PRAISE FOR
LUTHERAN EDUCATION:

Dr. Korcok has done his and our homework: those seeking a model for Lutheranism and the liberal arts will find one here. Drawing from the church fathers, the humanist thinkers, and the Wittenberg Reformation, this book documents the relationship and development of evangelical theology and its educational expression from Luther to Walther to the present. With particular attention to schooling children, Korcok provides an historical theology and proposes a Lutheran pedagogy. Along the way he supplies observations, insights, and applications with which the reader may agree or disagree, but he gives us plenty to consider. Well written, engaging, and often surprising—my copy is thoroughly marked and cross-referenced. If a living tradition is innovation that succeeds, here is a book to help us think about the future of Lutheran education as innovation in catechesis and the liberal arts.

—Russ Moulds, PhD
Professor of Education
Concordia University Nebraska
op-ed editor, *Issues in Christian Education*
A Teacher of the Church, editor and author

Dr. Korcok gives a very detailed history of Lutheran Education from Luther and Walther into its roots in Colonial America. He incorporates the focus on Christian catechesis combine with the focus on grammar, logic and rhetoric and how that approach is incorporated in to the Lutheran school today. This is a very comprehensive history of the factors that have affected Lutheran Education. This book is a must read for all Lutheran educators.

—William D. Cochran, Jr.
Director of School Ministry
The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

In this masterful study, Korcok presents the history of Lutheran education in an illuminated triptych. The left panel shows the birth of confessional liberal arts education in the confluence of renaissance humanism, evangelical theology and the return to early Christian pedagogues. In the center, we see Walther and other confessionals leaving behind the Rationalism and Pietism of their homeland and establishing an updated Lutheran liberal arts curriculum in Missouri. The last panel shows the enduring value and flexibility of classical Lutheran education. While the majority of education schools remain captive to a faith-denying modernist pedagogy, Korcok shows that a theologically driven liberal arts curriculum remains the only credible means of upholding the Lutheran confessions and of producing faithful disciples and worthy citizens for church and state. This book reminds us that the perennial need to reform the church requires constant effort to restore authentically Lutheran education. It is essential reading for all Lutheran educators.

—Angus Menuge, PhD
Professor of Philosophy
Concordia University Wisconsin
editor (with Joel D. Heck), *Learning at the Foot of the Cross: A Lutheran Vision for Education*
(Austin, TX: Concordia University Press, 2011)

While modern progressive education struggles to identify itself and to understand what it means to be human, Dr. Korcok has distinguished an education that truly articulates created humanity, has stood the test of time and is rooted in the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. That education is one where our forefathers (i.e., Luther, Bugenhagen, Walther) looked back to the classical liberal arts and saturated them in a confessional Lutheran theology. His book is a timely contribution to discussions within contemporary Lutheran education and is a must read for every Lutheran educator and those who are preparing to teach children.

—Rev. Stephen W. Kieser
President
The Consortium for Classical and Lutheran Education

Lutheran educators and parents have recently become interested in returning to the roots of a Lutheran education that can be called *classical*. Dr. Korcok's work provides an excellent and well researched inquiry into the origins and development of Lutheran education that is rightly called *classical,* evangelical education. By *classical* Korcok means the old education that Luther and 16th century Lutheran educators synthesized by blending an evangelical theology of baptism with the classical liberal arts and catechesis. Such an education needs to be recovered and revived to face the challenges our children will face today and tomorrow. Since our baptized children inhabit both the world and the Kingdom of God, they need an education that will equip them simultaneously to engage the world's fight and trust in the soul's salvation. For this, they need an education that imparts good knowledge, forms good character, and nurtures good faith. *Lutheran Education* forcefully makes the case that a classical and thoroughly evangelical pedagogy can accomplish these critical tasks today as they have so well in the past.

—Steven A. Hein, PhD
Director, Concordia Institute for Christian Studies
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Not all humanism is secular. Luther's studies in the grammar, logic and rhetoric of the ancient classics were indispensable tools for communicating the Gospel. He considered the liberal arts to be a great treasure assisting Christians as they look to God in faith and serve their neighbors in love. Dr. Korcok's work rekindles an appreciation for the seven liberal arts and the six chief parts of the Christian faith—and in doing so, he invites his readers to a renaissance rather than a reform of Lutheran education.

—Rev. Joel A. Brondos, STM
Headmaster, St. Paul's Lutheran School
Brookfield, IL

Tom Korcok marshals an impressive array of historical data and raises urgent issues of faith and life as he connects the Lutheran educational practice of two bygone "golden ages" (the Reformation of the 16th century and the North American confessional renewal of the 19th) to what is (or is not) going on in all our churchly educational

institutions at the beginning of the 21st century. His work merits our engaged study. May it provoke response and bear good fruit.

