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Preparing Christian High School Students for Secular College Experience

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**Preparing Christian High School Students
for
Secular College Experience**

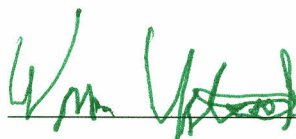
A Seminar Paper submitted to the faculty
Of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis
Department of Practical Theology
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Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

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May, 2004

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According to the naturalist view of Aristotle:

The soul is the form of the organism The soul is not material; it is the form of the living thing, but not the form of the body in the sense of being its shape. It is, rather, its essential nature and, as a thing it is what it does, the soul is the life or functioning of the living body.²⁴

According to the American educator, psychologist and naturalist John Dewey:

Men have never fully used the powers they possess to advance the good in life, because they have waited upon some power external to themselves and to nature to do the work they are responsible for doing. Dependence upon an external power is the counterpart of surrender of human endeavor.²⁵

Dewey claims that human beings have power to make radical changes. Many college professors are in fact naturalists who believe in a naturalistic understanding of reality. Therefore, the naturalist theory is another challenge to the Christian faith of young students.

B. Postmodernism and Its Implications for Young Christians on the Campus

Yet another God-less intellectual approach to reality is postmodernism. Many college professors embrace postmodernism as their ideology:

A postmodernist thinks truth is fragmented. He doesn't believe in a truth that's the same for everyone, only in 'stories' or 'narratives' or 'discourses' that are different for every group.... A Postmodernist thinks personality is fragmented. He doesn't believe in a soul, a self, an 'I' that keeps its identity and is responsible for everything it does.... A postmodernist thinks life is fragmented. He doesn't believe his life is going anywhere, that it has theme that it's about anything..²⁶

24. Ibid., 98-99.

25. John Dewey, *Essays in Experimental Logic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916) 21-22.

26. J. Budziszewski, 45.

Introduction

“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6 NIV). These words may have occupied the thoughts of Dr. Martin Luther when he wrote, “If all manner of problems are to be dealt with successfully, then the young people who are to live and govern on this earth after us must be trained and guided accordingly.”¹ This paper addresses the training and guidance of youth in the church with a view to properly preparing them for the college experience at state or private universities where the academic and social agendas may be non-Christian in outlook.

How shall a young Christian both learn and live in a secular institution of higher learning? Our study articulates distinctive cognitive aspects of preparing youth to attend college as Christians. But we also recognize how family support and peer relationships carry youth through the college experience. In a report about Christian youth, the Barna Group related how some young people who claimed to possess a developed understanding of the Bible, nevertheless showed no evidence of using that understanding in relation to the core beliefs and lifestyle choices that the group was studying.² The implication is that cognitive study or even concentrated efforts to comprehend Bible and doctrine are not the only helps needed for the prospective college student. Also pivotal in helping youth to live as Christians are such vital factors as a Christian home together with friendships among other Christian youth.

1. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*: American Edition, vol. 45, ed. Walther I. Brandt (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), 336. (hereafter AE)

2. George Barna, “Teens Evaluate the Church-Based Ministry They Received As Children,” [Article on-line]; available from [http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate &BarnaUpdateID=143](http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=143); Internet accessed August 2004.

To be sure, both family and friends are crucial for many high school juniors and seniors who are apprehensive about entering college. On the surface, they may be excited. But the prospect of leaving home and beginning a different life in a new setting can be unnerving. A sensitive Christian young person may be fearful about the possibility of losing his or her Christian identity, or even Christian faith, during years on the college or university campus. While not discounting other helps, this study focuses on intentional catechesis which supports the young Christian by calling attention to the moorings of Christian life in the Gospel, particularly Holy Baptism, and to foundational Christian moral values. There is a way for the Christian at college to retain Christian identity. This paper draws on the strength of God's Word in worship and Bible studies and the helps of Christian music and the practice of prayer life. The discussion unfolds with young Christians in mind for whom Christ is the first priority (Col. 1:18). They will be ready and prepared for the college experience when the church's ministry points them to a firm foundation in the Gospel according to the Scriptures!

Part 1 Christian Identity at a Secular College or University

The first part of this paper focuses on the challenges Christian youth face when they move to a college or university campus. In this study we will explore how Christian identity is based on our righteousness in Christ, how the Lutheran theology of the two kingdoms operates, and how Christian identity gives us the opportunity to be witnesses of Christ on campus.

1. Christian Identity When Life Is Different on the College or University Campus

As long as Christian children are in parochial high school they are more dependent on their parents and family members than on exercising their own independent actions. They are still at home and naturally they have to conform largely to the mores of their families and to habitual ways of doing things. Although they feel independent, they still have to respect parents and other members in their household.

But now they are ready for college/ university life. They are away from home, and they are on their own. For the first time they are really free. They do not have to account for their time (in most colleges), and they do not have to ask their parents for permission (some colleges act as *loco parentis*). They maintain their own bank accounts and no one questions their expenditures. This new found freedom can throw our Christian students into confusion; or it can make them mature, responsible people. They are not mature until they manage their time and money and are responsible for themselves. As long as they depend upon the opinions of others for their actions, they are not grown up. So young persons realize in college that they are free, but their freedom is limited by the rights of their neighbors. In this regard, Richard Knopp comments,

Sometimes Christian students are surprised when they enter a non-Christian college/university. They understand that they must differentiate their faith from other religious and non-religious belief systems or world views. Lutheran Christians discover their own personality and style, and they try to interact more effectively with others. Honestly, young Christians will learn important principles of their faith and practical skills to interpret God's Word properly, as well as skills to share their faith. Furthermore they discover how different world views are expressed in popular culture expressed in movies, music, and science. They must learn how to respond to the claims about macro evolution. They may be spending enough time in researching the internet on a variety of seminar topics that interest them. They work on individual and small group seminar presentations using computers, the internet, camcorders, video, editing software, and various library resources.³

2. Christian Identity in a Not So Christian Climate

Youth today live in a troubled world. They face tensions and problems in their family, academic, cultural, social, ethical, and intellectual settings. They live in a culture of partying, dating, mating, drinking, smoking, violence, etc. In this context, the love of God compels families and the Church to serve them. Instead of watching them spoil their lives, we must do something for them by giving them a lasting hope for their lives, and a sense of responsibility and accountability for their actions.⁴ Jesus has changed their lives through His love and the power of the Holy Spirit. God has graciously given them a new life in Jesus Christ and rejoices that this new life is theirs.

Christians are "children of God" through their baptism. Here they are daily assured of the forgiveness of sins, a blessing won for them through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus has come to this world as the Son of God to redeem all people from their sins and has given them hope of the resurrection and eternal life. He

3. Rich Knopp, "A Program to Help Teenagers Develop a Christian Mind and Interact Effectively with Non-Christian Worldviews in Their Culture." [Article on-line]; available from <http://www.worldvieweyes.org>; Internet; accessed 22 March 2004.

4. Ibid.

has come to this world to prepare all people to be God's children who accept and believe in Him. The Holy Spirit empowers them to live and to perform deeds in accordance with that great identity.

Very often, however, the college atmosphere does not encourage Christians to exhibit their identity. Therefore, Christian college students frequently keep their identity as children of God to themselves. In order to fit into the world, they hide their identity and the power of Jesus Christ from the world. Though the college culture is quite different with all its newness, challenges, and temptations, the Christian identity for young students remains always the same in Christ. In Christ, they are new creations in the midst of non-Christian settings. Scripture states, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor. 5:17 NIV).

3. Christian Identity as Righteousness in Christ

Lutheran students learn to understand their identity as it is formed by the two kinds of righteousness, namely, active and passive righteousness. They live in active righteousness (human righteousness) in their relationship with those who are in the world, a horizontal relationship. They also maintain their passive righteousness (divine righteousness), received in Christ Jesus by His death and resurrection, as "children of God," which is a vertical relationship. If they can see both the horizontal and the vertical dimensions of their righteousness in their college life, this helps them to realize who they are in Christ.

