8-20-2020

Chrysostom and Luther on the Intergenerational Character of the Faith: Retrieving the God-Designed Parental Role in the Transmission of the Faith to the Next Generation

Charles Samuel Voigt Ledebuhr
ledebuhrc@csl.edu

Charles Samuel Voigt Ledebuhr Mr.
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, charlesledebuhr@gmail.com

CHRYSOSTOM AND LUTHER ON THE INTERGENERATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE FAITH
RETRIEVING THE GOD-DESIGNED PARENTAL ROLE IN THE TRANSMISSION OF THE FAITH TO THE NEXT GENERATION

A Thesis
Presented to the Faculty of
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Systematic Theology,
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

By
Charles Samuel Voigt Ledebuhr
August, 2020

Approved by:	Joel D. Biermann	Thesis Advisor
	David R. Maxwell	Reader
	Peter H. Nafzger	Reader

Ebenezer!
Rendering all the glory and gratitude to God, I dedicate this work to my wife Veridiane.
God knows the valleys through which He led us in these months, but as our Good Shepherd He led us with His loving hand!
Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever. (Psalm 136:1)

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For the opportunity of this achievement, I must recognize the people and institutions that God used to lead me here.

Seminário Concórdia of Brazil. To the professors who laid the foundation for my theological thinking, saw in me a potential unknown by myself, and encouraged this endeavor.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil (IELB). Within this church body the Lord Jesus Christ called me to be His own since my Baptism and today He grants me the honor of serving Him in this same church-body as minister of His Word. Countless are the blessings poured out by the Lord on me within this church body along the way between the mentioned moments. One was the opportunity to be sent to study at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. That the deepening in the Word of the Lord in this institution be for the glory of God and growth of His Kingdom as I serve His people as minister of His Word.

All the professors from ULBRA, Seminário Concórdia, and Concordia Seminary have been used by God to shape me until now, but I could not fail to mention Paulo Moisés Nerbas, Gerson Luis Linden, Clóvis Jair Prunzel, and Joel D. Biermann.

ABBREVIATIONS

AC	Augsburg Confession
FC	*The Fathers of the Church,* A New Translation
LC	Large Catechism
LFC	*A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church: Anterior to the Division of the East and West*
LW	*Luther's Works*: American Edition
SA	Smalcald Articles
SC	Small Catechism
WA	Weimar edition of *Luther's Works*

ABSTRACT

Ledebuhr, Charles S. V. “Chrysostom and Luther on the Intergenerational Character of the Faith: Retrieving the God-Designed Parental Role in the Transmission of the Faith to the Next Generation.” MA Thesis, Concordia Seminary, 2020. 167 pp.

Although hardly anyone would argue against the importance of parents in the faith formation of their children or that God commanded parents to pass on the faith to their children, there is still a clear tendency in the church to concentrate the teaching of the faith around the temple and the pastor rather than giving to the home and the parents the proper attention in accordance with God’s design. This thesis addresses the issue by harvesting contributions from two esteemed theologians of the history of the Church, John Chrysostom and Martin Luther. The analysis of relevant texts from these authors shows that Chrysostom and Luther support the thesis that the transmission of faith is inherently intergenerational, i.e., God created the human being in such a way that he has a natural tendency to learn from the previous generation and pass on to the next generation the faith in all its nuances or what it means to be completely human the way God intends us to be. Further insights from the research in Chrysostom and Luther also corroborate what other contemporary authors have been emphasizing, that the distinctiveness of the Christian life must be recovered in order to pass on to the next generation God’s account of what it means to be human. Otherwise, the world will inculcate in the young a different version of what it means to be human. The testimony of these two highly esteemed theologians, one from among the Church Fathers and the other from the Reformation era, should not be taken lightly. Therefore, this research contributes to the discussion aimed at recovering the role of parents in the faith formation of new generations by including the voices of Chrysostom and Luther in order that their inputs may be reappreciated.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Ben Freudenburg, in his book, *The Family-Friendly Church*, reports the occasion he was invited to speak about the role of parents in youth ministry. When the organizers realized that he was suggesting a model in which parents occupied a central place, the organizers asked him to rework it in a way in which the pastor had the thing in his hands with parental participation only.

