

PRAISE FOR *THE IDEA AND PRACTICE*
OF A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

This is an extremely illuminating book that will be of great help to our universities and to the LCMS as a whole. At a time when synodical universities are struggling with “Lutheran Identity,” this book serves as a template for faculty, administrators, boards, and students for how that can be achieved and for how that identity can help colleges to be truly excellent at every level.

—Gene Edward Veith, PhD
Professor of Literature
Patrick Henry College

Clearly articulating the Lutheran interaction model for relating faith and learning, this volume is a gift to everyone interested in understanding the Lutheran difference in Christian higher education. Ranging from background theological and historical essays to reflections from scholarly disciplines and administrative and student life perspectives, this text is an up-to-date compendium of the important and distinct dimensions found in Lutheran higher education. Persons interested in understanding the role of the liberal arts in a Christian education for vocation will also find this text particularly helpful. I heartily recommend this anthology to anyone seeking to understand the Lutheran heritage and promise in higher education.

—The Rev. Ernest L. Simmons, PhD
Professor of Religion
Director, The Dovre Center for Faith and Learning
Concordia College, Moorhead, MN
Author of *Lutheran Higher Education: An Introduction*
(Augsburg Fortress, 2001)

Impressively comprehensive and theologically articulate, this book turns a spotlight on church-related academic pursuits within the Lutheran (Missouri Synod) tradition. Its thoughtful analysis of Lutheran perspectives and values will enrich the national conversation concerning the place and role of religion in university education.

—Douglas Jacobsen, PhD, and Rhonda Hustedt Jacobsen, EdD
Authors of *No Longer Invisible: Religion in University Education*
(Oxford University Press, 2012)

The essays assembled in this volume provide valuable glimpses into the splendor of Lutheran higher education properly delivered. The reader is invited to immerse himself in the beauty of Lutheran higher education through discussions that engage the interaction of core Lutheran fundamentals and the heart of higher education. This work offers a refreshing explication of the richness

that is the Lutheran approach to Christian higher education. *The Idea and Practice of a Christian University: A Lutheran Approach* is an essential text for anyone involved or interested in Lutheran higher education.

—The Rev. Dr. Paul A. Philp
Director of Institutional Research and Integrity
The Concordia University System

The effort to transfer Lutheranism’s European Protestant heritage into American culture has not always been easy. This unusually helpful collection of essays explains what Lutheran higher education tries to do, has done, and would like to do—both in maintaining the best of the heritage and serving the needs of the present. The book’s many contributors offer much to ponder for anyone who values the heritage of the Reformation, the cause of Christ in the United States, and the application of specifically Lutheran insights to the practices of higher education.

—Mark A. Noll
Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History
University of Notre Dame
Author of *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind* (Eerdmans, 2011)

Scott Ashmon and his colleagues are to be commended for their effort. Collectively, they draw upon the Lutheran tradition as an insightful and much needed means of making sense of today’s confusing higher education landscape. Individuals serving in Lutheran contexts should be amongst the first to read, ponder, and act upon what this work offers. However, the model they unfold in their own ways is also of considerable value to individuals serving in contexts nurtured by a wide variety of Christian traditions.

—Todd C. Ream, PhD
Professor of Higher Education
Taylor University

The diverse contributors to this volume succeed in achieving a difficult aim—speaking from a particular tradition in winsome ways that will resonate with and engage the wider academy. Indeed, this book illuminates how and why certain Lutheran-shaped concepts and skills such as vocation, the two kingdoms, and “faith seeking understanding for service” should continue to interact with and influence Christian and even secular higher education. Moreover, I found that the creative insights from authors spanning multiple disciplines, and even the co-curricular arena, added fresh and engaging new ideas regarding how Lutheranism can nourish the university.

—Perry L. Glanzer, PhD
Professor of Educational Foundations
Resident Scholar, Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion
Baylor University

THE IDEA AND PRACTICE
OF A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

A LUTHERAN APPROACH



Peer Reviewed

EDITED BY SCOTT A. ASHMON

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FOREWORD

The reader of the essays in this volume will benefit from and enjoy a rich tapestry of clear and substantive perspectives on the Christian university in its Lutheran expression. In the tradition of Cardinal Newman's *The Idea of a University* (Oxford, 1873) and Jaroslav Pelikan's *The Idea of a University: A Reexamination* (Yale, 1992), the authors engage this topic with freshness and transparent expertise. In a culture that increasingly renders higher education value-neutral and reduces its aims to utilitarian goals, this work casts a bright beam on how faith and reason complement and enrich human knowledge. The great *solae* of the Reformation—*sola gratia*, *sola fide*, *sola scriptura*—inform the collective analysis that ultimately orders all knowledge rightly in relation to God's definitive disclosure of himself and reality in Jesus Christ, who holds all things together (Col 1:17).

Within this framework, there are distinctive accents that enrich the multifaceted aspects of the Christian, and in this instance, the *Lutheran* rendering of university education. Two such foci are: (1) the Lutheran two-kingdom lens of God's power and grace that emphasizes the interaction of faith and learning; and (2) the insightful emphasis on the doctrine of vocation as a guide to placing mind and soul in service to God and neighbor. This paradigm is decidedly different from the Reformed (neo-Calvinist) model—seen in books such as Arthur Holmes' *The Idea of a Christian College* (Eerdmans, 1987)—that uncritically merges God's two kingdoms through the "integration of faith and learning." The emphasis on vocation also helpfully places learning in service to the neighbor, whether in God's right-hand kingdom of grace or in his left-hand kingdom of power.

One can only rejoice that this volume raises the question of the Christian university with fresh energy and mind-heart-soul engagement. Since James Burtchaell's *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Christian Colleges and Universities from Their Christian Churches* (Eerdmans, 1998), the loss of Christian identity in many colleges and universities has become indisputable. The result is a virtual wasteland in many universities on questions of ethics and philosophy. How ironic that just as human learning advances with dazzling technology, the very meaning of human existence has been removed as a legitimate, even crucial, question for what is truly significant in higher education. May this volume

FOREWORD

challenge modern university culture, and, as the authors propose, provide a richer and more beautiful, and above all else, a more truthful reading of the human condition.

Dean O. Wenthe
President of the Concordia University System

PART ONE

FOUNDATION FOR LUTHERAN
HIGHER EDUCATION

THE PURPOSE OF A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY: A LUTHERAN VISION

*Scott A. Ashmon*¹

WELCOME TO ANYU

Rebekah Nathan, a cultural anthropologist, had spent most of her professional life doing ethnographic studies in a remote overseas village. Over her years of university teaching in the United States, though, she realized that the culture of her students had become increasingly foreign to her. So she decided to spend a whole year incognito as an older, returning freshman at her university—taking classes and living in the dorms—to write an ethnography about her fellow freshmen. In learning about these new university “villagers,” Nathan also saw what her university, which she anonymously calls AnyU, proclaimed to be the purpose of a university.

The defining moment came not at the middle or end of the academic year, but at the very beginning during the Welcome Week, when freshmen were introduced to their living and learning community, and the Freshman Colloquium, when they were initiated into academic life. Nathan describes this initial experience as “replete with competing messages.” The Welcome Week revved students up with messages of fun, independence, and careerist pragmatism. The colloquium then tried to instill in students the idea that university life is preparation for citizenship through liberal arts learning and the development of virtues. These conflicting messages, palpable during Nathan’s entire year at AnyU, left her wondering, “How are these to be reconciled? Is one message preferable to the other? Can we really have both? Do they put limits on each other?”²

¹ Scott Ashmon, PhD (Hebrew Union College), is Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew and Director of Core Curriculum at Concordia University Irvine (CUI).

² Rebekah Nathan, *My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 155–56. Rebekah Nathan is a pseudonym. For a

Where can the answer to these questions be found? It is the contention of this essay that a historically-rooted and biblically-based Lutheran vision for education answers these questions with its goal of educating students in wisdom and vocation for freedom and service to society, nature, and the church. Growing out of the fruitful interaction of historical educational theory and practice, Scripture, and the Lutheran doctrines of Christian freedom, vocation, and the two kingdoms, this vision offers “a supple, serviceable, and sophisticated” framework for supporting and coordinating both educational ends and guiding the practices of university life.³ To demonstrate this contention, this essay will examine the purpose of a Christian university from this view. It will then describe how this educational vision impacts one key practice at Christian universities: connecting faith and learning.

WISDOM AND VOCATION FOR FREEDOM AND SERVICE

Conflict between a Liberal and Useful Education

Conflict over the purpose—and value—of higher education is neither unique to AnyU nor new to the public forum. Clashes between occupationalism, which sees the purpose of higher education as job training, and liberal education, which sees it as developing individual intellect and character for citizenship, are still evident today. Some institutions focus exclusively on vocational training. On the opposite spectrum, some institutions shun (pre-)professional programs and majors for a purely liberal arts education. Clashes within universities that have liberal arts requirements and (pre-)professional programs are also palpable as students—and parents and government officials—tend to think that the majors provide relevant education for “the real world” while the liberal arts set up annoying, useless hurdles in the race to a degree and job.

similar observation of conflict and question of reconciliation between liberal and vocational education, see Derek Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should be Learning More* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 78–79.