Having an understanding of their righteousness in Christ, the students are in position to evaluate the ideas and thoughts generated by class presentations, and they may comprehend the physical and spiritual implications of these new concepts. This

understanding gives the students a perception for comprehending life in the secular world as children of God. It grounds them in their Christian identity. Therefore, to help the Christian students prepare for college, a series of Bible studies framed by the theology of the righteousness of God would be worthwhile. Appropriate Bible studies will contain substantial biblical references for Christian students and will shed the necessary clear biblical light on their critical thinking. This critical thinking will assist them in examining the academic, intellectual and social aspects of college life in the light of biblical theology. These Bible studies will enable them to work and to express their identity in a God-pleasing way. They will grow to serve their neighbor for the glory of God (active righteousness). While living in passive righteousness in Christ Jesus, young students realize that the world is sinful, and, though they are children of God, they too are sinners (*simul justus et peccator*). Furthermore, they still realize that they need to guard against temptations and the work of Satan. At the same time they are also reassured that in the midst of their fall into sin, the righteousness of Christ, the preaching of His Word and the administration of the sacraments is with them to pronounce forgiveness whenever they repent. In this way the means of grace offer them encouragement all through college life. A vital regular worship life is therefore necessary in their journey as college students.

Lutheran pastors and youth workers/leaders should accept the challenge to teach the Lutheran doctrine of the righteousness of God to young high school students. They must call young students to listen and learn these foundational principles through effective teaching so that the youth may be able to comprehend the two kinds of righteousness clearly and apply this doctrine in their personal as well as social lives.

4. Christian Identity and the Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms

We hope that the church may also instruct Christian youth about the theology of the two kingdoms. Such instruction may assist them to comprehend their identity and to discover a framework for evaluating everyday events and occurrences in their college lives. Dr. Luther thought of the two kingdoms in terms of two governments, the left and right hands of God: the “secular kingdom” being the left hand, which God rules through secular authority, and the “spiritual kingdom,” the kingdom of the right hand which God rules through the Church.⁵ In Luther’s commentary on Isaiah 60:19 (1527-30), he distinguishes “Christ’s kingdom from the kingdom of the world.”⁶ Furthermore, there is “the kingdom of the devil,” the active third kingdom which is not under the control of the kingdom of God.⁷ “It is a presupposition which permeates the whole of our thinking about how God works in His world and the entire life to which He has called us.”⁸ Dr. Paul Raabe has presented a Lutheran understanding of the Kingdom of God in the following words:

The Kingdom came through Jesus, but the old age continues. The governments of this present age, the Roman Empire of the first century and all of the subsequent governments, continue to exercise their power. Death continues to swallow up the living. To this day even churches have cemeteries. To the eyes of fallen human reason it looks as if nothing has changed with the coming of Jesus Christ. But the eyes of faith see in Jesus the very Kingdom of God anticipated and promised of old.⁹

5. Kenneth Hagen, “Luther’s Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms,” *God and Caesar Revisited*, ed. John R. Stephenson (St. Catharines, Ontario: s.n., 1995) 17.

6. *Ibid.*, 17.

7. *Ibid.*, 17.

8. Robert Kolb, “Christian Civic Responsibility in an Age of Judgment,” *Concordia Journal* 19 (Jan 1993): 19.

Lutherans enjoy a complete and greater comprehension of the Kingdom of God and also properly distinguish between Law and Gospel. These strengths will help teenagers to grow in basic Christian doctrines and to lead meaningful Christian lives in their secular institutions of higher learning. The New Testament proclaims that the crucified and risen Lord Jesus is the King whom God promised to send. He delivers those who believe in Him from the dominion of sin and death. He transforms His children and welcomes them into His Kingdom through the power of the Holy Spirit by baptizing and teaching them in His Church (Matt. 28:18-20). "Thus the rule of King Jesus is spiritual and not temporal."¹⁰ It means that there will be no visible reign of Jesus until He comes again at the end of the age. It also emphasizes the eschatological nature of a Christian life that looks forward to the return of Jesus. As such, there exists a temporal order and a spiritual order in this world, that is, a two-dimensional concept of the Kingdom of God, yet both being governed by God. An awareness of this distinction can only be helpful to young Christians in their faith and daily lives.

The kingdom of God is a kingdom of grace and mercy. Christian students should always know, believe, and acknowledge His goodness and grace even unto death:

For His kingdom is not of this world. But to all kingdoms, to all commonwealths, He will bring the new Word and new teaching about Himself that all who believe in Him and are baptized will have forgiveness of sins and life eternal. This is the kingdom of this King, this is His dominion, this is His imperium. Those who do not believe, then, who do not receive Him, will be punished with eternal death.¹¹

9. Paul Raabe, "The Gospel of the Kingdom of God," *Concordia Journal* 28 (July 2002): 294-295.

10. "Render unto Caesar.....and unto God; A Lutheran View of Church and State," *A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: LCMS, Sept 1995), 10.

11. Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, AE, vol.12, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: CPH, 1955) 57.

Christian students are members of both Kingdoms. Both Kingdoms are governed by God but in different ways. “God governs the ‘Kingdom on the left’ with his law and the ‘Kingdom on the right’ with his Gospel.”¹² Christians live in both kingdoms because of the forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life that are theirs in Jesus Christ through Holy Baptism (Acts 22:16; I Pet.3:21; Titus 3:4-7).

5. Christian Identity and the Opportunity to Witness to Christ on the Campus

Christian students enjoy the privilege of giving a Christian witness during their college lives as baptized Christians (Acts 2:38). They understand that they are also given the gift of the Holy Spirit in their baptisms. For Christian students, this is significant, because they can be reassured that the Holy Spirit will continue to lead, guide, and comfort them in their identities as redeemed children of God. Whatever they do as children of God, it will be a witness to their identities; ultimately, a witness to Christ. “Thus a Christian life is nothing else than a daily Baptism, once begun and ever continued.”¹³ In their identities as Christians, these young students give a significant witness in word and action to the College community.

When LCMS Christian young students witness to their faith to their peers, that witness is a comfort to them as they face the change and shock of college life. The good Lord provides them with a framework to make God-pleasing decisions whenever they face the social pressures of college life. This framework will guide them to interact with their classmates and help them to evaluate what they learn. Furthermore, it encourages

12. Robert Benne, *The Paradoxical Vision: A Public Theology for the Twenty-first Century* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 82.

them not to hide their Christian identity but to be bold in the power of our Lord Jesus Christ as they witness to His message of salvation which is for the entire universe.

Again, through their faith in Jesus Christ, a form of passive righteousness, Christian students are empowered to be Christian witnesses. They comprehend that they are children of God, and God empowers them to perform good deeds (active righteousness) for the benefit of their peers and for the glory of God. This awareness arises from catechetical instruction in the doctrine of the two kingdoms.¹⁴

If we want young Christian students to witness to our Lord Jesus among their college classmates, we must equip them with the Scriptures. According to Dr. Martin Luther,

Thus we have, in all, five parts covering the whole of Christian doctrine, which we should constantly teach and require young people to recite word for word. Do not assume that they will learn and retain this teaching from sermons alone. When these parts [Catechism] have been well learned, you may assign them also some Psalms or some hymns, based on these subjects, to supplement and confirm their knowledge. Thus our youth will be led into the Scriptures so that they make progress daily.¹⁵

Further Dr. Luther says in the Large Catechism 5:85:

...we may more easily install the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer into the young so that they will receive them with joy and earnestness, practice them from their youth, and become accustomed to them.¹⁶

13. Theodore G. Trappert, trans., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Large Catechism, fourth part: #65 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 445. (Hereafter *The Book of Concord*)

14. *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis: CPH, 1986). The Second Article and its meaning. "The Sacrament of the Holy Baptism." 22-23 indicate that the old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drowned and die with all sins and evil desires and that a new man should daily emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever." 22-23.

15. *Book of Concord*, 364.

16. *Ibid.*, 456.