> Denominational leaders asked me to write about the role of parents in youth ministry as part of a thirteen-week leadership training course called "Lead On." In my segment, I compared a youth ministry without parent participation to a tent with a missing pole—it's just a matter of time before the thing collapses. It was a blow to me when my denomination's youth office rejected my vision. "That won't work," they said, "because kids don't want their parents around at youth group." They wanted to tweak my material to limit parent's involvement to what I considered shallow responsibilities—taxi drivers, cooks, and cash machines.[1]

The case reported by Freudenburg is not unusual at all but is a symptom of the widespread assumption that, when it comes to teaching the faith to the young (and not only in youth ministry but in the whole task of passing the faith to the next generation), the parents stay at the sidelines while the "professionals" take care of the situation, a tendency easily found both among church workers and parents alike. As Wentzel reports, "Ninety-two percent of the pastors [Marvin Bergman, in his 1982 study of Lutheran confirmation,] surveyed reported that lack of parental interest in confirmation instruction was a problem. … Bergman's study indicates that pastors… are deeply concerned that parents are not sufficiently involved."[2]

Freudenburg's central assumption, "*Parents are the primary Christian educators in the*

[1] Ben F. Freudenburg with Rick Lawrence, *The Family-Friendly Church* (Loveland, CO: Vital Ministry, 1998), 19.

[2] Wayne Wentzel, "Using Parents in Preparing their Children for Confirmation and First Communion" (DMin Major Applied Project, Concordia Seminary, 1995), http://scholar.csl.edu/dmin/100, 75–76.

church, and the family is the God-ordained institution for building faith in young people and for passing faith on from one generation to the next,"[3] is regarded as so self-evident that there would hardly be found someone to argue against it. It has strong scriptural foundation both in the Old and in the New Testaments. Among many others, from the Old Testament we can mention Deuteronomy 6:

> Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the Lord your God, *you and your son and your son's son*… these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. *You shall teach them diligently to your children*, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (Deut. 6:1–2, 6–8, emphasis added)[4]

In the New Testament, we can mention Paul's orientation to fathers in Ephesians to "bring [their children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). Throughout Church history, highly esteemed theologians have confirmed it as well. From among the Church Fathers, John Chrysostom has devoted a whole treatise, *An Address on Vainglory and The Right Way for Parents to Bring Up Their Children*, to the subject.[5] From the Reformation, Luther's headings to the sections of the Small Catechism are the most remarkable example: "In a simple way in which the head of a house is to present [it] to the household."[6] Nevertheless, the typical importance given to church-centered Christian education over home-centered Christian education seems to contradict this assumption. Parents are not often actively and intentionally engaged in passing on

[3] Freudenburg and Lawrence, *Family-Friendly Church*, 10, 21. Emphasis original.

[4] All the scriptural references, except some of those in quotations, are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

[5] Saint John Chrysostom, *Address on Vainglory and the Right Way for Parents to Bring Up Their Children*, trans. Max L. W. Laistner (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1951).

[6] Small Catechism, in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of The Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 351, 354, 356, 359, 362.

the faith to their children. Instead, despite nodding theoretically to the role of parents in transmitting the faith, the Church itself, with its programs, conveys to parents the message that they should drop their children at the temple from time to time and the professionals will take care of this task for them. "Over the years the message has been, 'Let the professionals do the teaching. They know best.' So, parents send their children to the church for Sunday school or other religious instruction, handing the responsibility of faith education to the teachers."[7]

The present thesis addresses this situation by harvesting John Chrysostom's and Martin Luther's inputs on the parental role in faith transmission. The aim is twofold: (1) To bring renewed appreciation to the God-given parental role in faith transmission through the authoritative testimonies of Chrysostom and Luther, who reiterate the role of parents in passing on faith to the next generation; and (2) To gather some insights from Chrysostom and Luther to aid and encourage parents who take up their God-given role in transmitting the faith to their children.

To this end, relevant excerpts from Chrysostom and Luther about the parental role in the Christian education of their children will each be examined. Then, the main points of agreement and disagreement between Chrysostom and Luther will be compared and contrasted. Finally, the insights of Chrysostom and Luther will be applied to the situation at hand—the role of parents in the cultivation of the faith in the lives of their children in the church today. But first of all, we will define the central thesis and the situation that this paper intends to support with Chrysostom and Luther.