—John Stephenson, PhD
Professor of Historical Theology
Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, St. Catharines, Ontario

LUTHERAN EDUCATION

FROM WITTENBERG TO THE FUTURE

THOMAS KORCOK

CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE • SAINT LOUIS

Peer Reviewed

Published 2011 by Concordia Publishing House

3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118–3968

1-800-325-3040 · www.cph.org

Manufactured in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Korcok, Thomas.

Lutheran education : from Wittenberg to the future / Thomas Korcok.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references (p.).

ISBN 978-0-7586-2834-3

1. Lutheran universities and colleges--United States. 2. Education, Humanistic--United States. 3. Education, Higher--Aims and objectives--United States. I. Title.

LC574.K67 2011

378.07'173--dc23 2011018352

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

FOREWORD

Lutheran schools have always accompanied Lutheran churches. Today the connections between church and school—theology and pedagogy, spiritual formation and practical education—are not as clear as they used to be. In this eye-opening history of Lutheran education from its beginnings through the 19th century, Thomas Korcok shows how educational issues have always been at the heart of Lutheranism. In doing so, he also identifies a distinctly Lutheran approach to education.

The Lutheran educational tradition, as Dr. Korcok describes it, consists of a liberal arts education—a broad, humane curriculum, rich in the classics, and open to truth even from non-Christian sources—combined with Christian catechesis. Liberal education (with its language "arts" of grammar, logic, and rhetoric; and its mathematical "arts" of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music) derived from the ancient Greeks and Romans. Its purpose was the formation of effective citizens (the name deriving from the Latin word *liberalis*, referring to a free citizen). St. Augustine and other Church Fathers Christianized the pagan curriculum, and in many different forms and variations, it has shaped Western education ever since.

Dr. Korcok shows how the theological conflicts of the Reformation were also pedagogical conflicts. Whereas the medieval version of the liberal arts emphasized logic—resulting in the systematic rationalism of the scholastics—the Lutherans followed the Renaissance educators who emphasized rhetoric, which included not only the art of persuasion but the study of literature in primary texts, such as the Bible. The Lutherans eventually broke with the Renaissance humanists, who believed that liberal education is enough to instill morals and virtue in young people. Lutheran educators insisted that moral improvement rests on spiritual growth, that children need the Word of God in both Law and Gospel as expressed in the confessions and devotional life of the Church. That is, Christian young people need catechesis. Meanwhile, Lutheran educators were also battling the Anabaptist "enthusiasts," who rejected what they

considered the worldliness of the liberal arts and advocated teaching the Bible alone. The Enlightenment manifested itself in rationalist education, which opposed the liberal arts for preserving the past at the expense of social and scientific progress. The rationalists opposed catechesis not only because of their aggressive secularism but also because of their nationalistic agenda. The confessional distinctives—whether Catholic, Lutheran, or Reformed—divided Germany. Suppressing the religious differences and homogenizing the schools would contribute to a united Fatherland. Lutheran education was also challenged from the other extreme with Pietism. In their subjectivism, the Pietists considered both the liberal arts and catechesis to be too intellectual, advocating instead a "practical" education restricted to job training and Bible reading. Through all of these conflicts, Lutheran educators continued to offer an academic education that was open to the outside world while also instilling the Christian faith.

Central to Lutheran education, according to Dr. Korcok, were two characteristically Lutheran doctrines. The first was Baptism. Because all Christians are baptized, reasoned Luther's pastor Johannes Bugenhagen, they all have a high status before God and deserve the very best education. The leveling effect of Baptism meant that the kind of education once reserved for an elite—the liberal arts—would be offered to all Christians, including women. The second educationally significant doctrine was vocation. Baptized Christians are called to live out their faith in the world in the different stations of life to which God may call them. The family, the workplace, the church, and the state are realms to which Christians are called to love and serve their neighbors. The liberal arts can equip a child for effective service in the world; catechesis can equip a child for everlasting life. The Lutheran schools would equip citizens for both of God's Kingdoms.

Dr. Korcok's book is particularly fascinating in what it adds to the history of the Missouri Synod. He shows that educational issues were a major factor in the Saxon immigration to the United States. In Saxony, confessional pastors and congregations could worship as they pleased. Most of their conflicts were with the local schools, which were implementing rationalist pedagogy and the nationalist agenda. After arriving in the United States, a major priority for the congregations that would later form the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod was the establishing of schools. To prepare teachers for those

schools—as well as pastors for the new seminary—the Synod also opened full-blown classical gymnasia, teaching Latin, Greek, and Hebrew as part of a thorough liberal arts education to prepare pastors and teachers. At a time when teachers in American schools often had no more than an elementary education, the Lutheran parochial schools—which made a point of teaching the English language along with American history and politics and which were led by extremely well-educated teachers—gave their graduates a clearly superior education and contributed greatly to the success of the German immigrants.

Dr. Korcok's book comes at the perfect time. Today the whole country is embroiled in educational controversies. Many Lutheran churches are struggling to understand the ministry of their schools. This book shows that Lutherans have a rich educational heritage, one that lives today and that holds great promise for the future.