³ See Mueller’s chapter for a summary of the Lutheran doctrine of vocation and two-kingdom theology. The quoted phrase comes from David W. Lotz, “Education for Citizenship in the Two Kingdoms: Reflections on the Theological Foundations of Lutheran Higher Education,” in *Institutional Mission and Identity in Lutheran Higher Education: Papers and Proceedings of the 65th Annual Convention, Lutheran Educational Conference of North America* (Washington DC: Lutheran Educational Conference of North America, 1979), 18–19.

Such conflict existed in the Reformation era too. Martin Luther's letter to the councilmen of Germany in 1524 responded to this question: "What is the use of teaching Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and the other liberal arts?"⁴ In a sermon six years later, Luther railed against parents who—as avaricious, idolatrous, servants of Mammon—would say, "Ha, if my son can read and write German and do arithmetic, that is enough. I am going to make a businessman of him."⁵ Philip Melanchthon, Luther's colleague at the University of Wittenberg, also had to address this clash. In 1531 he penned an oration reminding students that while the "higher disciplines"—the professional programs in theology, law, and medicine—were obviously useful personally and to society, they were not to "neglect or scorn the remaining disciplines [i.e., the liberal arts] as though useless for life" in their rush toward "ambition" or "gain." While the liberal arts may have "little outward appeal for the crowds," they are useful as the foundation for studying the higher disciplines. The two, in his analogy, work together like vowels and consonants. Without both working in harmony, speech—or rather an education for life—is impossible.⁶

The roots of the conflict over education's purpose are diverse with the common need for a job, desire for wealth, and social mobility being a few. Another root is the educational thought of John Locke and subsequent utilitarians. In 1692 Locke proposed that the "welfare and prosperity of a nation so much depends on [education]" that youth should receive the "easiest, shortest, and likeliest [education] to produce virtuous, useful, and able men in their distinct callings" in society.⁷

Other roots that "enthroned the practical" in America are the rise of specialized research disciplines and the advancement of science and technology in universities after the Civil War coupled with major funding from business and industry moguls and government land-grant acts for training professionals in business, science, agriculture and mechanical arts; for amassing profit; and for societal progress. The same root is seen after World War II when the government, businesses, and industries funded universities

⁴ Martin Luther, "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools," in AE 45:357.

⁵ Luther, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," in AE 46:215, 244, 251–52.

⁶ Philip Melanchthon, "On the Order of Learning," in *Orations on Philosophy and Education*, ed. Sachiko Kusakawa, trans. Christine F. Salazar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3–5.

⁷ John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895), lxiii.

to train scientists, engineers, technicians, and businessmen for the same ends.⁸

Each of these roots nourishes the tree of higher education to bear fruit that is useful, hireable, and lucrative. The tarest parts of this fruit hold the view “that all of life is a preparation for business—or, perhaps, more bluntly, that life *is* business.”⁹ This fruit is ripe in modern America. For-profit universities with a mission for mammon market themselves to students looking solely for technical and professional training. Non-profit universities, looking to keep themselves solvent, also offer condensed, or abridged, occupational programs for career-minded students. Even the U.S. Department of Education’s College Scorecard quantifies every university’s “value” by financial and occupational metrics: cost, graduation rate, loan default rate, median borrowing, and employment upon graduation.¹⁰

Yet another root of this conflict goes back to Aristotle in the fourth century BC. In Book VIII of *Politics*, Aristotle discusses public education and draws a deep divide between liberal education suited to freemen and mechanical education for professionals. With the premises that “the first principle of all action is leisure,” that “leisure is better than occupation and its end” since leisure “gives pleasure and happiness and enjoyment in life,” and that “learning and education” is best done “with a view to the leisure spent in intellectual activity,” Aristotle concludes that the rational soul’s leisurely contemplation of truth is happiness and the highest end of education. Aristotle describes the dichotomy between the liberal (“free” from work/service) and servile activities this way:

The object also which a man sets before him makes a great difference; if he does anything for his own sake or for the sake of his friends, or with a view to excellence, the action will not appear illiberal; but if done for the sake of others, the very same action will be thought menial and servile.

For Aristotle only knowledge pursued for its own sake and the pursuer’s happiness is liberal and noble; knowledge pursued for professional

⁸ For an analysis of the influence of the Germanic research ideal and government, business, and industry funding on the utilitarian end of higher education and the commodification and corporatization of universities, see Christopher J. Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

⁹ Benjamin R. Barber, *An Aristocracy of Everyone: the Politics of Education and the Future of America* (New York: Ballantine, 1992), 205.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Education, accessed September 19, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/higher-education/college-score-card>.

purposes is servile and suited for the “vulgar crowd” whose “minds are perverted from the natural state.”¹¹

Aristotle’s dichotomy between liberal and servile education is reflected in *The Idea of a University* (1852) by Cardinal John Henry Newman, a scholar whom Jacques Barzun hails as “the greatest theorists of university life” and a book that Jaroslav Pelikan lauds as “the most important treatise on the idea of the university ever written in any language.”¹² Newman, who draws heavily on Aristotle as “the oracle of nature and truth” in delineating the purpose of higher education, similarly contrasts liberal and commercial education and holds that the highest end of education—being “a direct need of our nature” and, quoting Cicero, “a condition of our happiness”—is liberal knowledge and a cultivated mind:

[T]hat alone is liberal knowledge, which stands on its own pretensions, which is independent of sequel, expects no complement, refuses to be *informed* . . . by any end, or absorbed into any art, in order duly to present itself to our contemplation. The most ordinary pursuits have this specific character, if they are self-sufficient and complete, the highest lose it, when they minister to something beyond them.

Liberal education . . . is simply the cultivation of the intellect . . . its object is nothing more nor less than intellectual excellence. . . . To open the mind, to correct it, to refine it, to enable it to grow, and to digest, master, rule, . . . to give it power over its own faculties, application, flexibility, method, critical exactness, sagacity, resource, address, eloquent expression.¹³

Pursuing knowledge for vocational or societal ends is a lower, servile form of education, even if it is beneficial. This root, of which Aristotle and Newman are exemplars, nourishes the tree of higher education to bear fruit that is intrinsically valuable for knowledge and the joy of the noetic self.¹⁴

¹¹ Aristotle, “Politics” in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 2:1337b18–1338a12, 1341b9–16, 1342a17–23. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press, Copyright © 1984 by the Jowett Copyright Trustees.

¹² Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Idea of a University: A Reexamination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 6, 9.

¹³ John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), 78–79, 81–83, 92.

¹⁴ For a recent example see Mark William Roche’s award-winning book, *Why Choose the Liberal Arts?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010). Roche says, on pages 15 and 26, that a liberal arts education is its own end and that through it humanity achieves its highest end: the leisurely joy of contemplating the eternal.

Neither Aristotle nor Newman, however, denies that liberal education can be very useful. Aristotle avers that there “can be no doubt that children should be taught those useful things which are really necessary, but not all useful things.” For this lower goal of utility, a liberal education is “useful” for “moneymaking,” “the management of a household,” and “political life.” Still, youth should only be taught “such kinds of knowledge as will be useful to them without making mechanics of them” since the personal happiness of contemplating the truth free from service is the highest end of education and life.¹⁵ Newman grants that, “If then a practical end must be assigned to a University [education], I say that it is that of training good members of society” whose cultivated intellects prepare them to “fill any post with credit,” “master any subject with facility,” and bring “a power and a grace to every work and occupation” enabling them “to be more useful, and to a greater number” than those educated for a “temporal calling, or some mechanical art.”¹⁶ In this vision, utility is a felicitous byproduct and lower end of liberal education.

In response to the rise of professional and technical studies at universities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, some liberal educators intensified the dichotomy between liberal and servile education to the point where “only a ‘useless’ education can be called ‘liberal’” thus making its fruit void of nourishment.¹⁷ This dichotomy is evident even in the twenty-first century, most notably with Stanley Fish’s declaration that the humanities, or liberal arts, do nothing useful for society whatsoever; they are purely their own good and only meant to give pleasure to those who enjoy studying them.¹⁸ But such a division between liberal and useful education, whether from staunchly intrinsic or utilitarian quarters, does not, however, represent the theory and practice of the bulk of Western higher educational history. A few salient examples will suffice to illustrate this point.

Liberal Education and Vocation in the History of Western Higher Education

In ancient Egyptian scribal schools, students read classic wisdom texts like *The Instruction of Amenemope*, written around 1200 BC by a successful

¹⁵ Aristotle, “Politics,” 2:1337b3–9, 1338a15–17.

¹⁶ Newman, *The Idea of a University*, 126, 134–35.

¹⁷ Bruce A. Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education*, exp. ed. (New York: The College Board, 1995), 231.