[7] Merton P. Strommen and Richard A. Hardel, *Passing on the Faith: A Radical New Model for Youth and Family Ministry* (Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 2000), 17.

CHAPTER TWO

THE INTERGENERATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE FAITH

Passing on the faith to the next generation is inherently intergenerational. In the context of this thesis, the faith that is being passed on to the next generation means both the *fides qua* and the *fides quae*. The intergenerationality of the *fides qua*, which is created and sustained uniquely by God through the means of grace, lies in that one generation is to expose the next generation to the means of grace by which God creates and sustains faith (e.g., when parents bring their children to Holy Baptism). Regarding the *fides quae* passed to the next generation, this thesis means both the doctrine of the Gospel with all its articles and how to live a Christian life in creation the way God intended. With the term, intergenerational, this thesis means the interaction of one generation with the next, particularly, but not exclusively, parents with their children, since this is the primary, although not only, intergenerational relationship Scripture refers to when dealing with the passing on of the faith (*fides qua* and *fides quae*) to the next generation.[1] Finally, in this thesis the term, inherent, is used to refer to things as originally created by God, which means that God created us in such a way that, when we are young, we have a natural disposition to learn the faith (or to learn what it means to be human)[2] from the previous generation and, when we are older, we have natural disposition to teach or to pass the faith (or

[1] Strommen and Merton, in *Passing on the Faith*, also define faith "as an affair of the heart and a commitment of the mind that results in service and moral behavior," and mention Luther's description of faith as "a living, busy, active, mighty thing." After noting the distinction between "the faith by which one believes" (*fides qua*) and "the faith which one believes" or the knowledge of the faith (*fides quae*), they make sure to add that their "definition of the faith is still not complete" without one more element: it "results in a flow of good actions" (75–79). It can be added that to pass on the substance of the good works God expects from his children (the content of this "flow of good actions") is an essential part of the *fides quae* that is supposed to be handed down to the next generation.

[2] See Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand, *The Genius of Luther's Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 21–128, who rightly include both passive justice and active justice in "what it means to be truly human." More on this in the section "Passing on What It Means to Be Human" below.

what it means to be human) to the next generation.

Scriptural Foundation

In his account of Creation, right after Moses wrote that, "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27), he continued, "And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over [it]'" (Gen. 1:28). Mankind, male and female, was created by God in His image and blessed to beget children. Then, humanity (man, woman and generations to come) is given dominion over (the responsibility to care for) the creation. This is the original design of creation and is so since before the Fall. The dominion over (the responsibility to care for) the Creation was given in connection with the command to *be fruitful and multiply*. The task was given to Adam, Eve, and the generations to come. So as Adam (as the head) was supposed to pass the word given to him to Eve (and therefore is held responsible for the first sin, even though Eve was tempted and sinned first; Rom. 5:12), so also Adam and Eve were supposed to pass on to the next generation (and the next generation to the generations to come) what was given to them (the task to care for the creation). Even though we do not have it explicitly said here (but it is certainly implicit), this is coherent with the rest of Scripture.

In the Pentateuch, Moses repeatedly reasserts parental responsibility to pass the words that they were receiving from God to the next generation. The institution of the Passover and the consecration of the firstborns included the children asking their fathers why it was done so that they could tell their children how the Lord delivered them from Egypt (Ex. 12:25–27; 13:7–9, 13–16). To the *Shema* was attached the responsibility to teach it to the children (Deut. 6:4–9). The theme of the passing on the faith to the next generation is also recurrent in the Psalms and Proverbs. One strong example is in Psalm 78:

> He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers *to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God*, but keep his commandments; and that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God. (Psalm 78:5–8, emphasis added)

The same pattern is found also in the New Testament. In Peter's sermon at Pentecost, he told his audience, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. *For the promise is for you and for your children* and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself" (Acts 2:38–39, emphasis added). Paul instructs parents to "bring [their children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). The most well-known example of this in the New Testament is certainly Timothy, whose faith "dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and you mother Eunice and now, I am sure," concludes Paul, "dwells in you as well."[3]