GENE EDWARD VEITH
Provost and Professor of Literature
Patrick Henry College

PREFACE

One of the unfortunate ironies of life is that, often, the more committed you are to a task, the less you are able to think about the deeper issues connected with it. The task consumes so much of your attention and time that you simply don't have the opportunity to reflect on the bigger picture. It is a situation in which many educators, especially those working in parish-run schools, find themselves.

This book had its genesis at a time when I was being asked to consider the bigger picture of Lutheran education. I was a pastor in a rural parish in Ontario, Canada that was in the process of establishing a Lutheran elementary school. Lutheran schools were relatively unknown there, and so an essential part of the process was to provide answers to questions like "Why should the church establish a school?" and "How is a Lutheran school different from public schools or other private schools?" Such questions led me to consider deeper, more penetrating questions like "What is the relationship between pedagogy and theology?" and "How does theology shape the curriculum?"

Because the Lutheran church has such a rich history of both systematic theology and religious education, I assumed that there would be plenty of written material addressing those questions, but I soon realized that I was wrong. Perhaps the Evangelical Lutheran Church has been so busy with the mechanics of education that few had ever had the time to take a step back and ponder the bigger picture.

At about the same time, I stumbled upon some educators who, in an effort to answer similar questions, saw the classical liberal arts as the pedagogical model of choice for Evangelical schools. In an effort to develop a distinctly Lutheran pedagogy, they turned to the ancient arts of the trivium—grammar, logic, and rhetoric—as the basis for a modern form of classical education. Could an Evangelical interpretation of the liberal arts furnish the answers for the questions that had been raised?

The quest for an answer to that question led me to complete a Master of Philosophy that examined how the Evangelicals of the sixteenth century understood the liberal arts. The journey continued through a doctoral dissertation which explored how the sixteenth century model was adapted by C. F. W. Walther and questioned if this model was useful in a modern classroom.

The pursuit of a doctoral degree led me to stumble upon intriguing topics along the way that could not be covered within the confines of my research thesis. These topics were like hidden paintings by a great artist that were crying out to be discovered, brought to light, and displayed in the grand gallery of educational discourse. Writing this book allowed me to uncover several hidden works. I explore the development of the liberal arts prior to Luther, examine, in detail, the relationship of education to the Lutheran understanding of baptism, vocation and catechesis, examine the influence of the Anabaptist and Enthusiasts on the development of Lutheran pedagogy, and I provide a critical assessment of the suitability of modern liberal education as a basis for confessional Lutheran pedagogy.

One might be tempted to view this as a book about historical theology rather than pedagogy. In fact it is both. It is all part of the same picture. What this book seeks to develop is a contemporary Lutheran pedagogy by doing what Christian pedagogues have always done—going back to earlier sources. By examining this bigger picture one can see an Evangelical liberal arts pedagogy as an intricate work of art that connects the teacher in the classroom to Lutheranism's first sources. Thus, direction for the future is to be found in the sources and pedagogues of the past. To look back is to move forward. Educators must see themselves as part of a continuum of pedagogues ready to engage in dialogues with Isocrates, Cicero, Augustine, Aquinas, Erasmus, Luther, Bugenhagen, Melanchthon, Walther, and other pedagogues of the past, and encourage their students to do the same. This is the heart of all classical education: preparing students for the future by equipping them to study the thinkers of the past and to apply the divine truth and wisdom they uncover to the world they will inherit.

I must acknowledge and thank those who have been instrumental in the development of this book. There are so many people who have helped out that any list I provide will be incomplete; however, several

require special commendations. Professors Doret de Ruyter and Leendert Groenendijk from the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam served as my doctoral advisors and were exemplars of the ideals of good scholarship. Doctors Gene Veith and Jon Bruss willingly and eagerly served as reviewers for the book and provided invaluable suggestions as well as much needed encouragement in completing the project. I am grateful to the editorial staff at Concordia Publishing House who has shown more than a modicum of patience with me, a first time author. Finally, I must thank my wife, Doreen, who served as my editor, proof-reader, and critic. She spent untold hours straightening my tangled thoughts and making sense of my "up-mixed" words.

ABBREVIATIONS

AE Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works.* American Edition. Volumes 1–30: Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan. St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–76. Volumes 31–55: Edited by Helmut Lehmann. Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–86. Volumes 56–75: Edited by Christopher Boyd Brown. St. Louis: Concordia, 2009–.

CWE *The Collected Works of Erasmus*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978–1989. All quotations reprinted with permission of the publisher.

TC *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church, German-Latin-English*. Friedrich Bente and W. H. T. Dau, eds. St. Louis: Concordia, 1921.

WA Luther, Martin. *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe.* 65 vols. Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1883–1993.

Style Notes

When a cited work uses an English spelling of an European name the English spelling will be retained: for example, Buenger vs. Bünger.

Arabic and Roman numbers used in journal citations are entered according to their original usage: for example, Evang.-Luth. Schulblatt III and Evang.-Luth. Schulblatt 9.