In his commentary on Genesis 5:22-24, Martin Luther writes, "Thus Enoch walked with God; that is, in this life he was a faithful witness that after this life men would live an eternal life, thanks to the promised Seed."¹⁷ Following the lead from Luther therefore, the pastor, youth worker, parents and the congregation together must help their young people to walk with God so they can lead a life of Christian witness. They can follow the example of John the Baptist who was not the light, but was sent to bear witness to the Light, Jesus (John 1:8). Likewise, the words and deeds of Christian college students become a witness of their faith as their Christian identity points to Jesus Christ.

17. *Luther's Works*, AE, vol. I: 346.

Part II Challenges to Christians on Today's College or University Campus

The second part of this paper focuses on the challenges of the Christians on today's college or university campus and mainly addresses their Christian faith and their Christian lives.

6. Challenges to Christian Faith

A. The Naturalist View of Human Reality

A new Christian college student knows that the college classroom is academically a very challenging place. The lessons that are taught in many classes at the college level challenge the way Christian students think about reality and their identity as children of God. In this connection, the broad discipline of humanities taught by various professors has become an important issue. Psychologists, anthropologists, biologists, ethicists, lawyers, doctors, and theologians define human reality in their own way for their own purposes.¹⁸ Psychologists explore the human identity so they can treat the human conditions and human behaviors. Whereas anthropologists define humanity in order to classify and characterize creatures,¹⁹ biologists study the human race in terms of its biological development.²⁰ Ethicists analyze the intricacies of human behavior for the purpose of fostering appropriate interpersonal and social relationships. They also deal with some of the most complicated and difficult questions such as the ethical appropriateness of human cloning.²¹

18. Philip G. Zimnardo, *Psychology and Life*, ed. Glenview, 10th ed. (IL: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1979), 22.

19. Tim Ingold, ed. *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology: Humanity Culture, and Social Life* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 3.

20. William Larsen, *Human Embryology* (New York: Church Hill, Livingstone, 1997), 117.

In his book *The Way of the (Modern) World, Or Why It's Tempting to Live As If God Doesn't Exist*, Craig M. Gay makes the observation that the American culture and its disciplines are promoting a culture of practical atheism, which consequently can only offer only incomplete definitions of humanity. Gay writes:

Contemporary society and culture so emphasize human potential and human agency and the immediate practical exigencies of the here and now, that we are for the most part tempted to go about our daily business in this world without giving God much thought. Indeed, we are tempted to live as though God did not exist, or at least as if his existence did not practically matter. In short, one of the most insidious temptations fostered within contemporary secular society and culture, temptation rendered uniquely plausible by the ideas and assumptions embedded within modern institutional life, is the temptation to *practical atheism*.²²

Scholars define human identity on the basis of their own studies and disciplines. Moreover, the trend in modern American culture is to define humanity without God. The modern American culture is largely atheistic, sometimes pluralistic. As a result, a Christian student sees a real contradiction between these definitions of humanity. He or she must be prepared to answer such definitions with a Christian apology. One intellectual approach to the understanding of reality is *naturalism*:

Naturalism is the belief that the material world of nature is all there is, all there ever has been, and all there ever will be-- that nothing supernatural is real. If naturalism is true, then there isn't any God.... Most naturalists also think that the truth of naturalism is obvious to any rational person. Many even think it has somehow been proven by science. They conclude that faith is irrational, that belief in God is superstition, and that Christians are just too weak-minded to face the facts.²³

21. James Q. Wilson, "The Paradox of Cloning," *The Ethics of Human Cloning* (Washington DC: The AEI Press, 1998), 73.

22. Craig M. Gay, *The Way of the (Modern) World, Or, Why It's Tempting to Live As If God Doesn't Exist* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 2.

23. J. Budziszewski, *How to Stay Christian in College: An Interactive Guide to Keeping the Faith* (Colorado: Nav. Press, 1999), 43 (Hereafter J. Budziszewski).

Postmodernists attack human identity. They also want to deconstruct the norms and absolutes of belief in a god as reality. Christian students must counter such offensives by being firmly rooted in their Christian identity and the theology of the two kingdoms. "According to Christianity, human identity does not rest on culture, groups, nature, or individual autonomy. Every human being has an immortal soul.... Having a soul means that while you might play many roles and have a succession of different thoughts and feelings, you are still one person."²⁷

Students are going to hear many philosophical and dogmatic issues in their curriculum which will be contrary to their faith. Today's youth live in the midst of several different philosophies and theologies. This means postmodernism offers them many different options from which to choose, often leading them away from the One Truth to many truths; that is, from eternal truth to a variety of the so-called secular truths. According to Craig Kennet Miller:

Postmodernity is the condition of living in a sea of "truths," each with its own reality and set of beliefs. The individual is left with a decision to believe in something or to drift aimlessly in a sea of information. Rather than the culture or the society dictating the truth, the person in the midst of the postmodern condition has to decide what is the truth for him or her. Thus truth is not something that is found. Instead, truth is something that you create for yourself.²⁸

In the midst of all these confusions, Christian teenagers need to be exhorted and encouraged to believe the absolute truth in God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. During their college education they may be searching for love, God, friends, and knowledge and will find real comfort in such eternal blessings. The Church has to help

27. Gene Edward Veith, Jr, *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture* (Wheaton IL: Crossway Books, 1994), 87.

28. Craig Kennet Miller, *Postmodern: The Beliefs, Hopes & Fears of Young Americans, 1965-1981* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1996), 55.

them to assert that the ultimate truth is in Jesus Christ in whom they can find the true God, love, friendship, and knowledge. As an example, James N. Watkins explains the life of Kathy, a teenager, who asserts that she has established a relationship with God who makes her mind brand new. She is able to find comfort and meaning in two specific Bible verses: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom. 12:2), and "... be made new in the attitude of your minds; and put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph. 4:23-24). These promises have helped her to experience mental and spiritual healing (forgiveness of sins) and a new life with God.²⁹

C. Evolution and Outlooks influenced by Evolution

The naturalistic theory of evolution taught by many secular college professors becomes another challenge for Christian students. This theory challenges the biblical truth of creation in the name of science. Evolutionists claim that they have superior knowledge because they claim that it is empirical, objective, and provable. In the theistic evolution theory, God created the earth using the process of evolution. In this theistic evolution process, the six days of creation in Genesis is not understood literally. Instead it is understood as six periods of many millions of years. Here, God is the creator of mankind but has no relationship with mankind except in giving them the role of caretaker of the earth. God acts like a clock maker who wound the earth and set it in motion. This theory is theologically unacceptable because it denies God's power and relationship with

29. James N. Watkins, *The Why Files* (St. Louis: CPH, 2000), 2003.

mankind whom He made in His image. It also severely weakens the need for a Savior to redeem the world from sins.³⁰ This is the place, to be sure, where Christian students have to keep high standards theologically, biblically, logically, and intellectually, for which they need thorough Bible studies on biblical creation versus scientific evolution.

Christian high school students believe, according to the First Article of the Apostle's Creed, that the God of the Bible created the universe and brought everything into existence by His Word.³¹ He is the only transcendent, omniscient, and omnipotent God. Man has to oversee God's creation and live in fellowship with God. Death is not a part of God's plan, but it is the result of sin; whereas a naturalist claims that this cannot be scientifically proved or tested.

D. Pluralism as a Challenge to Particular Faith in Jesus Christ

As defined in Webster's *Third International Dictionary of English Language Unabridged*, pluralism is, "a metaphysical theory [stating] that there are more than one or more than two kinds of ultimate reality."³² It is, "a metaphysical theory [based on the idea] that reality is not an organic whole but is composed of a plurality of independent entities, whether material or spiritual or both."³³ John Hick, a pluralist, has posed an

30. David A. Faulkner, "A Practical Guide for Young College Bound Christians, Their Parents, and Home Churches," (A booklet prepared for the use of LCMS youth, their parents, and local congregations and presented in the graduate level Christ and Culture class, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 2003).

31. Genesis 1.

32. *Webster's Third International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*, ed. Philip Babcock Gove and The Merriam-Webster (Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster Inc. Publishers, 1981), 1745.