¹⁸ Stanley Fish, “Will the Humanities Save Us?” *The New York Times*, January 6, 2008, accessed September 19, 2014, http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/01/06/will-the-humanities-save-us/?_r=0.

and well-respected scribe to his son on how to think, speak, and act temperately, piously, and virtuously in his future scribal office and life. Students also learned writing, arithmetic, geometry, foreign languages, geography, astronomy, and the names of flora, fauna, and minerals. Later in their education students specialized in theology, medicine, administration and other subjects so that they could work for the palace or temple as a scribe, physician, priest, judge, or administrator of agriculture or commerce.¹⁹ In ancient Egypt what would later be called liberal and professional education, or wisdom and vocation, went hand in hand with the former serving as the foundation for the latter and life.

The connection between liberal education and vocations also appears in ancient Greece and Rome. Book VII of Plato's *Republic* (ca. 370 BC) outlines an ideal education for future warriors and philosophers who will protect and rule society. This education "mustn't be useless," declares Plato. Studies in arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music, and logical inquiry will enable students to perceive what is true, good, and beautiful. Besides achieving education's great goal of knowing "the eternally real and not what comes into being and then passes away," this knowledge will be invaluable for performing the vocations of defender and leader.²⁰ Likewise the Roman rhetorician Cicero, advancing the dominant educational program of the Greek orator Isocrates (fourth century BC), argues in *On the Orator* (ca. 55 BC) that students should be well versed in the liberal arts, all knowledge, so that they can assume any position in public life and wisely, virtuously, and eloquently address any matter. While, as Bruce Kimball remarks, the Roman oratorical curriculum "eschews specialization," it does not eschew usefulness. Its first goal is broadly vocational: "training the good citizen to lead society."²¹

Medieval universities also connected liberal and vocational education. The curriculum was grounded in the seven liberal arts developed in ancient Greece and Rome: grammar (Latin, literature, and history), rhetoric, and logic (together called the *trivium* or "three [language] ways [of knowing]") and arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy (the *quadrivium* or "four [mathematical] ways [of knowing]"). These seven arts led, under Thomas Aquinas' curricular expansion in the thirteenth century, to the study of

¹⁹ Patrizia Piacentini, "Scribes," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, ed. Donald B. Redford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3:187-92.

²⁰ Plato, *Republic: Books 6-10*, trans. Chris Emlyn-Jones and William Preddy (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 521d, 527b.

²¹ Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers*, 36-37.

three philosophies: natural, moral, and metaphysical.²² The crowning study was theology, the contemplation of God. These disciplines also prepared students for professional graduate studies in theology, law, and medicine. These contemplative and useful ends of education were mirrored, in Aquinas' view, by the ends of teaching. Question eleven of *Disputed Questions on Truth* (ca. 1256) asks, "Is teaching an act of the active or contemplative life?" Aquinas gives two answers. When the object of teaching is the subject matter itself, the end is "the contemplative life . . . the seeing of truth." When the object is the student, the end is "the active life . . . , which is aimed at for its usefulness to neighbours."²³

At the University of Wittenberg, following Renaissance humanism's revival of the oratorical tradition, Melanchthon reformed the liberal arts curriculum to emphasize classical and biblical languages, literature, history, rhetoric, and logic. "Dare to know . . . it is your task to seek the truth," Melanchthon charged his students.²⁴ This truth was to be found in studying human wisdom in classical texts, natural wisdom in creation, and divine wisdom in Scripture in their original languages. A major thrust of this education, then, was for students to pursue wisdom by reading and interpreting texts and, ultimately, eloquently proclaiming God's revealed Word, especially the Gospel. Another thrust of this education, which included the higher disciplines of theology, law, and medicine, was to cultivate wise, virtuous citizens for life itself and for their vocations in service to the church and state. "[A]ll disciplines that are taught in the schools are necessary for life," Melanchthon exhorts his students, so "keep in view the purpose of your studies, and decide that they are provided for giving of advice for the state, for teaching in the churches and for upholding the doctrine of religion."²⁵

A final example comes from colonial America. Harvard College, established in 1636, created its curriculum to mirror the humanist education of Oxford and Cambridge. Freshmen studied Latin, Greek, Hebrew, rhetoric, logic, history, geography, and theology; sophomores added the study of physics; juniors added ethics and metaphysics; and seniors added arithme-

²² Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers*, 66–67.

²³ Aquinas, "Disputed Question on Truth," in *Thomas Aquinas: Selected Writings*, ed. Ralph McInerny (London: Penguin, 1998), 214–15.

²⁴ Philip Melanchthon, "On Correcting the Studies of Youth (1518)," in *A Melanchthon Reader*, trans. Ralph Keen (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), 50, 56. Reprinted by permission of Peter Lang Publishing.

²⁵ Melanchthon, "On the Order of Learning," 5–6. For more on the University of Wittenberg, see the chapter by Dawn and Mallinson.

tic, geometry, and astronomy. This non-specialized curriculum was meant to mold learned, pious, and civil graduates who could go serve as clergy and statesmen. This model, which saw liberal education as vocational education for the church and state, served as the paradigm for every American college prior to the American Revolution.²⁶

These examples show that while there have been shifts in the curricular balance between liberal and vocational education, one constant theme remains: liberal education served as the foundation for vocations. Whether as a base for further education in a specific vocation, for directly entering into vocations in church or state, or as a broad preparation for life's various vocations, a liberal education was clearly connected and useful to vocation.

A Biblical Paradigm of Education

The educational vision that wisdom and vocation, learning and usefulness, go together is not only apparent from history, but also, and significantly for the Christian university, from Scripture. Tradition holds that Plato's Academy had this sign above its entrance: "Let no one who is ignorant of geometry enter." If this was the placard above the gate to education in Athens, what would the placard be in Jerusalem? It would be Ps 1.

Psalm 1, which contrasts the wise righteous person with the foolish wicked person, stands at the beginning of the Psalter to invite those desiring wisdom to enter the Psalms and drink in more wisdom. It also invites readers to pursue wisdom in the wisdom texts that follow it in the canons: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job.²⁷ Based on Ps 1 and related biblical passages (e.g., Isa 55:1–3; John 4:13–14, 7:37; Rev 22:17), the invitation on the placard above Jerusalem's gate would read, "Let everyone who thirsts after wisdom freely enter."

²⁶ Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers*, 103–13 and Lucas, *American Higher Education*, 103–5. Even after this period, American higher education continued to uphold both liberal and vocational education for the next two centuries, although the content and mixture of these two aspects of education changed in various ways (Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, *The Academic Revolution* [New York: Doubleday, 1968], 199).

²⁷ The Jewish division of the Hebrew Bible, which extends back at least to the early second century BC (see the prologue to Ecclesiasticus/Sirach), falls into three parts: Torah, Prophets, and Writings (cf. Luke 24:4). Psalms heads the Writings section with Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes after it. Bishop Mileto in the late second century AD offers the earliest Christian list of Old Testament books. It is arranged in four parts: Pentateuch, Historical, Wisdom/Poetic, and Prophetic Books. Psalms heads the Wisdom/Poetic section with Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job after it. The same order is seen in the earliest, most complete Christian Bibles in the fourth century.

But what sort of wisdom? Wisdom to what end? Certainly there is practical human wisdom and natural wisdom in the biblical wisdom texts. Observations or admonitions about the good and bad effects of effort and idleness as seen in nature (Prov 6:6–11) or wealth and poverty (Prov 10:15, 23:4–5) are part of Scripture’s wisdom. But the principal focus is on divine wisdom: “The beginning of wisdom is the fear/reverence of the LORD” (Prov 9:10).²⁸ This is the golden thread that runs through the wisdom texts (Ps 34:11; Job 28:28; Eccl 12:13) and culminates in the incarnation of God’s wisdom in Christ the Savior (1 Cor 1:18–24; Col 2:2–3). It is divine wisdom that heads the Psalter and invites the reader to enter and receive it.

The invitation of Ps 1 portrays the wise person as one “whose delight is in the teaching (i.e., Law and Gospel) of the LORD” and who “meditates day and night on his teaching” (v. 2).²⁹ This person “will be like a tree transplanted beside canals of water so that it will produce its fruit in its season and its leaves will not wither, and all that it will do will succeed” (v. 3).³⁰ To understand the message of these verses, their parallelism and extended simile need to be unpacked. This tree (wise person) is transplanted (implicitly by the grace of God from an arid land of self-reliance [see Jer 17:5–8]) next to an intentionally-dug waterway (God’s revelation) that continuously brings life-sustaining and nourishing water (God’s teaching) to the tree. The tree drinks by continually meditating on God’s revealed Word. Such learning is personally delightful and beneficial because it contains God’s good Law and saving grace.³¹ It also has the planned outcome of causing the wise person to produce timely fruit, constant foliage, and success.

²⁸ Translations of the Hebrew Bible are my own.