INTRODUCTION

In 1533 Philip Melanchthon delivered "A Speech Concerning the Miseries of Teachers" in which he took a light-hearted look at the difficulties faced by teachers. Comparing the teacher to Sisyphus, he said, "For how much greater is the task for a teacher than for Sisyphus? His task of rolling a rock is a single one, and he is free from anxiety. See how a teacher's task, to my discomfort, is many-sided. Never, unless compelled by a teacher, does a boy take a book into his hands. When he receives it, his eyes and mind wander off. A teacher explains something, presently sleep creeps up on the spoilt boy, and carefree he sleeps on one of his ears, while the teacher shatters himself by teaching."[1] The speech is a reminder of how little the teaching profession has changed. The frustrations and troubles of a teacher in the sixteenth century remain the same in the twenty-first century. Children's minds still wander and they still nod off while the teacher "shatters himself by teaching." If we can identify common struggles and "miseries" faced by teachers throughout history, is it also possible to identify common joys and successes? How were those joys and successes achieved? Are there methodologies, curricula, and pedagogical philosophies that have proven themselves successful for almost two millennia? What if it could be demonstrated that these things were adaptable to a variety of circumstances and were valuable allies in the formation of Christian students? Surely these things would be of some interest to educators today.

This tantalizing thought stands in sharp contrast to the current educational environment which is something of an ocean awash with the flotsam of new curricula and the jetsam of new educational philosophies. Too much of the history of modern education is one of failed programs and abandoned philosophies. The optimism of

---

[1] Philipp Melanchthon, "*De miseriis paedagogorum oratio* (1533)," in *Corpus Reformatorum*, ed. Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider (Halle: Schwerschke, 1843).

twentieth-century educational modernism has slowly sunk beneath the waves. A much more pessimistic twenty-first-century post-modernism now floats on the surface but is listing badly, having difficulty coming up with fresh contributions to educational thought. As one then bobs about in this educational ocean, the idea of finding a lush island is enticing indeed. This is what the liberal arts offers to the contemporary educator: a model of education that is on one hand ancient and realistic, and on the other hand fresh and optimistic.

The Lutheran educator can chart a course to this island because he has access to the maps that were drawn up by teachers who used the liberal arts as their compass. These maps were composed by educators like C. F. W. Walther, J. C. W. Lindemann, and F. C. D. Wyneken: nineteenth-century Lutheran pedagogues who adapted the liberal arts to meet the needs of a nineteenth-century Confessional Lutheranism.

Further back in the bloodline are educators like Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, and Johann Bugenhagen. These sixteenth-century pedagogues adapted the arts to create a thoroughly Lutheran model of education. These teachers were so successful that their pedagogy and their adaptation of the arts became the foundation of education in Germany and in most of Protestant Europe for the next three centuries.[2]

The Lutheran teacher's ancestral line does not stop there. It can be traced all the way back to St. Augustine who, in the fourth and fifth centuries, took the view that the liberal arts curriculum of the Greeks and Romans was of divine origins. Augustine's educational genius was to adapt this "pagan" form of education to serve the requirements of Christian education.

Lutheran educators are almost inherently predisposed toward looking to the past for direction. Their pedagogical ancestors have always understood themselves as part of a greater context—a continuum of educators—who inherited the arts and, when there was a need for educational reform, returned to their predecessors for direction. C. F. W. Walther, who was not only the foremost Confessional Lutheran theologian of the nineteenth century but also that century's foremost Confessional Lutheran educator, looked to

[2] John Witte, *Law and Protestantism: The Legal Teachings of the Lutheran Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 290.

Luther and the educators of the Reformation for direction. Luther, in turn, was inspired by the humanists and the Church Fathers to study their use of the liberal arts. In other words, in order to move forward in applying the liberal arts, educators, at key points in Lutheran history, went back to the past.

Over the years many excellent works have examined various aspects of Lutheran education. Luther's educational work has been particularly well documented. In English the classic, if somewhat dated, work is Painter's *Luther on Education*.[3] Also dated is Bruce's *Luther as Educator*.[4] More recent works include Harran's *Martin Luther: Learning for Life*[5] which traces Luther's own education and the influence it had on his pedagogy, and Strauss' somewhat controversial *Luther's House of Learning.*[6] German-language works include Petzold's *Die Grundlagen der Erziehungslehre im Spätmittelalter und bei Luther*[7] and Ashiem's *Glaube und Erziehung bei Luther: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Verhältnisses von Theologie und Pädagogik*.[8] Published books documenting the work of Walther and the early Missourians are fewer. However, Beck's *Lutheran Elementary Schools*[9] and Stellhorn's *Schools of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod*[10] contain a wealth of information about the development of Lutheran schools in North America. Works dealing with contemporary Lutheran pedagogy are also sparse. Here