33. *Ibid.*, 1745.

important contemporary challenge to traditional Christianity based upon his theory of Christian religious pluralism.³⁴

On Hick's view, it makes sense to deny the truth of many of the defining doctrines of orthodox Christianity and to affirm that all of the major religions provide equally valid contexts for both moral transformation and salvific or liberative transport. However, Christian inclusivists disagree with Hick's pluralism. They believe instead that the atoning work of the crucified and risen Jesus is the divinely ordained way to redemption. But they also hold that God nevertheless saves all those who do not know about Jesus if they respond to the light God gives to them both here and in the afterlife. This means that God's universal redemptive love is providentially operative throughout the created order, which includes both human creatures and religions.³⁵

Here John Hick describes how religions can be equally valid moral transformers and salvific transports to reality. Whenever LCMS Christians hear pluralist views in the classroom, they should be strong in their faith with the biblical truth that our God, Yahweh, does not accept all world religions. Rather, He commands and claims, "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exod. 20:3). He never includes all the world religions under one umbrella but instead demands, "You shall not bow down to them (other gods) or serve them, for, I the LORD your God am a jealous God..." (Exod. 20:5). Teenagers should always remember that God's Word is their strength in the days of temptations when they encounter views of pluralism and inclusivism.

Obviously, today we live in a complex community of faith with multiple religious philosophies. Even within Christianity, there are numerous denominations. In a secular college context, Christian students not only face the possibility of confronting confusing faith structures in the classroom but also from classmates of different faiths as

34. Charles T. Hughes, "Pluralism, Inclusivism, and Christology," *Jesus Then & Now: Images of Jesus in History and Christology*, ed. Marvin and Charles Hughes (Pennsylvania: Harrisburg, Trinity Press International, 2001), 154.

35. *Ibid.*, 154.

well. Similarly they have to confront the teachings of evolution and creation. Christian students believe that the God of the Holy Bible created the universe in six days. It is a reality in their lives, whereas it is a myth or superstition for those who are weak in faith. The Holy Bible says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov. 1:7 NKJV).

Christian students must develop and master critical thinking during their college years. Their college education is not just memorizing materials and reciting what professors teach. Students have to master critical thinking by examining a statement, inquiring about its correct meaning, and asking how this statement affects them, their churches and communities. Critical thinking is objective and it is not intended to attack other beliefs based on emotion; rather it evaluates and analyzes beliefs on the basis of facts. It also offers a critique on the basis of the teachings of Holy Scripture.

E. Confronting Non-Christian Professors Who Teach College Courses

Lutheran teenagers remember Prov. 1:5 (NKJV): "A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel." They realize and experience in college that their professors may not be Christians. Some may even be anti-religious. Yet Christian students believe that Christ died for the sins of the whole world. They introduce themselves to their professors and treat them with respect even if their professors are not Christians and teach principles contrary to the Christian faith.

Young Lutheran Christians are going to face a new atmosphere in colleges and universities, especially when they try to establish relationships with their professors. While they are in colleges, they have chances to rate their professors based on their studies and experiences. They are going to form their own opinions about their classes

and their professors. Pastors and youth workers of the church have a moral responsibility to instruct the college-bound youth of the church so that they will be able to appropriately respond to professors who challenge their faith. These young people must be instructed about professors and their classes. One helpful way to learn about colleges, professors, and classrooms is to help our high school students to get connected with the senior college students of our congregations so they can gather useful information about college life. Our young people may consult the “Rate My Professors”³⁶ website so that they will be able to collect enough information about professors who teach different subjects. This information can be beneficial for all our students.

When young Christians enter college, they hear different things or stories about their professors. Professors may be rated as sexy on the basis of their physical appearance. Some students may make superficial comments about their professors. Sometimes they evaluate a professor saying he or she is nice and knows his/her subject very well. When students describe a professor as a hard grader, some professors take it as a personal point of pride. In some classes, problems occur when professors bring their own personal problems into the classroom. For example a professor has religious freedom to believe in his/ her own faith, but he/she can not insist that students embrace his/her religion or treat students poorly because of the students’ faith.

In colleges, professors take a broad range of effective actions to establish and facilitate learning. Professors understand that teaching is an art and a science. They use their skills widely on the basis of their research and methodology, but they are rarely

36. Lane Gillespie, “Rate My Professors” [Article on-line]; available from <http://www.ratemyprofessors.com/index.jsp>; Internet; accessed in March 2004. This site really helps students to understand and evaluate their professors and the subjects that are taught by each professor.

rewarded. Becoming an excellent college teacher is a continuing lifelong professional challenge. Professors may be competent enough in adopting different teaching techniques, assignments, and examination patterns to help students in their studies. Christian teenagers must be encouraged to take advantages of all modes of learning for their progress in life, so they can serve society and their churches better.

7. Challenges to the Christian Life

American teenagers are not free from the problems of life. For example, the Manhattan Institute survey of 11,000 public school students reveals the following:

Grades 9-12	Urban	Suburban
Have drunk alcohol more than 2-3 times	62.7%	66.3%
Have driven while drunk	07.8%	11.2%
Have tried an illegal drug	35.5%	36.8%
Have had sex	49.0%	50.2%

-Manhattan Institute website, January 2004³⁷

Furthermore, the Chicago Tribune noted that in 2003, school campuses were scenes where 1,460,000 violent incidents took place. Ninety-two per cent of high schools had at least one violent incident on campus.³⁸ These statistics show the urgency to reach Christian youth with the Gospel of Jesus Christ in order to influence and help their social and moral lives.

A. Pressures of Non-Christian Social Life

When students go off to college, they gain a lot more freedom and independence. As a matter of fact, they exercise complete freedom. Without parents around them to

37. Rick Edwards, ed. "SNAPSTATS" Manhattan Institute Survey on 11,000 Public School Students, *Youth Worker: A Contemporary Journal for Youth Ministry*, Mar/Apr 2004, 11.

38. Ibid.

compel them or tell to go to worship on Sundays, students become responsible for their own actions. Many times, however, the wrong use of freedom leads them down the wrong path precisely because parents are no longer with them to check upon their activities or to encourage them to grow in their Christian identity. Students are tempted to feel that they are “liberated”, meaning that they may enjoy their new freedom/independence in whatever way they want to. Peer pressure may motivate them to try drugs or alcohol or engage in sexual activity, all of which may be more appealing because others are doing it, enjoying it, and not “getting into any trouble because of it.” Since there is no one to continually reaffirm their Christian identity, and encourage them in their beliefs and morals, they may go astray easily. For this very reason, it is extremely important for Christian students that when they first arrive on campus to get acquainted personally with the pastor or campus Christian minister. They should also seek out the local church so they can join a Christian support group and attend regular Lutheran Sunday worship or a Lutheran campus church.

The topic of sex is the most challenging topic for young people, including Christians. Parents, teachers and pastors must be open and up front about this topic with young students, especially with those who are entering college. Today in our society, not only TV and movies are filled with sex, but also the advertisements in newspapers and magazines. Even the radio uses sex appeal to sell different products, and television easily distorts the truth. Dr. Gene Edward Veith states,

Television blurs the line between truth and entertainment. Film and video can now render the wildest fantasies and make them seem realistic. Real events, by the same token, are fictionalized. It is little wonder that the TV generation has a

hard time distinguishing between truth and fiction and that intellectuals raised on TV argue that there is essentially no difference between the two.³⁹

Today's world encourages men to view women as objects of pleasure rather than seeing them as individuals whom God loves. The words of the Prophet Jeremiah to Israel are very much relevant to our society today: "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; nor did they know how to blush..." (Jer. 6:15 NKJV).

Today we find a tendency among teenagers to spend much of their time watching TV, videos, and DVDs, listening to music, and participating in sports. These are conveniences of the modern world that add fun and enjoyment to daily living. Nevertheless such media also influence the human mind in such a way that what is not real puts on an appearance of reality. Young people are deceived by the virtual reality commercialized by modern science and technology. Christian students also want to watch what they want indiscriminately. However, they must be counseled about the influence and the dangerous effects of such devices in their lives by showing them God's plan in Jesus. In this way they will be prepared to make wise choices in their lives even when they are constantly pressured by their college experiences.

