (Verses 1,2,4 and “A Precious Food...”) (Sacrament of the Altar)

We do not subscribe to Lutheran hymns, but we believe them, and we love them precisely because they reveal the faith so clearly. Lutheran music is inseparable from Lutheran theology. We must deal with all the excuses people give for not singing these Lutheran hymns. The best way to deal with all the excuses is simply to teach people to sing the hymns. There is no other way.

Rev. Mark Preus, fifth son of twelve children, says that when he grew up, his

family joined together for dinner, singing hymns, hearing God's Word, and discussing the day's questions. From childhood, he learned the joy and comfort of Christian doctrine not as a stale textbook, but as life itself. With an M.Div. from Concordia Theological Seminary, Rev. Mark Preus also holds degrees in Latin and Classics. Today he and his wife Becky share the

Lutheran faith through Lutheran hymnody with their own six children, with another on the way! He serves as pastor of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church and Campus Center in Laramie, Wyoming.



Classical Lutheran Education Journal

*A JOURNAL OF
THE CONSORTIUM FOR CLASSICAL AND LUTHERAN EDUCATION*

www.ccle.org

VOL. VIII, 2014