---

[3] Franklin Verzelius Newton Painter, *Luther on Education* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1928).
[4] Gustav Marius Bruce, *Luther As An Educator* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979).
[5] Marilyn J. Harran, *Martin Luther: learning for life* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1997).
[6] Gerald Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).
[7] Klaus Petzold, *Die Grundlagen der Erziehungslehre im Spätmittelalter und bei Luther* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1969).
[8] Ivar Asheim, *Glaube und Erziehung bei Luther: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Verhältnisses von Theologie und Pädagogik* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1961).
[9] Walter H. Beck, *Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States: A History of the Development of Parochial Schools and Synodical Educational Policies and Programs*, Second ed. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1965).
[10] August C. Stellhorn, *Schools of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1963).

one finds Rietschel's *Foundations in Lutheran Education*[11] which examines the basis for Lutheran education in a contemporary world and includes a historical overview of the development of Lutheran schools. Schmidt's *The Lutheran Parochial School*[12] is a useful examination of key documents and events connected with Lutheran education. Each of these volumes has merit in its own right; there is, however, no work that looks at Lutheran education as a whole and identifies the common historical themes upon which the contemporary educator can build a liberal arts curriculum.

In the medieval and Renaissance period, a common form of painting was the triptych: a three-paneled painting that had a common theme running throughout all three panels. Taken individually, each panel conveyed a rich, but incomplete, story. One had to view all three panels of the triptych together to understand the whole story. This is a good way to conceptualize the story of the Lutheran liberal arts. The panel on the left pictures Luther, Bugenhagen, and Melanchthon in light of the liberal arts. As the Reformation was primarily a theological movement, theology had a profound affect on how the Lutheran educators interpreted the role of the liberal arts in Lutheran pedagogy. These educators recognized that they were part of an ancient tradition that stretched back to Augustine, who had established the principle that the liberal arts should form the foundation of Christian pedagogy. At the same time, they are looking to more contemporary pedagogues, specifically the Northern European humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, for direction in how to make the arts relevant to the sixteenth century. In the center panel, one sees C. F. W. Walther and other early Missourian educators working in the context of the theological and educational currents of nineteenth-century Lutheranism. The onslaughts of rationalism and Pietism had a profound affect on the thoughts and actions of this small group of Confessional Lutherans. They were factors in their decision to emigrate to America, shaped their pedagogy and, most importantly, drove them back to the Reformation era for a confessionalized model of the liberal arts. Like

[11] William C. Rietschel, *An Introduction to the Foundations of Lutheran Education* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2001).
[12] Wayne E. Schmidt, *The Lutheran Parochial School: Dates, Documents, Events and People* (Chelsea: Concordia Seminary Publications, 2001).

the sixteenth-century Lutherans, they were at a crucial point in history. The moment drove them to adapt the liberal arts to suit their circumstances and use them as the key building blocks of their pedagogy. Though an old model of education, it was given a fresh interpretation to meet the requirements of a nineteenth-century Confessional Lutheran school curriculum.

In the last panel of the triptych, today's educators are exploring how this classical Lutheran model of education addresses the concerns raised by the prevailing educational paradigm—liberal education. It is important to note that liberal education is distinct from the classical liberal arts. The chief aim of liberal education is the development of the student into autonomous individuals. It is often assumed that Lutheran theology has little to say about this model of education. The unfortunate result is that Lutheran theology either dismisses the concerns of liberal education or it assumes that liberal education is a neutral pedagogical model that has no impact on the overall goals of Lutheran education. By bringing the historical Lutheran appropriation of the liberal arts into conversation with modern pedagogy, Lutheran educators will be well situated to make an accurate assessment of contemporary educational thought.

Some explanations are required for some of the key terms appearing in this work. Particularly in American parlance, "Evangelicals" generally refers to non-denominational conservative Christians; however, the term was originally used by Luther and the other sixteenth-century Lutherans to describe themselves and their theology. In this book "Evangelicals" refers to the latter. The term "liberal arts" commonly refers to a general course of university studies that concentrates on the humanities. This book refers to the term in the classical sense: that is, the ancient grouping of the seven arts believed to comprise a complete education. The lower division of these arts, referred to as the "trivium", included grammar, logic, and rhetoric, and comprised the foundational tools of learning. The higher division, the "quadrivium", was generally composed of geometry, astronomy, arithmetic, and music, and formed the four arts of higher learning. A comprehensive study of the development of these higher arts would be truly beneficial, especially for those involved in undergraduate and graduate studies. The study of long and nuanced history of the quadrivium contains a treasure trove of insights into the

principles of Christian higher education. That task shall be left to another.

This book is primarily interested in the arts as related to pre-university education. As such, while not ignoring the higher arts, it will concentrate on the development of the lower three arts of the trivium. One further note of clarification is required. The English word "trivial" developed from the word "trivium." "Trivial" originally referred to that which belongs to the trivium—the basis of all learning. Ironically, in modern usage, something "trivial" has little importance or worth. This is certainly not how the term is used here.