²⁹ “Teaching” is used instead of the normal translation “law” for the Hebrew word *tôrāh* because *tôrāh* generally means “instruction, teaching.” Sometimes it refers to God’s Law (Exod 18:16, 20); other times to God’s grace (Exod 13:9 and the Torah of Genesis to Deuteronomy in the Jewish canon). “Teaching” best fits this context because after Ps 1 the reader encounters psalms devoted to God’s Law and grace (e.g., Ps 119 and 136).

³⁰ This verse ubiquitously reads “which/that yields” in English translations. The Hebrew word behind the relative pronoun “which, that” is *’āšer*. Translating *’āšer* this way here is legitimate, but it misses the nuance that the tree has been transplanted by God from an arid place, where it was fruitless and withered, to a well-watered orchard in order that it naturally fulfill its good functions as a tree. Given this, it is best to translate *’āšer* as a purpose clause. For other relevant examples of this use of *’āšer*, see Deut 4:10, 40 where God gave Israel his words “so that” they would learn to fear/revere God, “so that” it would go well for them in the Promised Land, and “so that” (here the Hebrew is *lěma’an*, a clear purpose clause) their lives would be long.

³¹ James L. Mays, *Psalms* (Louisville: John Knox, 1994), 42.

One way of reading this psalm is to see it as speaking to the personal prosperity of the wise. This is a legitimate reading. It resonates with wisdom texts that connect God’s Word, wisdom, and righteousness to the divine blessings of health, wealth, peace, offspring, and honor (Prov 3:1–8, 13–18; 22:4; Job 1:1–3). A tree that is constantly watered will naturally flourish. The water supply ensures that the tree’s roots drink in water to keep its leaves verdant (Jer 17:8) and produce abundant fruit at just the right time. Its leafy shade reciprocally protects its roots from the harsh, desiccating rays of the sun. Its fruit can fall to the ground to fertilize the soil and nourish the tree more. All of this causes the tree to prosper in its own stature, strength, and life.

To leave the psalm at this level, though, misses the thrust of the tree imagery. The primary purpose of a fruit tree for any human reader—regardless of whether the reader looks at Ps 1 through a first person (the tree is me) or third person (the tree is her) lens—is that it benefits others. This is commonly understood by fruit farmers and everyone who eats fruit. It is also seen in Gen 1:11, 29 and 2:8–9, 15 when God creates fruit trees. The trees are to be self-reproducing and aesthetically pleasing. But their ultimate purpose is to nourish and sustain human life. This end is also achieved by providing never-ending shade to protect people from the fatal heat that beats down on them (cf. Judg 9:15; Ezek 17:23; Jonah 4:6–8). And where there are trees there is water—especially in an orchard with an intentionally-dug waterway as in Ps 1. The fruit and shade that trees offer to those who come near also direct them to the same free water that nourishes the trees. The success of a fruit tree is vitally important for itself, but ultimately it is for the provision and protection of others.

This reading is strengthened by the contrast with the wicked fools whose ways are opposed to God’s and likened to “chaff” (vv. 1, 4). Chaff, the husk that surrounds harvested grain, was thrown into the air in ancient Israel so that the wind would blow it to the side while the heavier grain would fall to the ground to be collected for food. Chaff was insubstantial compared to grain and nutritionally useless to people. The point of this imagery is clear: while wicked fools (chaff) are found with wise righteous people (grain), they lack the wisdom (nourishment) that is useful to others so they are cast aside.

So why pursue an education in wisdom? There is personal pleasure and benefit to be found in divine, human, and natural wisdom. This is a good end, but it is not the ultimate end. The great end of an education in wisdom is to be useful to others, to be life-sustaining people in the place(s) you have been planted.

This purpose, manifest in Ps 1, is reflected in other biblical passages. The second great command of Scripture is “Love your neighbor as yourself”

(Lev 19:18; Matt 22:39). It is presumed here that a person will love himself. That is a good end, but the ultimate end is loving the neighbor. Even the greatest command—“Love the LORD your with the all of your mind and with all of your soul and with all of your strength” (Deut 6:4; Matt 22:37)—is fulfilled, Jesus says, in loving the neighbor (Matt 25:31–40). The example of God’s prophets and apostles shows that they did not keep their education in the wisdom of God’s Law and Gospel to themselves. As per God’s calling—and warning—they proclaimed God’s wisdom for the salvation of others (Ezek 3:1–21, 33:1–8; Gal 1:11–24). Moses stood before God’s presence on Mount Sinai receiving God’s revealed Word, but did not stay there. He, too, as per his calling, came down to proclaim God’s Law to Israel (Exod 19–24). Jesus’ divinity and glory shone forth on a mountain in a moment of comfort, but he did not remain there despite Peter’s temptation (Luke 9:28–35). He too descended the mountain setting aside his heavenly glory to complete his calling by revealing the mysterious wisdom of God’s Gospel through his teaching, healing, death, and resurrection. All of these texts support the educational paradigm of Ps 1 that a person learns wisdom ultimately to serve others through her God-given callings.

Applying this biblical paradigm to higher education—which at a Christian university includes the study of divine, human, and natural wisdom—a clear analogy emerges. Education should be personally pleasurable and beneficial. That is a good end. It is not, however, the highest end. An education in wisdom is ultimately for watering trees—whether students, faculty, staff, administrators, or constituents—so that they can produce nutritious fruit and protective shade for the lives of others in their vocations in life.

Lutheran Theology and Education

Lutheran theologians, whose *sola Scriptura* (“Scripture alone”) exegesis directly influences their faith and practice, likewise uphold the value of pursuing the truth. Melancthon dares his students to know the truth. Luther rhetorically asks, “How dare you not know what can be known?”³² O. P. Kretzmann, a past president of Valparaiso University, asserts that a Christian university is dedicated to a two-fold task: “the search for Truth and the transmission of Truth.”³³

³² Quoted in Robert Benne, “A Lutheran Vision/Version of Christian Humanism,” *Lutheran Forum* 31, no. 3 (1997): 42.

³³ O. P. Kretzmann, “The Destiny of a Christian University in the Modern World (1940),” in *The Lutheran Reader*, ed. Paul J. Contino and David Morgan (Valparaiso,

Lutheran theologians recognize the personal joy and benefit that come with education. Luther himself speaks of God creating humans so that they can understand God's creation and "take delight in that knowledge as part of [their] nature."³⁴ He talks of how the "pure pleasure a man gets from having studied" also leads to "great wealth and honor" through the vocations that the educated attain.³⁵ In the same vein, Kretzmann declares that the first two premises of a Christian education are that "God created man a moral being, with body and soul, endowed with reason, emotion, and will . . . for man's good and enjoyment" and that "God created heaven and earth and all that is therein for man's use and enjoyment." Education is meant to develop these joyous gifts within God's will.³⁶

To be within God's will, though, the good ends of pursuing truth and personal joy and benefit must not become the highest ends of education. When they do, education falls to two temptations: idolatry and self-centeredness. On the one hand, the pursuit and contemplation of truth as the highest end of education leads to what can be called "idealatry," where ideal truth becomes the sole, sufficient end of erudition and is thus effectively worshiped as god by its ivory tower devotees.³⁷ On the other hand, making personal pleasure and profit the greatest goal of education leads to the sinful self-centeredness that Luther lambasts when he laments that, "our nature has been so deeply curved in upon itself because of the viciousness of original sin that it . . . turns the finest gifts of God in upon itself and enjoys them . . . for its own sake."³⁸ None of these good gifts of God—truth, pleasure, or profit—should be misplaced in the order of good ends lest they

IN: Valparaiso University, 1999), 110. Reprinted by permission of Valparaiso University.

³⁴ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1–5*, AE 1:46.

³⁵ Luther, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School," in AE 46:243–44.

³⁶ O. P. Kretzmann, "Christian Higher Education," in *New Frontiers in Christian Education* (River Forest, IL: Lutheran Education Association, 1944), 84.

³⁷ C. F. W. Walther makes a similar point in his 1849 speech at the laying of the cornerstone for the German Evangelical-Lutheran College and Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. In this speech Walther encourages the Lutheran Church to remain "a faithful and upstanding promoter of art and scholarship," but warns that "art and scholarship [should] never become the idol to whom one builds altars, but only the means by which the church . . . promotes the true enlightenment and well-being of the world" (C. F. W. Walther, "Rede bei Gelegenheit der feierlichen Legung des Grundsteins zu dem deutschen evang.-luther. Collegium- und Seminar-Gebäude zu St. Louis, Mo.," *Der Lutheraner* 6, no. 21 [1850]: 161–63. The English translation of this speech was kindly provided by David Loy).

³⁸ Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, AE 25:291.

lose their God-given goodness and become temptations to put ideas and the self above the two highest ends: God and neighbor.