The Human Being without History

God created the human being and gave man, woman, and the generations to come dominion over (the task to care for) creation (First Article). God sent his only begotten Son to accomplish the redemption of the human race through his life, death, and resurrection for us (Second Article). The Holy Spirit gathers through the means of grace a holy people for God applying the promise which is for them, for their children, and for all who are far off by creating

[3] See also Gen. 18:19; Deut. 4:9, 11:19, 31:12–13; Psalm 145:4; Prov. 1:8, 2:9, 22:6, 31:1; Isa. 38:19; Col. 3:20. Developments on the Scriptural foundations for the parental responsibility in the upbringing and Christian education of children can be found in Marcia Bunge, "Children, Adults, and Shared Responsibilities," in *Children, Adults, and Shared Responsibilities: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives*, edited by Marcia Bunge, 59–78 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 64; M. Jason Fullerton, "Intergenerational Transmission of Faith: The Biblical Role of The Godly Parent in The Spiritual Formation of The Child" (DMin diss., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, 2019), 10–55, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global; Wentzel, "Using Parents in Preparing their Children," 5–7.

and sustaining faith in Jesus Christ alone (Third Article).[4] This trinitarian framework gives the human being renewed and regenerated by the Holy Spirit (the Christian) a history in which he occupies a space, answering the basic questions of where we came from, what we are doing here, and where we are going. This gives us a basis, background, and *telos*. The basis is the whole scheme of things of which we are a part. The background is the story to which we pertain. And the *telos* is to be fully and truly human according to God's design.

Such a standardized framework to make sense of life is what to a great extent human being in modernity lacks. In *After Virtue*,[5] Alasdair MacIntyre points out that in modernity people live with neither a *telos* nor a standardized set of virtues grounded in beliefs that give life a stable basis and background. In pre-modern societies, someone knew his identity by the place he occupied in that society and so knew what was expected of him in that environment and, in turn, what to expect from others. "I am brother, cousin and grandson, member of this household, that village, this tribe. These are not characteristics that belong to human beings accidentally, to be stripped away in order to discover 'the real me'." They are 'the real me'. "They are part of my substance, defining partially at least and sometimes wholly my obligations and my duties."[6] To live out my humanity in such an environment means to meet the expectations my place in the world bestows on me. "To know oneself as such a social person is however not to occupy a static

[4] More on this trinitarian framework of all things, see "A Creedal Framework" in Joel D. Biermann, *A Case for Character: Towards a Lutheran Virtue Ethics* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 135–63, EBSCOhost; and the section "Passing on What It Means to Be Human" below.

[5] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

[6] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 33. MacIntyre also points out that in classical/heroic societies "Every individual has a given role and status within a well-defined and highly determinate system of roles and statuses. The key structures are those of kinship and of the household. In such a society a man knows who he is by knowing his role in these structures; and in knowing this he knows also what he owes and what is owed to him by the occupant of every other role and status" (122).

and fixed position. It is to find oneself placed at a certain point on a journey with set goals; to move through life is to make progress—or to fail to make progress—toward a given end."[7] In the unfolding of history that led to modernity, this conception of life within a framework (with a background, a basis, and a goal) has been lost, although it has not been seen as loss.

> It passes to some degree unnoticed, for it is celebrated historically for the most part not as loss, but as self-congratulatory gain, as the emergence of the individual freed on the one hand from the social bonds of those constraining hierarchies which the modern world rejected at its birth and on the other hand from what modernity has taken to be the superstitions of teleology.[8]

It is not that everyone in modernity lives this form of nihilism detached from each and every structure to give meaning to life; as MacIntyre notes, "I am not here speaking at all of those who seek to uphold older traditions which have somehow or other survived into some sort of coexistence with modernity."[9] Nevertheless, this detachment or individual independence from a normative story became the premise for making sense of the world human beings in modernity acquire almost as if by osmosis from the surrounding culture. James Edwards calls this normal nihilism.[10]

In *The Culture of Narcissism*,[11] Christopher Lasch observes that "We are fast losing the

[7] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 34.

[8] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 34.