It is not too late to encourage our teenagers to participate in appropriate entertainment activities. It is not too late for them to reach for high ideals and standards. We need to help them to make good judgments about what they may appropriately watch in their dorms even when no one is watching them. They are accountable to God for their own activities. For this reason, we may advise them to join in a "Christian Students

39. Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *Postmodern Times: A Commentary Thought and Culture* (Wheaton IL: Crossway Books, 1994), 81-82.

Concern Group” to encourage self control and provide alternative forms of entertainment and edification.

Dating is a phenomenon which we generally see among the young people. The first thing all Christian students must remember about dating is that dating is about marriage. “It is not a search for fun and sex. It is a search for a suitable marriage partner.”⁴⁰ According to Genesis 1 and 2, men and women are designed for marriage, not for dating. Whenever young Christian students consider dating, they have to ask themselves questions such as: Who can I date, who can I marry, what can I do, and how far can I go? “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous” (Heb.13:4 ESV). They must establish clear answers to these questions prior to entering college. If they do not, they can become susceptible to temptations and fall into problems with individuals whom they date. Christian college students are always reminded that they must grow and listen to what Scripture has to say regarding sexual temptations.

Christian teenagers may be dating sex abusers, drug addicts, alcoholics, and so on. In order to help these teens, “Parents must shoulder their responsibilities in guiding youngsters for many years with a reasonable use of authoritative control.”⁴¹ Here the right amount of authoritative control over our boys and girls is needed. This control is to help them to take responsibility for themselves. “Our goal should always be in evidence-

40. J. Budziszewski, 105.

41. Ruth Small Moser, and Leslie. E. Moser, *You and Your Teen-ager: A Partnership with God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966), 139.

- the goal of self control. But let's not fail to use good common sense in helping them to achieve this goal."⁴²

There are different social organizations in colleges such as Greek Clubs. The Greek Clubs are organized from the background of the Greek culture with Greek letters for men's and women's groups. These groups coordinate events and community service projects in addition to sponsoring educational programs. Furthermore, these organizations provide students with opportunities to enhance campus life in a unique environment. Through their experiences, students learn the value of campus and community service. These organizations encourage community service and philanthropy, provide leadership, opportunities, promote scholarship and build lasting friendships. Christian youth must always keep up Christian values whenever they are in other cultural organizations. Cultural organizations contrary to Christian morality and principles must be avoided.⁴³

"What your date partner thinks will carry more weight with you than a cement mixer."⁴⁴ So whenever there is dating, both Lutheran young men and women should pray for spiritual strength and self control in which the Holy Spirit will not allow one to hurt the other. "Praying for other people is the surest way of treating them right when you find yourself with them."⁴⁵

42. Ibid., 39.

43. Larry Mannolini, "Students and Campus Life," [Article on-line]; available from <http://students.adelphi.edu/sa/csla/orgs.shtml>; Internet; accessed in June 2003.

44. Water Riess, *The Teen-ager You're Dating: A Christian View of Sex about Boys for Girls, about Girls for Boys* (St. Louis: CPH, 1964), 110.

45. Ibid., 110.

The Church has to teach our youngsters that God gave sex to His beloved children, not only for procreation, but also for fellowship, communion, joy, comfort and mutual love. When the Bible records the coming together of husband and wife sexually, it uses the word “knew” instead of “sex”. Sex is a form of communication, and it is a way of saying “I love you.” The youngsters must see that sex is a wonderful, beautiful gift of God, and God does not want anybody to adulterate it.⁴⁶

B. Moral Choices Presented to the Young Christian on the Campus

It is possible that males and females find sexual gratification through their eyes. Jesus teaches about lust and He says, “ If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell” (Matt.5:29 NIV). Therefore, “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb.12:2 NIV). Since man lives in this sinful world, sins lead him to live in impurity. Impurity can become a habit:

Impurity of the eyes and mind lives like a habit but fights like addiction. Overcoming this addiction must be done COLD TURKEY. You cannot taper down because your mind and your eyes are just too tricky and deceitful. With tapering down, whatever impurity you do allow seems to multiply in its impact, and the habit won't break. Besides, tapering down brings with it the possibility of sexual binges that might go on for days.... For singles this means starving your eyes of all things sensual. This will help you overcome the desire for pre-marital sex with women you date and will see your date as a person and not an object.⁴⁷

46. Adrian Rogers, “Keeping Sex Unadulterated,” [journal on-line]; available from [http://home.christianity.com/topics/Christianity_and_culture/sexual ethics](http://home.christianity.com/topics/Christianity_and_culture/sexual_ethics); Internet; accessed 14 Feb 2003.

47. Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoker, *Every Man's Battle* (Colorado: Water Book Press, 2000), 108.

This discussion shows that it is important for young Christian students to surround themselves with “Christian Students Concern Groups” in order to improve their ethical and moral behavior. In college, they must conform their Christian behaviors and actions to their Christian identity. In their social environment, they always realize their Christian life in terms of the two kingdoms-temporal and eternal-that they demonstrate a very high ethical and moral Christian behavior so that others in the college will be encouraged to see the glory of Jesus Christ in their college lives.

Part III Meeting Challenges to the Christian on Today's Campus

Christian teenagers can meet the challenges in their colleges and universities only by the help of God's Word (*sola Scriptura*), by God's grace (*sola gratia*) and by their faith in Jesus Christ (*sola fide*). This becomes possible by the power of the Holy Spirit as they receive strength through Bible study, as they live out the theology of two kingdoms, and as they give attention to their devotional and prayer lives, and also corporate worship and Lutheran Christian music, all in their relationships with fellow Christians.

8. Strength through Bible Study

The Bible is the sacred Book or collection of books accepted by the Christian church as uniquely inspired by God and thus authoritative, providing guidelines for belief and behavior.⁴⁸ God's written Word, the Bible, consists of both the Old and the New Testaments. God gave His living Word, Jesus Christ, and His written word, the Scriptures to the world. Although the Bible was written by prophets and apostles, the Bible originated not with their wills, but with God's (2 Pet. 1:20-21). "All Scripture," Paul wrote, "is given by the inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16).⁴⁹

Lutherans believe and teach that the only source, rule, and norm for their doctrine and life are Holy Scripture. Because we accept the Scriptures as the very Word of God Himself, Lutheranism has refused to recognize any other writings on the same level as the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments.⁵⁰ We also confess

48. "Bible." (1992-1999). *PC Study Bible* (Version 3). [CD-ROM]. Seattle, WA: Biblesoft Productions.

49. "Scripture," (1992-199). *PC Study Bible* (Version 3). [CD-ROM]. Seattle, WA: Biblesoft Productions.

50. "Gospel and Scripture," *A Report of the Commission of Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod*, November 1972, 4.

that the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired source and norm of all Christian preaching and teaching. Furthermore, we say that the Gospel of forgiveness for Christ's sake through faith is the key that opens the Bible, because this Gospel is, after all, the heart and center of the Bible's message. The purpose of the Scriptures is to make us wise unto salvation. The written Word of God is durable, universally available and has remained essentially unchanged in its message since it was first inspired by God. The Bible, God's inspired Word, is able to make young Christians wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 3:15). The Scriptures testify of Christ (John. 5:39) and He is the key to comprehending what the Scriptures teach (Luke 24: 27). Young people should search the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11) to discover God's message for their lives.