The best gift that a liberal education can give an individual is freedom. One definition of this freedom is the intellectual and moral liberty that a “liberating” education gives. That is, a liberal education is liberating because it frees the individual from ignorance, vice, and falsehood for critical thought, virtue, and truth. This definition of “liberal” education arose after the Civil War and has been picked up by liberal educators of all stripes, including Lutherans.³⁹

As helpful as this definition of freedom through liberal education is, Lutheran theologians are not content to rest there. For Lutherans the foremost freedom that a Christian liberal education can offer people is the freedom from sin, death, and the devil received by faith through grace in Jesus Christ (Rom 3:21–25, 6:23, 8:2; Eph 2:8–9). It is the truth of the Gospel that truly sets people free (John 8:32). The Law, even in the form of liberally learned virtues that guard and guide civic life, ultimately only shows people their sins (Rom 3:20). Neither the Law nor education frees people from sin and makes them righteous before God; only the Gospel does. It is in this light that Kretzmann contends that a Christian university should,

Above all . . . [be] deeply committed to the recovery of the one great fact which our wayward world has forgotten: The reality of God and the individual’s responsibility to Him, a responsibility which can only be met by the fact of the Atonement and the re-establishment of an intimate relationship with the Ruler of the Universe through Him who once entered the stream of time in order to tell men that they could know the truth and that it would make them free.⁴⁰

As the doctrine of justification in Christ is central to all theology, Lutherans hold, so the Gospel must be central to any Christian university. Since a Christian university seeks the truth and confesses the Truth to be Christ, so the message of the Gospel must be a part of the university’s fabric and communicated to students, faculty, staff, administrators, and constituents in multiple relevant and appropriate ways.

The origin and import of this Gospel freedom is wonderfully expressed by Luther in his 1520 treatise on “The Freedom of a Christian.” Summarizing the whole of Christian life, Luther states that “A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of

³⁹ Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers*, 158.

⁴⁰ Kretzmann, “The Destiny of a Christian University,” 112–13.

all, subject to all.”⁴¹ This apparent paradox comes from biblical passages like 1 Cor 9:19 (“For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all”), Rom 13:8 (“Owe no one anything, except to love one another”), and Phil 2:6–7 where Jesus is described as both Lord and servant.

Based on these and other passages, Luther argues that through God’s gracious Gospel a Christian is both free from sin, death, and the devil and obligated to serve one’s neighbor in response to the Gospel. Being free from the condemnation of the Law and freely receiving eternal life instead, the Christian is free to be unconcerned for the self and solely, cheerfully, and lovingly concerned with others instead. Such freedom does not lead to avoiding good works or doing evil; Christian liberty does not lead to license. Rather, as Rom 6:18 and 1 Pet 2:16, 24 say, being freed from sin by God’s Gospel means that a Christian is now enslaved to serve God by righteously loving others. Christians are, in Luther’s words, both the “freest of kings” in that “all things are made subject to him and are compelled [by the gospel] to serve him in obtaining salvation” and the freest of servants whose “faith is truly active through love” as little “Christs” to the world.⁴²

This is the freedom that a Christian university in a Lutheran vision offers first and foremost. Liberation of the mind should occur in liberal education. To be a truly liberating education, though, the proclamation of the Gospel must also be present since it is the Gospel that liberates the whole person from sin and death for eternal life and motivates for loving others here and now. This freedom ought to affect a Christian education and harness the liberation of the mind not just for the good ends of pursuing truth, personal joy, and benefit, but ultimately for the highest end of serving the neighbor in the name of Christ.⁴³

This end must also include serving nature as this is a key—albeit often overlooked—component of creation and salvation. In creation God makes humans “in the image of God” and calls them to “rule” over the earth (Gen 1:26–27) and “serve” and “preserve” the garden (Gen 2:5).⁴⁴ These verbs are later used for kings, who are to shield and support people as God’s shepherds (1 Kgs 4:24; 2 Sam 5:2; Ezek 34:1–6), and of Levitical priests, who are

⁴¹ Martin Luther, “The Freedom of a Christian,” in AE 31:344.

⁴² Luther, “The Freedom of a Christian,” in AE 31:354–55, 365, 368.

⁴³ William H. K. Narum, “The Role of the Liberal Arts,” in *Christian Faith and the Liberal Arts*, eds. Harold H. Ditmanson, Howard V. Hong, and Warren A. Quanbeck (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1960), 20 and Gene Edward Veith, “Classical Education as Vocational Education: Luther on the Liberal Arts,” *LOGIA* 21, no. 2 (2012): 25–26.

⁴⁴ The verbs in Hebrew are *rādāh* (“rule, have dominion”), *‘ābad* (“serve, work, cultivate”), and *šāmar* (“preserve, guard, keep”).

to minister to and protect God's sanctuary (Num 3:7–8, 18:7). These verbs in Genesis, then, coupled with the context of God's "very good" acts of creation, indicate that humans are God's royal and sacred stewards who are to take very good care of creation (cf. 1 Pet 2:9). This vocation is also implied in salvation where God conforms sinful humans in the image of Christ, who sacrificed himself unto death to redeem nature too and one day make it "very good" again (Rom 8:19–21, 29; Rev 21). Thus in creation and salvation God calls people to be his exalted agents who serve, protect, and even sacrifice themselves for nature.

In this light, a Christian education should funnel to Christ and flow out to all. It should direct people to their vocations in Christ's creation and salvation (Col 1:15–20), offer them freedom in Christ's Gospel, and prepare them for service as Christs to their neighbors and nature in response to the Gospel.

In line with Ps 1 and other biblical passages, Lutheran theologians are adamant that the greatest good of education is enabling people to serve. Fundamental to this task is a Christian liberal and professional education that cultivates "wise, honorable, and well-educated citizens."⁴⁵ This education not only serves as a "handmaiden" to understanding, teaching, and proclaiming God's revealed Word, especially the Gospel, but enables people adeptly to assume various vocations in God's two kingdoms—church and society, and adroitly address the issues that arise in them. This education promotes peace and justice on earth while serving the eternal welfare of humanity with God's Gospel. A couple of key passages from C. F. W. Walther, a nineteenth century Lutheran theologian, and Luther illustrate this two-kingdom vision for education:

We are keenly aware of the incomparable importance . . . of learning, not only for the temporal welfare of mankind but also for the eternal welfare of the world. . . . We know full well not only that all branches of knowledge can enter and be drawn into the service of sacred theology, but also that without many of them, particularly without thorough acquaintance with the original languages of Holy Scripture, without knowledge of secular and sacred history . . . a thorough and relatively comprehensive understanding of Scripture and thus the development and preservation of pure Biblical teaching is impossible. . . . As long as and wherever the Christian church flourished, it always and everywhere proved itself to be a friend and cultivator of all good arts and sciences, gave its future servants a scholarly preparatory

⁴⁵ Luther, "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany," in AE 45:356.

training, and did not disdain to permit its gifted youth at its schools of higher learning to be trained by the standard products of even pagan art and science.⁴⁶

Now if . . . there were no souls, and there were indeed no need at all of schools and [biblical and classical] languages for the sake of the Scriptures and of God, this one consideration alone would be sufficient to justify the establishment everywhere of the very best schools . . . , namely, that in order to maintain the temporal estate outwardly the world must have good and capable men and women. . . . [who are able] to converse intelligently on any subject, or to assist and counsel anyone. . . . [If they learned] the languages, the other [liberal] arts, and history, they would then hear of the doings and sayings of the entire world, and how things went with various cities, kingdoms, princes, men, and women. Thus, they could in a short time set before themselves as in a mirror the character, life, counsels, and purposes—successful and unsuccessful—of the whole world from the beginning; and on the basis of which they could then draw proper inferences and in the fear of God take their own place in the stream of human events.⁴⁷

Because of the value that Lutherans place on *sola Scriptura* and the doctrine that every Christian is part of “the priesthood of all believers” (1 Pet 2:9), who are to teach others God’s Word, Lutherans since Luther’s day have consistently held that all Christians should receive a liberal education so that they can read, interpret, and proclaim God’s Word. Furthermore, since Lutherans hold that God’s holy vocations are not limited to churchly offices (like bishop, priest, and nun), but include all honorable vocations in God’s two kingdoms, people should receive an education that prepares them to fulfill those vocations excellently and faithfully. Education should prepare them to think independently, critically, and wisely; communicate clearly and persuasively; and act virtuously and faithfully in their various vocations in life.

Education for vocations in the church and society are both godly ends and mutually supportive in Lutheran theology. The church and its vocations not only proclaim the Gospel, but support and sustain the temporal life and its worldly vocations as part of God’s originally good creation and

⁴⁶ C. F. W. Walther, “Foreword to the 1875 Volume: Are We Guilty of Despising Scholarship,” in *Selected Writings of C. F. W. Walther: Editorials from “Lehre und Wehre,”* trans. August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia, 1981), 124–25.