[9] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 71. "Within particular modern subcultures, of course, versions of the traditional scheme of the virtues survive; but the conditions of contemporary public debate are such that when the representative voices of those subcultures try to participate in it, they are all too easily interpreted and misinterpreted in terms of the pluralism which threatens to submerge us all." (226)

[10] James C. Edwards, *The Plain Sense of Things: The Fate of Religion in an Age of Normal Nihilism* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997). Biermann summarizes that to be the kind of nihilist according to Edward's concept of normal nihilism is "to be compelled to live in a world where *nothing* has any more weight or significance than what any given person chooses to give to it" (Joel Biermann, "No Longer Married, But Still Engaged: The Role of the Church in the Face of Declining Christian Influence." *Revista Igreja Luterana* 81, n.1 (2020): 200–01, http://www.revistaigrejaluterana.com.br/index.php/revista/issue/view/1).

[11] Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: Norton, 1991).

sense of historical continuity, the sense of belonging to a succession of generations originating in the past and stretching into the future."[12] But the human being needs the sense of historical continuity, he needs to know the story of which he is a part. As James K. A. Smith points out, "We need stories like we need food and water: we're *built* for narrative, nourished by stories, not just as distractions or diversions or entertainments but because we constitute our world narratively. It is from stories that we receive our 'character,' and those stories in turn become part of our background, the horizons within which we constitute our world and engage in action."[13] The human being without history (without a background) does not know the basis upon which to make decisions nor the destination to which he is headed. As MacIntyre observed about traditional societies (i.e. societies with a tradition), human beings thus disengaged from a tradition enjoy a kind of freedom that is "more like the freedom of ghosts—of those whose human substance approached vanishing point—than of men."[14]

Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism* grew out of a study he had previously done on the American family[15] that led him "to the conclusion that the family's importance in our society had been steadily declining over a period of more than a hundred years. Schools, peer groups, mass media, and the 'helping professions' had challenged parental authority and taken over many of the family's child-rearing functions."[16] The result is "a society dominated by large bureaucratic organizations and mass media, in which families no longer played an important role in the

[12] Lasch, *Culture of Narcissism*, 5.

[13] James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 129. Emphasis original.

[14] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 127.

[15] Christopher Lasch, *The Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Besieged* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

[16] Lasch, *Culture of Narcissism*, 238. The question of parental authority will be developed in the section "*In Loco Parentis*" below.

transmission of culture and people accordingly had little sense of connection to the past."[17] Such a society disconnected from history sees no past from which receive a tradition and consequently envisages no future to which bequeath what they did not even receive.

> A society that fears it has no future is not likely to give much attention to the needs of the next generation, and the ever-present sense of historical discontinuity—the blight of our society—falls with particularly devastating effect on the family. The modern parent's attempt to make children feel loved and wanted does not conceal an underlying coolness—the remoteness of those who have little to pass on to the next generation and who in any case give priority to their own right to self-fulfillment.[18]

This is based on the widespread assumption that the goal of human life is to be happy and avoid suffering, and to become all I want to be, i.e. to strip away all of my "artificially" inherited roles and discover my 'real me', a task I have to do by myself. As MacIntyre puts it,

> What I have described in terms of a loss of traditional structure and content was seen by the most articulate of their philosophical spokesmen as the achievement by the self of its proper autonomy. The self had been liberated from all those outmoded forms of social organization which had imprisoned it simultaneously within a belief in a theistic and teleological world order and within those hierarchical structures which attempted to legitimate themselves as part of such a world order.[19]

The psychological regime that has become the order of the day advances the assumption that the 'real me' needs to be liberated from the external constraints, those that MacIntyre says are essential to make sense of who one is, and to do so in order to become all one wants to be. It is a search inside the self for something that should rightly be received from tradition. Vigen Guroian observes that

> In our day this modern approach is justified by prior commitments to certain psychological theories that elevate personal autonomy and self-realization above what we dismissively call "external authority." The teacher must not introduce values into the classroom but instead work to "draw out" from children their own moral

[17] Lasch, *Culture of Narcissism*, 239.

[18] Lasch, *Culture of Narcissism*, 50.

[19] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 59.

> beliefs and through a process of clarification help them to better formulate their own values.[20]

More than a century ago, English author and philosopher G. K. Chesterton pointed out the inconsistency of such a procedure.