Bible study means the study of God's Word. It is the primary means by which God is present and working in the world:

... He is not Himself part of this world, but He acts in it by means of His Word. He becomes personally known through His Word (1 Sam. 3:21). His Word is powerfully creative (Ezek. 37:4) and its purposes are irresistible (Isa. 55:11; Jer. 23:29). "God's Word is totally dependable; it represents His permanent commitment" (Isa. 40:8). When heard and responded to, His word meets deep needs in young people's heart and provides joy, satisfaction, and confident direction which can be achieved in no other manner (Deut. 8:3; Ps. 119:162; Jer. 15:16). God's word has the power to penetrate all pretense, and discern "the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). God's speaking of His word reaches a culmination in the sending of His Son (John. 1:1-14; Heb. 1:1-2). God's word is supremely true of Jesus and the gospel of Jesus Christ is in a special way, the word of God as it makes known and brings into operation the reconciliation with God which is His purpose for mankind (2 Cor. 5:18-19).⁵¹

51. "Word of God." (1992-1999). *PC Study Bible* (Version 3). [CD-ROM]. Seattle, WA: BibleSoft Productions.

So LCMS teenagers need to study their Bibles daily to grow and experience their reconciliation with God in Christ. Young Lutheran Christians read newspapers daily to find out what is happening in the world, but they study the Bible in order to find out why it is happening:

As no other book does, the Bible lays bare our secret notions, enshrines our fairest hopes, reveals what it means to be a man in a bewildered and bewildering world. The Bible discloses how incurably religious man is, depicts us as we are, and pictures a divine and searching love that ultimately cannot be thwarted."⁵²

Continuous spiritual growth is the will of God for all believers. St. Paul prays that the Christians at Colossae might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so that they might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God (Col. 1:9-10).

Bible study is an important part of training young college students to live Christian lives in today's world. This principle remains true throughout our history. More than fifty years ago Oscar E. Feucht suggested that the Lutheran teenagers develop the following strengths in their Bible studies:

They grow stronger in the faith
 They grow in Christian character
 They acquire Christian attitude and insights
 They gain a deeper understanding of Christian doctrine
 They can distinguish truth from error
 They develop skills for practical Christian living
 They prepare themselves to fulfill their Christian mission in life, at home, at work, in the church, in community, in their social life, and in the world of today.
 They get help to meet life's problems
 They get trained for lay leadership
 They qualify as Lutheran Christians.⁵³

⁵². J. Carter Swaim, *Why Read the Bible? Questions for Christians[1]* (New York: Friendship Press, 1965), 12.

9. An Outline for Bible Study on Life in the Two Kingdoms

Christian education department staff, pastors and youth workers of LCMS congregations can make use of the following Bible study outline in their ministry to youth. The outline may engage the Holy Bible, the Book of Concord, Luther's works, and other relevant books and teaching aids.

I. Introduction

- a. Life in High School and Home
- b. Expected Life in College (Anxieties, Fears, Anticipations)
- c. Christian Identity (From God's word, Baptism, God-pleasing deeds)

II. Witnessing to Christ in College Life: The Identity of the Christian College Student

- a. Comfort in God's Word and Christian Identity
- b. Comfort in Christian Faith
- c. Confidence in Christ as a Child of God

III. Life in the Two Kingdoms

- a. The Theology of Two Kingdoms
 - 1. Temporal-Physical (Left Hand)
 - 2. Eternal-Spiritual (Right Hand)
 - 3. The Rulers of Two Kingdoms (God – Satan – People?)
- b. Luther's writings on the Two Kingdoms Theology (Lutheran Theology)
- c. Bible Verses about Two Kingdoms
 - 1. Helpful Bible Verses and Notes about the Present World
 - 2. Bible Verses about the Future of this World
 - 3. Who Speaks about Whom?
 - 4. What Will Happen?
- d. Review the Small Catechism – CPH Edition 1986
 - 1. Ten Commandments and Meanings
 - 2. The Apostolic Creed and Meanings
 - 3. The Table of Duties

IV. Academic Challenges to Christians in a College

- a. Personal Freedom/ Independence
- b. Study Habits
- c. Classroom Learning
- d. Scripture Guidance- Proverbs Ch.1
- e. Cheating

V. Intellectual Challenges to Christian Students

- a. Atheism and Human Identity
- b. God-less Teaching/ Society
- c. Christian Identity
- d. Naturalism and Evolution
- e. Postmodernism

VI. Social Challenges to Christian life in College

- a. Social Freedom
- b. Accountability
- c. Christian Worship Life
- d. TV, Movies and Radios
- e. Dating (Purpose- Code of Conduct, Biblical Teaching, Prayer)
- f. Christian Sexuality

The above outline is subject to adaptation or changes, additions or deletions within the framework in which the Bible study is designed. This outline is oriented in terms of my introduction so that the reader may benefit from this college Bible study for the purpose of helping Christian youth to retain confidence in their identities as Christians. It will also encourage their witness to the college community.

10. Strength in a Personal Devotion and Prayer Life

Christians find strength in their personal spiritual devotional lives. Dr. Martin Luther's Works, vol. 42 and vol. 43, are his devotional writings (American Editions). LCMS teenagers will remember that they are sinners just like all others in the world. As they see the nails piercing Christ's hands, they know that this, too, is their work. When they behold His crown of thorns, they comprehend that this is the result of their evil thoughts, etc.⁵⁴ Therefore they need very strong devotional lives in their specific situations in order to grow in Christian faith and conduct so that their colleagues may see their Christian identity. "Luther's writings (devotional) call upon the Christian to take a

54. *Luther's Works*, AE, vol. 42:9.

responsible stand in the particular situations of his life in obedience to God's word.⁵⁵

Christian youth should take a responsible stand in their particular situations of life in obedience to God's Word by which they become strong in their spiritual journey.

In personal devotional lives, they also need to grow in their prayer lives. "Luther called for prayer for the enemy and the persecutor who, though triumphant for the moment, will soon be confronted by eternal doom."⁵⁶ Here Christian teenagers have to realize that, even when they find their professors and colleagues acting as enemies to their faith, they need to pray for them by praying with Jesus, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke. 23:34 NIV). God's deliverance has been assured to each one in Jesus Christ and He always hears us. The LORD God heard King Hezekiah when he prayed to the LORD, "Remember, O LORD how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes" (2 Kings. 20:3 NIV). St. Paul wants the Corinthians to live a devoted prayer in undivided devotion to the Lord (1 Cor. 7:35). Therefore it is the right way for our college students to live devotional and dedicated lives in Jesus Christ.

Again, the strength of Christian life is prayer life. Johann Gerhard, one of the greatest classical Lutheran theologians (1582-1637), wrote:

Pious prayer offered in faith is familiar conversation with God. It is a salutary remedy to all the difficulties of life. It is the key to heaven and the door to paradise. It shows us how much we depend on God, and it is a ladder of ascension to God. It is a shield for our defense and a faithful messenger of the ambassador. It is refreshment in the heat of misfortune; it is medicine during illness. It is a winch, drawing us to heaven, and a vessel that draws water from the font of divine kindness. It is a sword against the devil and a defense against misfortune. It is a wind that blows away evil and brings earthly benefits. It is a

55. Gustav K. Wiencke, ed. *Luther's Works: Devotional Writings*, vol. 43 [II] (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), xiii.

56. *Ibid.*, xiii.

nurse that nurtures virtue and conquers faults. It is a great fortification for the soul and gives free access to God. It is a spiritual feast and a heavenly delicacy. It is a consolation for the dejected and a delight for the holy. It grants knowledge of the secret things of God and acquires His gifts. It upholds the world and rescues people. It is a joy for the heart and jubilation for the mind. It follows God's gift of grace, and it leads ahead into glory. It is a garden of happiness and a tree full of delights. It claims the conscience and increases our thankfulness. It sends demons running and draws angels close. It is a soothing remedy for the misfortunes of this life and the sweet smell of the sacrifice of thanksgiving. It is a foretaste of the life to come and sweetens the bitterness of death. Whoever is truly a child of God through faith will, with childlike trust, address his or her heavenly father every day in prayer.⁵⁷

Christian youth become stronger and stronger in their pious prayer and devotional lives with God through their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. An effective prayer is a spiritually informed response from people who are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Christian college students live their lives as a response to Jesus. They mature in their Christian identity as they pray regularly in response to the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