⁴⁷ Luther, “To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany,” in AE 45:368–69.

the “masks” through which God hiddenly works to love and preserve his creation. The churchly vocations, Luther explains, inform and instruct people “on how to conduct themselves outwardly in their several [worldly] offices and estates, so that they may do what is right in the sight of God.”⁴⁸ Likewise, education gives Christians knowledge of Scripture and theology so that they can thoughtfully and faithfully apply its divine and human wisdom to their unique vocations. Thomas Korcok, a historian of Lutheran education, expresses this need for thoughtful and faithful application well:

As Christians live their lives under the tensions of vocation, each responds uniquely. There is no template of Christian living that can be traced. . . . The doctrine of vocation . . . demand[s] that education teach people to think independently, not to be imitators. The unique circumstances in which God places each individual require unique applications of the theological principles of the Evangelical faith to the myriad choices a person encounters on a daily basis.⁴⁹

As for worldly vocations, these too are all honorable and praiseworthy gifts of God for they preserve and promote peace, justice, and life for all. In doing so, they also serve the church so that God’s Word—and especially the Gospel, which is of ultimate importance—has free course. Moreover, the worldly liberal arts serve the church by educating Christians so that they can accurately and insightfully read God’s Word and cogently and persuasively proclaim and defend it.⁵⁰

For Luther and other Lutheran theologians, a Christian liberal and professional education is the means by which God would have young men and women learn about human, natural, and divine wisdom; reason and revelation; Law and Gospel; freedom and service, the liberal arts and professional studies so that they can serve their neighbors and nature, be excellent and faithful leaders in the church and society, and promote temporal peace and life while proclaiming eternal peace and life in Christ. The importance placed on this education for God’s two kingdoms is perhaps nowhere better seen than in Luther’s exposition of the Fourth Commandment in his Large Catechism (1529). In explaining the command to “Honor your father and

⁴⁸ Luther, “A Sermon on Keeping Children in School,” in AE 46:226, 246.

⁴⁹ Thomas Korcok, *Lutheran Education: From Wittenberg to the Future* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2011), 51, 55.

⁵⁰ Luther, “A Sermon on Keeping Children in School,” in AE 46:231, 237 and Philip Melancthon, “On the Role of the Schools,” in *Orations on Philosophy and Education*, ed. Sachiko Kusakawa, trans. Christine F. Salazar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10–12, 16–19.

mother,” Luther turns the table and charges parents “at the risk of losing divine favor” to instruct youth “in the fear and knowledge of God” and “in formal study [i.e., liberal education] . . . so that they may be of service wherever they are needed.”⁵¹

THE INTERACTION OF FAITH AND LEARNING

With the educational interaction of wisdom and vocation for freedom and service to society, nature, and the church in view, this leads to an examination of a key related practice of Christian universities: the relationship between faith and learning. Much has been written on this topic in recent years with the typical theme being “the integration of faith and learning” and the typical question being “How does the Christian faith impact learning?”

The thrust of this theme and unidirectionality of this question already reflect, however, a particular theological stance that is dominant in modern American discussion: a neo-Calvinist worldview. This view, which has roots in the sixteenth century reformer John Calvin and the Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920), holds that Christians have a “cultural mandate” from God (Gen 1:28; Matt 28:18–20) to transform society so that it conforms to God’s sovereign will.⁵² Since fallen humans are totally depraved, their reason and knowledge of God’s Law and will are also totally depraved. Truth can be found among non-Christians because God’s “common grace” extends to all. This truth is useful to Christians since “all truth is God’s truth, wherever it be found.”⁵³ However, non-Christians cannot perceive truth fully, unite it, or act upon it properly in accord with

⁵¹ Martin Luther, “Large Catechism,” in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, eds. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 410 (part I:174). For “liberal education,” see the Latin translation in *Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921), 630–31.

⁵² This summary draws on Arthur F. Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987); James D. Bratt, “What Can the Reformed Tradition Contribute to Christian Higher Education?,” in *Models for Christian Higher Education: Strategies for Success in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Richard T. Hughes and William B. Adrian (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 125–40; Richard T. Hughes, “Christian Faith and the Life of the Mind,” in *Faithful Learning and the Christian Scholarly Vocation*, eds. Douglas V. Henry and Bob R. Agee (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 5–8; and Nicholas Wolterstorff, “The Point of Connection between Faith and Learning,” in *Educating for Shalom: Essays on Christian Higher Education*, eds. Clarence W. Joldersma and Gloria Goris Stronks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 64–86.

⁵³ This quote comes from Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College*, 17.

God's will. Only the regenerate minds of Christians educated in an all-encompassing Christian worldview can transform all aspects of society—including universities—to bring them into conformity with God's will and unite them in truth. Thus, there are two types of people and two types of learning: Christian and non-Christian. The task of Christian learning is to integrate faith and learning so that the Christian faith fully affects and unites all learning in God's truth and transforms society to bring it in line with God's Law and will.

A passage that illustrates well this integration approach to faith and learning comes from James D. Bratt of Calvin College:

The restoration of order in nature the Reformed have deemed to be largely God's business. . . . The redemption of society is a different matter: it depends more directly on human agency and is all the more urgent because society shows less of the steadying regularity of divine constraints than does nature. If sin from the outset radiated out of human perversity, so must restoration begin from human regeneration. If God's elect are called out of themselves into the society of the church, then the church is called as agent of renewal for all humanity. If God spoke especially to the Old Testament Israel in a law for their nation and bequeathed that example as special revelation to this New Testament people, then those people are mandated to institute its principles of justice and charity among themselves and among their neighbors so as to restore as much as possible God's will for earthly life. Calvinists, in short, feel called to be social and cultural leaders and therefore turn to education to teach that knowledge and wisdom, social and historical, theological and political, that are required to make leadership obedient to heaven and effective on earth. For Calvinists this constitutes the supreme religious service, the true worship of God. To return to our beginning, God would have due honor and proven glory; He would have them by "reclaiming all of his creation: the cosmos, human nature, and society"; and He would have his elect lead the way in this project.⁵⁴

This integration approach to faith and learning has greatly influenced the theory and practice of Christian higher education in modern America. Its influence can be seen in the challenge that Duane Litfin—the past president of the evangelical flagship, Wheaton College—gives Christian colleges to integrate faith and learning in every academic discipline in order to discov-

⁵⁴ Bratt, "What Can the Reformed Tradition Contribute to Christian Higher Education?," 131–32.

er and unite all truth in Jesus Christ the Lord, to “take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Cor 10:5), and to glorify God.⁵⁵ Its influence can also be seen in Christian colleges with classes in Christian Mathematics or Christian Psychology and residential halls that mandate Christian morals and lifestyles. It is an approach that many find appealing and marketable because it integrates faith and learning in a distinct and all-encompassing manner.⁵⁶

There are, however, other ways to approach the relationship between faith and learning. Another prevalent path is what can be called the “two books, two truths” or separation approach. In this vision faith and learning, or revelation and reason, each have their own dignity and sphere of knowledge, so are autonomous. This approach looks to Luther for its roots since he argued that God’s left-hand kingdom (society) is ruled by reason, experience, and law, while God’s right-hand kingdom (church) is ruled by revelation, grace, and faith. As each of these kingdoms is God’s with its own way of operating, each has its own dignity. “Every occupation has its own honor before God,” Luther states, “as well as its own requirements and duties.”⁵⁷ “No science [i.e., discipline] should stand in the way of another science,” Luther cautions, “but each should continue to have its own mode of procedure in its own terms. . . . Every science should make use of its own terminology, and one should not for this reason condemn the other or ridicule it.”⁵⁸ The separation approach also has roots in the scientist Francis Bacon and the Enlightenment project that separated reason from faith, science from revelation. In *The Advancement of Learning* (1623) Bacon argues that while no one can be “too well studied in the book of God’s word, or in the book of God’s works,” Scripture and nature are to be studied separately so as not to “unwisely mingle or confound these learnings together.”⁵⁹

A good example of the separation approach comes from Mark Edwards Jr., the past president of St. Olaf College. Responding to criticisms by James Burtchaell and George Marsden that the light of Christian universities and scholarship has died out due to secularization, Edwards counters that “we

⁵⁵ Duane Litfin, *Conceiving the Christian College* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 128, 138, 143, 145–47, 164, 173.

⁵⁶ Ernest L. Simmons, *Lutheran Education: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998), 32.

⁵⁷ Luther, “A Sermon on Keeping Children in School,” in AE 46:246.

⁵⁸ Luther, *Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1–5*, AE 1:47–48.

⁵⁹ Francis Bacon, “The Advancement of Learning,” in *Francis Bacon: The Major Works*, ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 126. Reprinted by permission of Oxford University Press.

are only seeing a different refraction of the light as the prism of society changes.” Defending liberal Christian universities and “culture Protestantism,” Edwards appeals to H. Richard Niebuhr’s description of Luther’s two-kingdom theology as “Christ and culture in paradox.” In this view, Edward says, “Christian revelation and secular knowledge” are in “significant—perhaps humanly unresolvable—tension with each other.” Furthermore, Christian universities, because they are situated in the left-hand kingdom of God, are “called to employ reason to pursue truth” with the result that “in most cases [there will be] no substantive difference between scholarship by Christians and non-Christians.” The “Christian substance” of Christian universities should only appear “in the Christian calling of faculty, staff and students and in the Christian context surrounding the academic enterprise—only rarely in the results of scholarly inquiry itself.”⁶⁰ In other words, revelation and reason, or faith and learning, should not mix because they are deeply at odds. They should be separated at a Christian university so that Christianity simply provides the space and staff for the rational pursuit of truth, not any substance for interacting with, critiquing, or informing the pursuit of truth.