> The fashionable fallacy is that by education we can give people something that we have not got. … It is odd that these people, who in the matter of heredity are so sullenly attached to law, in the matter of environment seem almost to believe in miracle. They insist that nothing but what was in the bodies of the parents can go to make the bodies of the children. But they seem somehow to think that things can get into the heads of the children which were not in the heads of the parents, or, indeed, anywhere else.[21]

This is precisely James Davison Hunter's critique in *The Death of Character*,[22] in which he traces the development of moral education for children in America from its Protestant theistic version in the eighteenth-century to its contemporary therapeutic nihilistic version and evaluates the unintended consequences of the psychological regime of moral education, concluding that what most saw as progress, ended up being *the death of character*. The main point of his argument is highlighted in an excursus located between the two chapters of Part 3, where he draws from findings of a study on moral commitments of young people he himself participated in at the end of 1989. After delineating the (lack of) moral commitments of a generation forged by the psychological regime that can be inferred from that study, Hunter hints (without categorically stating) that schools tend to lead children to embrace the worldview of therapeutic individualism and impress "a larger culture of therapeutic individualism" in the young that

[20] Vigen Guroian, *Tending to the Heart of Virtue: How Classic Stories Awaken a Child's Moral Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 34–35.

[21] Gilbert K. Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1910), 247–48.

[22] James Davison Hunter, *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age Without Good or Evil* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

"predisposes them toward certain moral ends that advocates of these pedagogies would all repudiate", namely, "to become less altruistic in their disposition toward those in need and more willing to fudge the boundaries of moral propriety."[23] Hunter's point is that the therapeutic pedagogies which try to forge moral behavior appealing to the inner being of people without resorting to an external standard of moral character yield moral agents that are guided by habits we hardly would call "moral" at all. "The net effect is that established structures of authority recede in social significance; the moral authority of the social order is demystified and deconstructed" in the so called "democratic way of life" and "the self becomes the locus of moral authority."[24]

But the created order of God is not as pointless as this. Vigen Guroian points out the contradictory rationale of the advocates of such nihilistic vision of reality.

> These educators think that moral education is like teaching children reading or arithmetic. But that is not even quite accurate, because in the case of moral education children are supposed to be permitted to discover and clarify for themselves their own values and personal moral stance in the world. Yet we do not permit children to invent their own math: we teach them the multiplication tables; nor do we encourage children to make up their own personal alphabets: we teach them how to read. What might be the outcome of an education that did permit children to invent their own alphabets and math? No doubt the result would be confusion or chaos. Should we be surprised at the outcome of our recent efforts to help children clarify their own values, in fact, invent their own personal moralities?[25]

Just as math has multiplication tables and grammar has alphabets that are just there and need to be learned if one is to master math or to read at all, God's creation is a reality with givens that need to be acknowledged if one is to learn what it means to be human within God's creation according to His design. The first feature of this design is that we have been created for

[23] Hunter, *Death of Character*, 175.

[24] Hunter, *Death of Character*, 182, 184.

[25] Guroian, *Tending to the Heart of Virtue*, 34–35.

intergenerational teaching and learning.

Hardwired for Intergenerationality

Hunter's *The Death of Character* was offered as a "corresponding sociology" to MacIntyre's philosophical insights, "a sociological interpretation of the moral ideals and strategies we as Americans" (and Westerners in general, can be added) "embrace and, in turn, seek to pass on to children."[26] What Hunter documents is the inability of the psychological regime to forge moral behavior through therapeutic pedagogies appealing to people's inner being without resorting to an external standard of moral character. That is because

> Humans are not born with a well-developed moral sensibility, much less "character." Whatever predispositions we may have due to our genetic wiring, we are still mostly "unfinished" at birth. In contrast to other species that have a well-developed apparatus of instincts, we are "instinctually deprived." We don't innately know what is socially acceptable … We are not born with moral obligations to stabilize life, a worldview to give coherence to life, or ideals to guide our lives. … Whether it is provided formally or informally, deliberately or unwittingly, moral instruction, then, is an exercise in the transmission of culture. It is a mechanism by which character is etched into a person's identity and existence.[27]

The point is that the transmission from generation to generation happens anyway. Hunter's argument is that, rather than representing the moral shape of the next generation (as it is usually regarded), the moral education portrays the moral mood espoused by the present generation, "moral education—uneven as it is—roughly mirrors the moral culture of which it is a part."[28] Which points to the fact that what is "hardwired" is the propensity or at least capacity human

[26] Hunter, *Death of Character*, xii.