For Christian youth, the natural outgrowth of faith, worship, confession, and adoration is praise. They love and respect God above all others, and they praise Him for his "mighty acts...according to His excellent greatness" (Ps.150:2 ESV) and for His "righteous rules" (Ps. 119:164 ESV). Christian college students show their trust in the power of God as they live prayerful lives. Dr. Martin Luther's prayer life, his morning and evening prayers, are a real example in their daily Christian lives for which pastors, parents and youth workers must train them. LCMS young students are encouraged to make use of the Lutheran prayer books, prayer practices, and other literature about the

57. Johann Gerhard, *Meditations on Divine Mercy: A Classic Treasury of Devotional Prayer*, trans. Rev. Matthew C. Harrison (St. Louis: CPH, 2003), 21-22.

prayer life of Christian heroes together with written liturgical prayers for their worship lives.⁵⁸

11. Strength in Corporate Worship and Christian Music

“Worship is usually defined as honoring or revering a supernatural being or power. This adoration is done with appropriate acts, rites or ceremonies.”⁵⁹ Roger D. Pittelko defines the term ‘Worship’ thus in his article, “Worship and the Community of Faith,” and he explains, “There is much about this meaning of worship that is salutary. God has worth, merit. That merit or worth is to be adored and honored.”⁶⁰ For Lutherans, it is the theocentric, Christocentric view of worship that forms Lutheran worship. Worship is the *real* strength in the lives of teenagers because “Worship is God speaking. It is our listening. Worship begins with God’s word. He is the content. Evangelical Lutheran worship begins with God giving us His Word. It comes to us and we respond in faith and devotion. It is God’s action, not ours. He is the mover, the doer. Faith comes as the gift from God, not from our own doing or action.”⁶¹ Such an understanding of worship helps our young Christians to gather together on Sundays for the Divine Service in their churches. “In the Divine Services, God serves us. He gives us his Word and sacraments The Divine Service liturgy is God giving to us and our responding to him. It is theocentric and christocentric, not the man centered activity that is usually defined as

58. “Prayer,” (1992-1999). *PC Study Bible Study* (Version 3). [CD-ROM]. Seattle, WA: Biblesoft Productions.

59. Roger D. Pittelko, “Corporate Worship of the Church: Worship and the Community of Faith,” *In Lutheran Worship History and Practice*, ed. Fred L. Precht (St. Louis: CPH, 1993), 44.

60. *Ibid.*, 44.

61. *Ibid.*, 45.

worship.”⁶² “The rhythm of our worship is from him to us, and then from us back to him. He gives his gifts, and together we receive and extol them. We build one another up as we speak to one another in Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Our Lord gives us his body to eat and his blood to drink. Finally his blessing moves us out into our calling, where his gifts have their fruition.”⁶³ Christian students find real spiritual strength in their worship lives in which singing to the Lord empowers them with the real spirit of joy in their worship.

Christian teenagers recognize that the Christian life is an active life of obedience to God, fellowship with Him and service to others. “Most Protestant teenagers go to church because they want to and look forward to being in Church. Few fit the caricature of feeling imprisoned at church.”⁶⁴ Fifty percent of Protestant youngsters wish that their church offered more programming for their age. Studies show that 57% of teens connected to churches say that the church does a very good job of making a difference in their lives.⁶⁵ It is interesting to note that girls tend to be more positive in their approach to church than boys.⁶⁶ The book, *Youth in Protestant Churches* by Eugene C. Roethlke Partain and Dr. Peter L. Benson gives a report on teenagers attitudes toward church as follows:⁶⁷

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Eugene C. Roethlke, Partain and Dr. Peter L. Benson, *Youth in Protestant Churches* (Minneapolis: Search Institute, 1993), 54.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid., 55.

I go to church because I want to	- 68%
I look forward to church	- 56%
I wish church offered more	- 46%
Church feels like a prison	- 06%
Church makes a difference for teens	- 57%

Lutheran teenagers are encouraged to worship only the true God who is the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three distinct persons in one Divine Being or Essence (the Holy Trinity).⁶⁸ They believe that our God is one Lord (Deut. 6:4) and no other God but one (I Cor. 8:4). Our Lord Jesus asked His beloved disciples to go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of this one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). Thus teenagers understand that this God forbids them to have other gods instead of Him or beside Him (idolatry).⁶⁹ Our God does not want His people to worship idols. Pantheism is worship of nature. The ancient Egyptians worshipped sacred animals, the ancient Arabs worshiped the sun, the Israelites worshiped the golden calf, the Philistines worshiped Dagon, and Phoenicians worshiped Baal. The worship of the silver shrines of Diana (Acts 19:24) and the images of Hindu and Chinese idols all come under forbidden worship.⁷⁰ The Almighty God requires that we believe in Him alone as our God. This means that, from the Bible, we know Him as true God, we own and acknowledged Him as our God, and we worship Him as our God. Such worship must not be lip service but be done in Spirit and in truth (John. 4:23). Worship consists

68. Edward W. A. Koehler, ed. *A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism*, The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1981), 45.

69. Ibid., 47.

70. Ibid., 48.

of fear, love, and trust in Him above all things.⁷¹ Christian youth should fear God “above all things” because He is the Almighty God; no one is greater and holier than He.⁷²

Wherever and whenever Christians gather to worship and praise God, they sing songs-songs of confidence and faith, songs of confession and contrition, songs of exile and rebirth, songs of sin and salvation. The music of Christian worship is a great *cantus firmus* extolling God’s glory, praising him for his mighty acts in rescuing his people, and proclaiming the great central act of God in Jesus Christ, the victory over sin and death that is celebrated with special joy and intensity each paschal season. Christians are a people who sing because they have a song to sing. The theme of their song has been clear and constant: it is the theme of thanksgiving for victory and salvation through the death and resurrection of their Lord Jesus Christ.⁷³

LCMS students grow stronger by singing the praise and glory of God as the lyrics inevitably influence their entire lives. For Dr. Luther, “Christian song is the inevitable eruption of joyful praise in the heart of the redeemed. For the believer to refuse to sing and speak about the faith that is within him or her is to demonstrate that he or she does not believe.”⁷⁴ Luther says, “There is now in the New Testament a better service of God, of which the Ps. 96:1 says: “Sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord all the earth.”

For God has cheered our hearts and minds through his dear Son, whom he gave for us to redeem us from sin, death, and the devil. He who believes this earnestly cannot be quiet about it. But he must gladly and willingly sing and speak about it. And whoever does not want to sing and speak it shows that he does not believe and that he does not belong under the new and joyful testament.⁷⁵ Therefore singing to the Lord and using a variety of musical instruments as a festive way of expressing glory to God adds additional strength and joy to the lives of our Christian youth.

71. Ibid., 49.

72. Ibid., 50.

73. Carl Schalk, “Music and the Liturgy The Lutheran Tradition,” In *Lutheran Worship History and Practice*. Edited by Fred L. Precht, (St.Louis: CPH, 1993), 243.

74. Ibid., 245.

Music implies vocal or instrumental sounds with rhythm, melody, and harmony.

The ancient Hebrews lived with music which was part of their everyday life. Music was a part of their family merrymaking. The best example is the homecoming of the Prodigal son in Luke 15:25. They also welcomed heroes and celebrated victories with music:

Miriam and other women sang, danced, and played Tambourines when the Israelites miraculously escaped the Egyptians, (Exod. 15:20) and the song of Moses is the earliest recorded song in the Bible. (Exod. 15). When Jephthah, won the victory over Ammonites, his daughter greeted him with Tambourines to celebrate his victory. (Jude 11:34). The Young David was called to sooth Saul with music (I Sam. 16:16-23). King David's triumph brought music (1 Sam. 18:6). In this sense, David was a minstrel- a player of stringed instruments. He introduced music into the Sanctuary worship. King Solomon retained it after the temple was built (2 Sam. 6:5; I Kings. 10:12). In the New Testament, we have the hymns of Mary (Luke 1:46-55), and Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79), that is, the Magnificat and the Benedictus. Early Christians sang Hebrew songs accompanied by music (2 Chron. 29:27-28). The apostle Paul refers to "Psalms and Hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Matt. 26:30 records that Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn after the Passover meal. The early Christians sung hymns for worship and comfort (Acts 16:25; Eph. 5: 19; Col. 3:16). According to Pliny the younger, Christians sang songs about Christ and their faith in Him, at the beginning of the Second Century AD.⁷⁶

Music is drawn into thankfulness and praise, enlarging and elevating the adoration of our gracious God:

The early church developed its music from the psalmody of the synagogue, to which it added the strophic hymns of Greek and Roman converts. When the liturgy became the sole property of the clergy, there existed a need for hymns in the language of the people. Thus there came into being the great body of Latin hymns introduced and promoted by Bishop Ambrose of Milan and his followers. In time these again became the property of the clergy and hierarchy. The Lutheran Reformation once more restored the church's song to the people in their native tongue. From then on the Lutheran Church became known as the "singing church." The song of the church has weathered and withstood such influences as pietism, rationalism, modernism, and universalism in one form or another.⁷⁷

75. Ibid.

76. "Music," (1992-1999). *PC Study Bible* (Version .3). [CD-ROM]. Seattle, WA: Biblesoft Productions.