The problem with this approach is that it plays up a purported paradox to the point of conflict. First, it fails to pay attention to the final part of Luther’s quote about the integrity of each science/discipline. After saying that each discipline should have freedom to pursue its own procedures with its own terms without being ridiculed, Luther concludes that “[each] one should . . . be of use to the other, and they should put their achievements at one another’s disposal.” This is a much different tone than a paradox of conflict that results in separation. Luther’s approach is about integrity, mutuality, and interaction. It is consonant with his own, Melancthon’s, and other Lutheran theologians’ statements that the liberal arts have their own integrity and value for society, but also serve the church by helping Christians understand and proclaim God’s Word; that the temporal vocations have their own dignity and purpose, but also serve the church by keeping the peace so that Gospel can have free course; and that the church has its own integrity and value eternally, but is connected and useful to supporting and guiding temporal vocations “as their conscience” of what is just, beautiful, and true.⁶¹ This separation model also suffers from a misreading of Niebuhr’s understanding of Luther:

⁶⁰ Mark U. Edwards Jr., “Christian Colleges: A Dying Light or a New Refraction?,” *Christian Century*, April 21–28, 1999, 459–63.

⁶¹ Narum, “The Role of the Liberal Arts,” 27.

[Luther's] antinomies and paradoxes have often led to the suggestion that Luther divided life into compartments, or taught that the Christian right hand should not know what a man's worldly left hand was doing . . . Luther does not, however, divide what he distinguishes. The life in Christ and the life in culture, in the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world, are closely related. . . . It is a great error to confuse the parallelistic dualism of separated spiritual and temporal life with the interactionism of Luther's gospel of faith in Christ working by love in the world of culture.⁶²

Finally, it is problematic even to use the term *paradox* when referring to Luther's two-kingdom view of Christian life. As the Luther scholar Robert Kolb comments, "In Luther's view the basic structure of God's design of human life in the two dimensions" is "not paradoxical." The relationship of God's two kingdoms and all that go with them are "complementary," "two inseparable dimensions of human life" that Christians live in "simultaneously."⁶³

So what best defines a Lutheran approach to faith and learning? Like the integration approach, Lutheran theologians hold that all truth is one and that a *university*—being a place where all branches of knowledge are "turned into one (whole)"—should seek unity of truth. Lutherans ecumenically confess that all truth coheres in Christ because Christ is the Creator and Savior of all (Col 1:15–20). Lutherans believe that truth expressed by non-Christians is still truth and to be used by Christians. "There is only one truth," Melancthon declares; Christians can use the Law of God and the philosophy of non-Christians because Christians know "that philosophy is the law of God."⁶⁴

But Lutherans do not make unity of truth the primary goal of education. Confessing that humans are not and were never created to be omniscient, that sin has adversely affected human reason, and that Christians are *simul iustus et peccator* ("simultaneously justified and sinful"),

⁶² H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951), 173–74, 179. Copyright © 1951 by Harper & Row Brothers. Reprinted by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

⁶³ Robert Kolb, "Niebuhr's 'Christ and Culture in Paradox' Revisited: The Christian Life, Simultaneous in Both Dimensions," in *Christ and Culture in Dialogue: Constructive Themes and Practical Applications*, ed. Angus J. L. Menzies (St. Louis: Concordia, 1999), 113–15.

⁶⁴ Philip Melancthon, "On the Distinction between the Gospel and Philosophy," in *Orations on Philosophy and Education*, ed. Sachiko Kusakawa, trans. Christine F. Salazar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 24.

Lutherans know that humans are incapable of conceiving of all truth together, are prone to error, and therefore must pursue truth with humility.⁶⁵ Lutherans take God's rebuke of Job—who presumed to know all things about his suffering—seriously when God tells him, in so many words, “Put on your big boy pants and riddle me this” (Job 38:1–3). Upholding the unity of truth in Christ as Creator and Savior, Lutherans see the Christo-centric unity of truth as a reality accomplished by Christ, revealed in God's Word, and received by faith; it is not a perspective that Christian universities can make society espouse through the integration of faith and learning. As the Lutheran scholar Martin Marty says, the unity of truth in Christ “must be ascertained, striven for, and then accepted as gospel gift.”⁶⁶ Basing the highest end of education on the interaction of wisdom and vocation, Lutherans prefer what can be called a “faith seeking understanding for service” approach to the unity of truth in Christ.⁶⁷ The more Christians know about truth in Christ's creation and salvation and how it coheres, the better they will be able to think, speak, and act in loving service to their neighbors and nature.

If the great goal of education for Lutherans is not the unity of truth, neither is it the transformation of society. Faith and learning are to connect with each other, but not in a way that makes society conform to God's Law and will. There are several reasons for this. First, Lutheran theology holds that society is already God's kingdom; it does not need to be claimed for Christ by Christians since Christ already accomplished this in creation and salvation, and will do so again in recreation when he comes again on the last day to recreate the “very good” utopia (Rev 21). In the meantime, Christians are called to preserve and promote peace in this temporal life, care for creation, and share the saving message of eternal peace in Christ. Second, it is the Gospel of salvation by grace through faith that brings people to know, trust, and follow God (Eph 2:8–10). Legalism cannot do this for society (Rom 7:7–11); it can only be accomplished by the Holy Spirit working faith in individuals. Third, God has made reason, experience, and law to rule over society, and these gifts are commonly available to all

⁶⁵ Richard W. Solberg, “What Can the Lutheran Tradition Contribute to Higher Education?,” in *Models for Christian Higher Education: Strategies for Success in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Richard T. Hughes and William B. Adrian (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 74–75.

⁶⁶ Martin E. Marty, “The Church and Christian Higher Education in the New Millennium,” in *Faithful Learning and the Christian Scholarly Vocation*, eds. Douglas V. Henry and Bob R. Agee (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 59.

⁶⁷ This is an adaptation of the motto of Anselm of Canterbury (ca. 1100): “faith seeking understanding” (*fides quaerens intellectum*).

people including non-Christians. God has also given people great freedom in creation to create their own cultures within the bounds and designs of God's structure.⁶⁸ God did not give humanity a comprehensive law to construct a monolithic Christian worldview and culture. Additionally, God has made the church to be ruled by revelation, grace, and faith, which are gifts freely received from God. To integrate faith and learning in the transformation model risks confusing God's two kingdoms with the result that God's church improperly triumphs over God's society and revelation inappropriately trumps reason, which distorts the good purpose and relationship of both.⁶⁹

Given the Lutheran two-kingdom approach to church and society, revelation and reason, Christ and culture, the best approach to the relationship of faith and learning for a Christian university in a Lutheran vision is one that maintains their God-given integrity and inseparable complementarity of being useful to each other and working together to serve society, nature, and the church with Christ's love. The best term for this approach to faith and learning is interaction. Thus, the Lutheran answer to the question of how the Christian faith impacts learning is neither integration for transformation nor avoidance via separation, but the mutual, responsible, and fruitful interaction of faith and learning for service.

How does this interaction occur? Much of this answer has already been illustrated above by how the Lutheran two-kingdom theology describes the integrity and mutuality of the church and society, revelation and reason, biblically-based theology and historical liberal education. Interaction occurs by each discipline having the integrity to pursue the truth in its areas with its own methods and terms. This includes the integrity of Christian theology, which, grounded in God's revealed Word and built up over two millennia, addresses the crux issue of mankind's justification before God by grace through faith in Christ and aims to offer a "comprehensive and coherent vision of life."⁷⁰ Coupled with integrity is an inseparable comple-

⁶⁸ An example of this is the imagination and freedom people have in God's left-hand kingdom to construct political systems that best serve the neighbor. While God instituted government for the sake of preserving and promoting peace, justice, and life for all (Rom 13), "Christians recognize how many options God has given for achieving His horizontal, temporal will within the structures of humanity as He designed it" (Kolb, "Niebuhr's 'Christ and Culture in Paradox' Revisited," 117).

⁶⁹ The caution of triumphalism and distortion is raised by Hughes, "Christian Faith and the Life of the Mind," 8.

⁷⁰ Benne, "A Lutheran Vision/Version of Christian Humanism," 43 and Robert Benne, *Quality with Soul: How Six Premiere Colleges and Universities Keep Faith with Their Religious Traditions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 197-99. This comprehensive,

mentarity where Christian theology and each discipline are connected and useful to the other. This occurs by Christian theology and each discipline confidently and humbly dialoguing, questioning, critiquing, and informing each other as is appropriate to their spheres of knowledge so that they mutually benefit each other. This occurs by collegially probing life's problems and pursuing God's truth for the purpose of more wisely serving the whole of God's creation with Christ's love.