PART A

LUTHER AND THE LIBERAL ARTS

The left side of the triptych, features Luther and the sixteenth-century Evangelical educators, is set in the context of different streams of influence that brought the liberal arts to the era of the Reformation—an era which ended up reforming the arts themselves so that they became thoroughly Lutheran. There were, in fact, three major streams of influence in the sixteenth-century Lutheran appropriation of the arts: the use of the arts by Christian educators from Augustine through the scholastics of the fifteenth century; the educational work of the northern European humanists; and, most importantly, the Evangelicals' own theology. In each of these three areas, there were three key recurring themes: the question of knowledge and truth, the use of "pagan authors" by Christian educators, and the relationship of theology to the liberal arts.

1

STREAMS OF INFLUENCE

FIRST STREAM OF INFLUENCE: EARLIER CHRISTIAN PEDAGOGUES

As the Evangelicals of the sixteenth century adapted the liberal arts to their circumstances, they drew freely on Greek and Roman teachers such as Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, Cicero, and Quintilian. This was not a novel idea. The precedent for using such authors had been set by Augustine of Hippo (354–430). In fact the influence of this Church Father continually surfaces in the Evangelicals' treatment of the liberal arts. Augustine's pragmatic approach to the subject, his flexible understanding of the arrangement of the arts, and his understanding of their pedagogical limitations were all reflected in the Evangelicals' understanding of the liberal arts.

As an educator, Augustine was part of a continuing tradition of the liberal arts which traced its roots back to late fifth-century BC Athenian society. A tradition of *enkyklios paideia* ("in a circle of instruction or "the cycle of education")[13] developed in opposition to "banausic" education (a trades-based education that equipped students to do manual labor) which was required by the artisans of the city. The Athenians recognized that the free citizens of the city required an

[13] Marrou translates this as "general education." The English word "encyclopedia" is derived from this word. Hellenistic culture understood the term in two ways. At times it was understood as "the general culture of the educated gentleman." At other times it referred to an ideal secondary education that prepared the mind for a life of contemplating ideas. H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (London: Sheed and Ward, 1977), 176–77.

education whose goal was to produce a virtuous man capable of engaging in thoughtful deliberations of philosophy and politics.

It is broadly maintained that the *artes liberales* or liberal arts emerged out of Hellenistic culture, and were further developed by the Romans.[14] The purpose of the arts was to produce virtuous and capable leaders who would use their oratorical skills for the good of their fellow citizens.[15] This would be a recurring theme over the next two millennia.

The formal curriculum of the seven liberal arts was not finalized until the sixth century when Cassiodorus (484–584) would speak of the *septem artes liberales*; however, the structure of the liberal arts was delineated by the Romans in the middle of the first century BC. The great Roman orators Cicero and Quintillian spoke of the three literary arts of grammar, logic (also called dialectics), and rhetoric—which would later be known as the trivium—and the higher arts, later known as the quadrivium, which generally included geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and music. Of the two groupings, the lower arts were the most important. Grammar taught the fundamentals of language, logic how to use that language to construct cogent arguments, and rhetoric provided the tools to put forth those arguments in a winsome and persuasive manner. After a student had mastered these arts, he had the ideal foundation required by orators and was prepared to progress to the higher arts. While the liberal arts were considered of paramount importance, room was also provided for an education in technical arts such as medicine, architecture, law, drawing, and military matters.[16] The student who had received a liberal arts education was prepared to advance to one of the

[14] Kimball in his book *Orators and Philosophers* convincingly argues that, while the concept of the liberal arts was certainly present in the Greek tradition of the *enkyklios paideia***,** it was the Romans who, with their emphasis on oratory and eloquence, developed the structure and pattern of the liberal arts. Bruce A. Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1986), 29.

[15] Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education*, 37.

[16] Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 176–85.

specialized sciences of learning: namely, philosophy, medicine, or law.[17]

Although not the first Christian educator to see the value of the ancient writers, Augustine was one of the first who was able to integrate the classics into a system of Christian education. Prior to Augustine, most of the Church Fathers recognized the intellectual depth and beauty of the ancient writings, but they struggled with how "pagan" classical learning could be incorporated into Christian pedagogy. St. Jerome, for example, knew the ancient writers well. He particularly loved the writings of Cicero, but he constantly battled his desire to read them, believing that the Roman author would drag his soul to hell.[18] Thus, well into the fourth century, there was only a slight influence of the classical tradition on Christianity.[19] Augustine, however, had a much more open view toward pre-Christian authors. He believed that all truth, even if contained in the writings of pagan authors, was still to be considered the truth and therefore to be received as from God. The very best of secular culture could be used by the Christian in service to Christ. He said, "A person who is a good and a true Christian should realize that truth belongs to his Lord, wherever it is found, gathering and acknowledging it even in pagan literature."[20] Augustine's profile as both a Christian theologian and a product of classical culture uniquely equipped him to bridge the gap between the fading classical Roman world and the emerging Christian world. Augustine took ancient classical humanism and transformed it into a Christian humanism that would dominate the world of medieval thought.[21]

---

[17] In early Latin, *scientia*, from which the English word "science" is derived, meant simply to know or to discern. By the early medieval period it came to describe a deep, penetrating understanding of a particular area of knowledge. James A. Weisheipl, "Classification of the Sciences in Medieval Thought," *Mediaeval Studies* 27(1965): 54.