77. *Lutheran Worship*, prepared by The Commission on the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (St. Louis: CPH, 1982), 7.

Since the LCMS is a singing church, LCMS youth are not an exception. They should be always equipped and encouraged to sing Lutheran songs and hymns to worship and glorify God. Ps. 100:1-2 demands, "Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs." The singing of hymns has been an integral part of Christian worship for LCMS youth. Singing of hymns is a way for all youth to communicate with God using more than just words. It assists them to pour the grateful feelings of the heart—feelings awakened by the experience of forgiveness and the gracious work of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁸

Lutheran hymns and songs are theological and our hymns of faith strengthen and steady us when we are weary and worn. Hymns help us to praise God. They unite the Lord's earth-bound church in heavenly harmony. They enable us to pray and encourage us to be in the Lord:

And hymns connect us with generations now gone. Each week millions of Christians in local settings around the world, using hymns composed by believers from every era and branch of Christendom, join voices in united bursts of praise, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord.⁷⁹

LCMS schools and congregations must continue to equip teenagers to sing to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord. Today we have Christian music, musical instruments, trained musical directors, professional musicians, and music colleges, creating ample opportunities for pastors to serve young Christian students with music. Christian youth

78. Robert K. Brown and Mark R. Norton, ed. *The One Year Book of Hymns*, (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publications, Inc., 1995), 2.

79. Robert J. Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul: 150 of the World's Greatest Hymn Stories*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2003), xi.

should be motivated to listen and learn Christian music so; they will become able to sing for Jesus. Most of the LCMS churches are wonderfully blessed with music choirs and practice schedules by which the heaven rejoices when the youth and the entire congregation sing songs to glorify God for the wonderful gifts of salvation that we have in Jesus Christ.

12. Strength in Relationships with Fellow Christians

LCMS teenagers are Christ's people who are privileged to have fellowship with all true believers. Jesus prayed to His Father, "I do not pray for these only [the disciples] but also for those who believe in Me through their word that they may all be one ..." (John 17:20-21). "God answered the prayer of our Lord in the days of the apostles and continues to answer it today. Through the word which the apostles preached believers become one with Him and each other!"⁸⁰ St. Paul uses the word *koinonia* (Κοινωνία) by which he employs the relationship existing between the wine and the blood and the bread and body of Christ received by participants in the Sacrament of the Altar, who though many, are one body in Christ (I Cor. 10:16-17).⁸¹ The New Testament describes Christians as partners who share in the Gospel (I Cor. 9:23), in faith (Philemon 6), in sufferings and comfort (Philemon 3:10; 2 Cor. 1: 7, Rev. 1:9), in the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13: 14; Phil. 2:1), and in eternal glory (I Pet. 5:1). St. Paul tells the Corinthians that they have been called "into the fellowship (Κοινωνία) of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (I Cor. 1:9) and St. John proclaims that which he has seen and heard, "so that you

80. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Commission on Theology and Church Relations, "Bible Study on Fellowship" (St. Louis: 500 North Broadway, LCMS, Sept 1994), 16.

81. "The Nature and Implication of the Concept of Fellowship," *A Report of the Commission of Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod*, April 1981, 8.

may have fellowship (Κοινωνία) with us; and our fellowship (Κοινωνία) with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ” (I John.1:3).

Thus Christian teenagers want to maintain Christian relationships with their fellow Christians. This fellowship is the spiritual relationship given to each child of God. Even before the foundation of the world, God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ planned for our redemption and chose us to be His sons and daughters (Eph. 1:3-14). God had created the human race to be in fellowship with Him (Gen. 1:26-29; 2:16-17), and this was destroyed when Adam and Eve transgressed His command (Gen. 3). But His Son Jesus Christ redeemed us from sins and called us to be His loving children. God unites us with Christ and makes us “heirs in hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:5-7). St. Paul writes, “Justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). We are given access by faith to His grace (Rom. 5:2). Fellowship with Christ is therefore given through faith in Him. Since young people are strengthened in this fellowship (relationship) freely with Christ, they are prepared for good Christian relationships with those who have the same faith in Jesus Christ.

“Faith not only places believers in Christ into a spiritual fellowship with their Lord, but it also unites them with one another.”⁸² St. Paul writes, “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4:4-6 ESV). Furthermore, he refers to Christ as “the Head of the body, the Church” (Col. 1:18). Therefore our young people should keep very strong relationships with their fellow Lutheran Christians who live in one hope, one Lord, one faith, one Baptism, and one God.

LCMS youth grow strong in fellowship with others who are of the same faith in Jesus Christ. They live in fellowship (Κοινωνία) with other Christians, a fellowship which is constituted by agreement in the confession of the Scriptural Gospel and the administration of the sacraments.⁸³ It is the spiritual fellowship that helps teenagers themselves to remain strong Christians.

Conclusion

Our discussion has focused on strengthening Christian teenagers as they prepare to leave for college. The two kingdom theology assists youth toward awareness of their identity as Christians. They live in both the temporal and spiritual realms, and in each they live under a gracious God. Such identity provides a framework for young Christians when they interact with the world around them. It is our hope that teens from Christian homes and Christian congregations will grow in their knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To that end the church's ministry to teenagers is best developed as a joint ministry of the Christian home and the congregation. This ministry attempts to encourage teens to consider as important the Scriptures as God's Word, the new life given in their Holy Baptism, the continued sustenance of that life in Christ by His own Body and Blood in the Sacrament, and the helps that Christian music provides as well as the discipline of a personal prayer life. Supporting these vital areas are Bible studies through which the Holy Spirit may encourage each of these priorities and disciplines. Practically speaking, Lutheran youth together with their fellow Christians will find strength in regular

82. Ibid., 10.

83. Ibid., 11 (footnote 7).

attendance at worship, taking advantage of nurturing studies of the Bible and other helpful works, and seeking out friendship with Christians who are of like minds.

In addition to these helps, the church's ministry will encourage Christian youth at college to reach out to others, to share with them the Gospel of Christ, and to serve their fellows when opportunities to help or assist are there. By remaining alert to such opportunities, they will use their talents in meaningful ways for the welfare of others, and in so doing, their lives, active in Christian love, will glorify God.

When Pastor Sievers delivered his speech at the closing ceremony of the school year at Concordia College, St. Paul, Minn; as an encouragement to youth, he often quoted Eccles. 11:9: "So freue dich, Jüngling, in deiner Jugend und lass dein Herz guter Dinge sein in deinen jungen Tagen. Tu, was, dein Herz gelüstet und deinen Augen gefällt; aber wisse, das dich Gott um das alles vor Gericht ziehen wird." ("Therefore rejoice, young man, in your youth and let good things of your heart be in the days of your youth. Do what your heart desires and pleases your eyes; but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.")⁸⁴ LCMS Pastors bless Christian young students and send them to their colleges in the name of God as in Num. 6:24: "The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious upon you, the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace." Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!

84. Martin S. Bertram, *Stimmen der Kirche* (St. Louis: CPH, 1961) 154.

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