How does the Christian faith affect learning? In the Lutheran interaction approach this question needs to be broadened and asked positively and negatively. For instance, how should the Christian faith impact the presuppositions that a Christian professor brings to bear on her particular discipline? Will that impact vary depending on whether the discipline is in the sciences, technology, engineering, mathematics, the humanities, or professional studies?⁷¹ How ought the Christian faith critique a discipline whose reigning paradigms or practices conflict with truth or goodness revealed in God's Word? How should the Christian faith affect the professor's choice of subjects to study, the theories and methodologies to use, or the study's aims and applications? How ought the Christian faith influence the relationships that professors have with each other, students, and their supervisors? How should it inform the vocations of regents, administration, staff, faculty, and students? How should the Christian faith enlighten the purpose and practices of campus life? How ought it color and shape the purpose, constitution, and character of a university? Also, are there some aspects of university life that revelation, faith, or grace ought *not* influence because doing so would inappropriately trump the rightful sway of reason, experience, and law appropriately exercised?

Another crucial question that needs to be asked in the interaction approach is, "How does learning aid the church?" As was common in Christianity for centuries starting in the early Church, the main direction of

coherent vision should not be taken as an all-compassing worldview where Scripture or theology have an answer to every question or a law for every situation, but a body of revealed and confessed truth on many crucial matters of life—especially God, human nature, sin, and salvation—and a corpus of divine and human wisdom for approaching the whole of life.

⁷¹ C. Stephen Evans argues for a "relevance continuum" where the Christian faith impacts philosophy and theology the most and mathematics the least, with other liberal arts and sciences falling in between (C. Stephen Evans, "The Calling of the Christian Scholar-Teacher," in *Faithful Learning and the Christian Scholarly Vocation*, eds. Douglas V. Henry and Bob R. Agee [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], 40). This scheme is a helpful starting point, but it should expand to include every discipline in universities, including professional studies.

connection between faith and learning was that the liberal arts served as a handmaid to theology. So Luther, for example, calls the liberal arts a John the Baptist, a forerunner, to the flourishing of God's Word because they show the fallen condition of the world and enable people to read Scripture, which prepares them for the Gospel revealed in God's Word.⁷² This is but another manifestation of the two-kingdom notion that God uses the vocations of the left-hand kingdom to serve the eternal ends of his right-hand kingdom. In this light, every discipline should ask how it can help the church understand itself biblically, historically, artistically, socially, economically, etc. Each discipline should ask itself what good gifts it can bring to Christ's church for the left-hand operation of congregations or the right-hand work of the Gospel. The church needs the questions and insights of human wisdom for it to flourish.

Each of these questions, and many more like them, need to be addressed honestly, carefully, and regularly by the whole community of a Christian university. While no simple answers can be provided here, several examples of the interaction approach will be given in subsequent chapters in this book. They will address many fundamental aspects of university life by inquiring into the interaction of Lutheran theology with academic disciplines, university vocations, and campus life.

For the integrity and inseparable complementarity of this interaction approach to work well, each academic discipline needs to have the freedom to ask questions and pursue the truth. Luther needed such freedom to rediscover the Gospel; Christian universities need this freedom now too. Christian academic liberty is not to be equated with license, though, but with freedom to pursue the truth in accord with the epistemology appropriate to each discipline and freedom to be faithful to the truth.⁷³ This liberty includes the freedom—individually and institutionally—to confess the truth confidently based on revelation, or reason, as Luther did when he declared at the Diet of Worms in 1521: “Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason. . . . I cannot and will not recant anything [I have written about Scripture].”⁷⁴ Implicit in Luther's assertion is the humble allowance that he could be wrong and would change his views if convinced otherwise.

⁷² See Luther, “To Eobanus Hessus, March 29, 1523,” in AE 49:34.

⁷³ Cf. Holmes who talks about academic freedom at Christian colleges as “responsible freedom” where faith and learning work together “to see all things from a confessional perspective . . . to unite loyalty with liberty” (Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College*, 61, 67).

⁷⁴ Translated and quoted in Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 180.

Thus, Luther's statement indicates that academic freedom is also open to making mistakes (that is, after all, a key ingredient in the scientific method) and being corrected toward the truth by reason or revelation, whichever holds sway in a given area.

The apostle Paul is instructive here as well. Paul encourages Christians in Phi 4:8 to pursue what is true, good, and beautiful: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think on these things." In 1 Cor 10:23–24, Paul tempers the liberty that Christians have in the Gospel with love for others: "All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful, but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor." In sum, Paul tells Christians that they are free to pursue all truth and every good thing, but this liberty is not ultimately to be used for the self; rather, it is for the good of others. Luther echoes Paul when talking about Christian freedom. In a Christian academic setting, this freedom means that all questions are possible to pursue for Christians, that truth and every good thing is freely to be pursued, and that academic freedom should ultimately be an instrument for loving and serving others.⁷⁵

"WHAT IS BEAUTIFUL MAY BE DIFFICULT"

In his inaugural lecture to colleagues and students at the University of Wittenberg, Melancthon unfolded a vision for education that was rooted in the Christian liberal arts tradition of educating students in human, natural, and divine wisdom so that they could assume vocations that were

⁷⁵ Non-Christians also have freedom to pursue the truth and every good thing, but this freedom rests solely in creation—not salvation—and is limited by (using Luther's language) their "bondage of the will" to sin and opposition to God and his will. They are free, like the Greeks, to pursue truth, goodness, and beauty for the sake of creating a good society, but this liberty is limited since they do not have freedom from selfish sin and rebellion against God or freedom from the demands and eternal consequences of the Law as Christians do in Christ. They do not have faith that holds to the Truth, who is Christ the Creator and Savior. Consequently they do not have the Gospel-generated "freedom of a Christian" to put aside sin and rebellion and, instead, pursue all of God's truth, goodness, and beauty to serve others in love as little Christs for their temporal well-being and eternal salvation. Because of this non-Christians lack full academic freedom. (For rebuttals that Christian universities are less free academically than secular institutions because of their theological commitments, see Litfin's response that every university has orthodoxies that qualify academic freedom and that Christian universities have true freedom because religious questions are not ruled out [Litfin, *Conceiving the Christian College*, 214–22].)

useful as they excelled “in sacred things” and “the marketplace.” Concerning this education, Melancthon conceded that “what is beautiful may be difficult,” but counseled that “industry conquers difficulty.”⁷⁶

Indeed, the historically-rooted, biblically-based, Lutheran educational vision of wisdom and vocation for freedom and service to society, nature, and church is beautiful. It answers the conflicting messages that students at AnyU experience between fun, independence, and career, on one hand, and a liberal education in wisdom and virtue for citizenship, on the other. A Christian university in a Lutheran vision resolves this conflict and directs the whole higher educational enterprise to the highest end of faith active in love by bringing both aspects of education into a fruitful relationship where students encounter the freedom and joy of learning human, natural, and divine wisdom; develop the ability to think, speak, and act on their own so that they can intelligently and faithfully fulfill their vocations; and become wise, honorable, and cultivated citizens of God’s church and society who love their neighbors and nature as little Christs because of Christ.

This vision is beautiful and difficult to achieve. Indeed, as the Lutheran historian Richard Solberg assesses, “The most serious critique one could level at Lutheran higher education in America is that it has failed to fulfill the educational challenges implicit in its own theology.”⁷⁷ This failure may be due to several factors: Lutheran universities may have forgotten the treasures of their own theology and history; they may be chasing too much after the ways of secular universities; or they may not have (set aside) the time, talent, and treasure needed to bring this vision to reality. Whatever the reason may be, this vibrant vision must be preserved, promoted, and implemented across the whole of university life. This vision is aesthetically pleasing and harmonious. Moreover, it is scripturally sound and produces fruit, shade, and success for the temporal and eternal peace of the whole of God’s creation.

QUESTIONS

1. If a cultural anthropologist spent a year as a student on your campus, what would she discover about your university? What would she see as the purpose of your university?
2. What foundations—biblical, theological, historical, philosophical, economic, etc.—most inform the vision of your university?

⁷⁶ Melancthon, “On Correcting the Studies of Youth,” 54, 56.

⁷⁷ Solberg, “What Can the Lutheran Tradition Contribute to Higher Education?,” 80.

THE IDEA AND PRACTICE OF A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

3. How do you see Christianity (Scripture, theology, or the Christian church) interact with your discipline or vocation in the university? Are these appropriate or inappropriate interactions?
4. How can your discipline or area of the university serve as a handmaiden to the church?
5. What would a university look like—from academics to university vocations to collegiate life—if it fully implemented the educational vision of pursuing wisdom and vocation for freedom and service to society, nature, and church?