[18] Henry J. Perkinson, *Since Socrates: Studies in the History of Western Educational Thought* (New York: Longman, 1980), 37.

[19] Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, 325.

[20] Aurelius Augustine, "On Christian Teaching," (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 47.

[21] H. I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, 4th ed. (Paris: E. De Boccard, 1958), 355.

Augustine believed that the purpose of education was to direct the student to disengage himself from less noble goals and turn inward to pursue the truth that lies within. He believed that divine illumination could be attributed to the indwelling of Christ. In, *On the School Master*, Augustine said, "Our real Teacher is he who is listened to, who is said to dwell in the inner man, namely Christ, that is the unchangeable power and the eternal wisdom of God. To this wisdom every rational soul gives heed."[22] This understanding of the indwelling of truth is a key concept in Augustine's view of the liberal arts within a Christian educational framework. As a student was educated in the arts, Christ was at work in that student revealing wisdom and truth. Early on, Augustine had an optimistic view that, if the liberal arts were properly used, they could lead a person to a knowledge of things eternal, and of the true wisdom that was manifest in Christ Jesus. As Augustine matured as a theologian, he began to take a more limited view of what the liberal arts could accomplish. The epistles of Paul, particularly the Letter to the Romans, convinced Augustine that a saving knowledge of God could only come through Christ as He revealed himself in the Scriptures.[23] By the time he completed *On Christian doctrine* in 426, he came to realize that the gap between the infinite and righteous God on the one hand, and finite sinful man on the other, was too great to be bridged by the liberal arts.

With this understanding, the arts were given a more restricted role with respect to their ability to enlighten the student with divine wisdom; however, they were still viewed as an absolutely essential aspect of a Christian's education. Grammar and logic enabled the Christian to properly understand Scripture, and rhetoric facilitated the effective proclamation of Scripture.[24] The higher arts—such as arithmetic, astronomy and geometry—placed the Scriptures in the context of the wisdom of God revealed in creation. Thus Scripture,

---

[22] Aurelius Augustine, *Earlier writings*, trans. John H. S. Burleigh, vol. 7, Library of Christian Classics (London: SCM Press, 1953), 95.

[23] Frederick Van Flerteren, "Augustine, Neoplatonism, and the Liberal Arts: The Background to *De doctrina christiana*," in *De doctrina christiana: A Classic of Western Culture*, ed. Duane W. H. Arnold and Pamela Bright (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 19.

[24] Augustine had a very practical reason for placing the liberal arts at the core of education. He saw them as tools to aid in evangelism.

when combined with the wisdom gained from the arts placed into man's grasp the totality of the wisdom and truth revealed by God. Referring to the pagan philosophers of the ancient world, Augustine wrote: "These, therefore, the Christian, when he separates himself in spirit from the miserable fellowship of these men, ought to be taken away from them, and to devote to their proper use in preaching the Gospel. Their garments, also—that is, human institutions such as are adapted to that intercourse with men which is indispensable in this life—we must take and turn to a Christian use."[25]

By immersing the student in the liberal arts, the teacher could engage the student in this inward process.[26] To accomplish this, Augustine returned to the Greek conception of an all-encompassing education. He believed that the student was not so much to be taught various subjects as to be led on a journey through the humanities.[27]

While Augustine changed the catalogue of the liberal arts, he maintained that grammar, logic, and rhetoric were always essential to the learning process.[28] Children, when exposed to an orator who uses the art of rhetoric to proclaim wisdom, will become excited and want to explore logic that they have learned. They will also want to explore

[25] *De doctrina christiana* II.XI, WA IX, 76.

[26] George Howie, *Educational Theory and Practice in St. Augustine* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 129–30.

[27] Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, 228–29.

[28] Augustine was never bound by a definitive list of what constituted the liberal arts. While he generally speaks of seven different arts, he freely changed what was included in the list. There are three works in which he catalogues the arts: *De ordine, De animae quantitate* and *Retractationum libri duo.* In all three works, he is consistent with the inclusion of the first three arts—grammar (*grammatica),* logic (*dialectica*), and rhetoric (*rhetorica* or *eloquentia*)—and also music and geometry. However, in *De ordine* he places the study of arithmetic as part of grammar and includes the study of astrology and philosophy. In the *De animae quantitate*, arithmetic (*numerandi disciplina)* is included in his list of seven arts but philosophy is omitted while in *Retractationum libri duo*, astrology is omitted and philosophy is included. This would set a pattern for successive generations of educators, including Luther and Walther. The liberal arts was generally understood as a fluid paradigm in which different arts could be added or deleted according to the educational needs of the times in which they lived.

the relationship between the spoken word they have heard and the written symbols they have encountered in learning grammar.[29]

In response to the desire of parents to seek out teachers with novel ideas, Augustine wrote that it was absurd for a parent to send a child to school merely to learn what the teacher thinks. The student was not to master the teacher's thoughts; he was to master the branches of learning. Teachers were to explain the branches of learning and direct the students through the arts so that they "reflect within themselves whether what has been said is true, contemplating, that is, that inner truth according to their capacity. It is then, therefore, that they learn."[30]

For the next seven centuries, Augustine's view of the liberal arts dominated Western education. Later pedagogues, such as the great educational reformer Rhabanus Maurus (780–856), made valuable contributions to how the arts were used, but they still continued in the Augustinian paradigm.[31]

Augustine established four educational principles which would be followed by the many Christian educators who succeeded him, including Luther and Walther. First Augustine maintained that all truth was of divine origin. This imbued learning with a certain sacred quality, and compelled the Christian not just to learn what was in Scripture but what other thinkers had said as well. Second, he believed that the Church was the natural heir of the liberal arts tradition. He maintained that God had preserved this tradition to enable the Church to grasp the sum total of divine wisdom and proclaim it in an eloquent and persuasive manner to the world around her. Third, Augustine understood the liberal arts as a flexible model of education—a malleable structure that could be changed to suit the theological needs of the day. Finally he viewed the liberal arts as a living tradition required that educators refer back to earlier

[29] Aurelius Augustine, *Later works*, trans. John Burnaby, vol. 12, Library of Christian Classics (London: SCM Press, 1955), 73.
[30] *De magistro*, 45 LCC VI, 100.
[31] Maurus, like Augustine, saw the usefulness of the arts to evangelism. He believed that, if the pagan tribes of Germany received a good liberal arts education, their conversion to Christianity could be facilitated. For his work among the Germans, he received the title *Praeceptor Germaniae* or "Teacher of Germany." That same title was given to Philip Melanchthon some 700 years later.

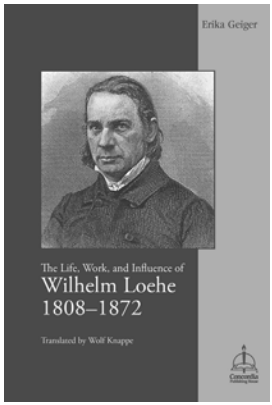
Peer Reviewed

Concordia Publishing House

Similar to the peer review or "refereed" process used to publish professional and academic journals, the Peer Review process is designed to enable authors to publish book manuscripts through Concordia Publishing House. The Peer Review process is well-suited for smaller projects and textbook publication.

We aim to provide quality resources for congregations, church workers, seminaries, universities, and colleges. Our books are faithful to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, promoting the rich theological heritage of the historic, creedal Church. Concordia Publishing House (CPH) is the publishing arm of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. We develop, produce, and distribute (1) resources that support pastoral and congregational ministry, and (2) scholarly and professional books in exegetical, historical, dogmatic, and practical theology.

For more information, visit:
www.cph.org/PeerReview.



NEW! The Life, Work, and Influence of

Wilhelm Loehe 1808 – 1872

Erika Geiger

"This first, full length biography of a key player in Lutheran history is accessible to lay audiences and appreciated by scholars."
—Prof. John T. Pless, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

The latest and best biography of a father of confessional Lutheranism in North America.

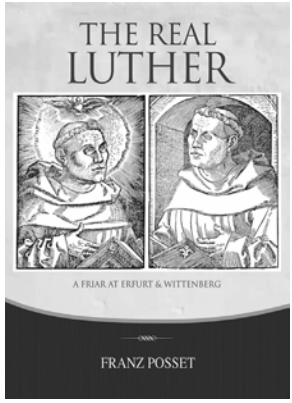
Loehe, who never visited the United States, sent missionaries, founded seminaries, established deaconess training, studied doctrine and liturgy, and fought with church officials. Geiger sets forth Loehe's life, and the divided opinions about him, in a compelling and authoritative narrative. (P) 296 pages. Paperback.

53-1176LBR **978-0-7586-2666-0**

NEW! The Real Luther: A Friar at Erfurt and Wittenberg

Franz Posset

"Students and researchers should read this book as a model for how to do Reformation History."—Dr. Markus Wriedt, Goethe University Frankfurt/Main



Roman Catholic Scholar, Franz Posset, carefully explores the history of Luther's development in the crucial years of 1501–17 before Luther's views were disputed. Setting aside legends and accusations, Posset gets at the facts about Luther as a late medieval friar in an age of reform. (P) 224 pages. Paperback.

53-1180LBR **978-0-7586-2685-1**

Forthcoming:

C. F. W. Walther: Churchman and Theologian

Includes the winning essays from the 2011 Reformation Theology Research Award as well as an extensive Walther bibliography, providing the latest and best research on C. F. W. Walther in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of his birth.

53-1171LBR **978-0-7586-2560-1**

---

www.cph.org • 1-800-325-3040

Concordia Publishing House