[27] Hunter, *Death of Character*, 23, 26.

[28] Hunter, *Death of Character*, 147. Hunter himself makes explicit that "in this book [*The Death of Character*] the enterprise of moral education is a prism through which we observe a larger and changing moral culture" (229).

beings have to acquire the basis, background and *telos* on which and toward which we live our lives through cultural immersion.

This point is further underscored by psychiatrist Erik Erikson's assertion that "the drives man is born with are not instincts; nor are his mother's complementary drives entirely instinctive in nature. Neither carry in themselves the patterns of completion, of self-preservation, of interaction with any segment of nature." While animals "have relatively inborn, relatively early, ready-to-use ways of interacting with a segment of nature as part of which they have survived," in the case of the human being "tradition and conscience must organize" any inborn drives they may have.

> As an animal, man is nothing. It is meaningless to speak of a human child as if it were an animal in the process of domestication; or of his instincts as set patterns encroached upon or moulded by the autocratic environment. Man's 'inborn instincts' are drive fragments to be assembled, given meaning, and organized during a prolonged childhood by methods of child training and schooling which vary from culture to culture and are determined by tradition. In this lies his chance as an organism, as a member of a society, as an individual. In this also lies his limitation. For while the animal survives where his segment of nature remains predictable enough to fit his inborn patterns of instinctive response or where these responses contain the elements for necessary mutation, man survives only where traditional child training provides him with a conscience which will guide him without crushing him and which is firm and flexible enough to fit the vicissitudes of his historical era.[29]

Erikson's psychosocial theory of the development expands this concept in his exposition of the eight or nine stages of life,[30] a path "during which the child must turn from an exclusive, pre-genital attachment to his parents to the slow process of becoming a parent, a carrier of

[29] Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (London: Vintage, 1995), 82–83.

[30] Expositions of the eight stages of the life cycle are found in Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 222–47; and Erik H. Erikson, "Human Strength and the Cycle of Generations," in *Insight and Responsibility: Lectures on the Ethical Implications of Psychoanalytic Insight* (New York: Norton, 1964), 109–57. The addition of a ninth stage was added by Erikson's wife in Erik H. Erikson, *The Life Cycle Completed: Extended Version with New Chapters on the Ninth Stage of Development by Joan M. Erikson* (New York: Norton, 1998).

tradition".[31] Unlike other theories of development, like Sigmund Freud's psychosexual theory of development or Jean Piaget's cognitive theory of development which describe only the development from birth to adolescence, Erik Erikson's theory covers the whole lifespan from birth to death. In doing so, he "attempted to delineate the whole life-cycle as an integrated psychosocial phenomenon, instead of following what (in analogy to teleology) may be called the 'originological' approach, that is, the attempt to derive the meaning of development primarily from a reconstruction of the infant's beginnings."[32] All the stages of life are interconnected and different generations living together at a certain point in history are equally interconnected. "For man's psychosocial survival is safeguarded only by vital virtues which develop in the interplay of successive and overlapping generations, living together in organized settings. Here, living together means more than incidental proximity. It means that the individual's life-stages are 'interliving,' cogwheeling with the stages of others which move him along as he moves them."[33]

Erikson observed not only that adolescents have the natural need to develop their identity by learning it from those who have already passed through this stage (adolescence), but also that in the generativity stage (middle adulthood) there is present a natural impulse to help the next generation to develop proper identity as they themselves have already done.[34] "The fashionable

[31] Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 230.

[32] Erikson, "The Cycle of Generations," 114.

[33] Erikson, "The Cycle of Generations," 114. This interdependence between the stages of life he calls "epigenetic," and its underlying assumptions are: "(1) that the human personality in principle develops according to steps predetermined in the growing person's readiness to be driven towards, to be aware of, and to interact with, a widening social radius; and (2) that society, in principle, tends to be so constituted as to meet and invite this succession of potentialities for interaction and attempts to safeguard, and to encourage the proper rate and the proper sequence of their enfolding. This is the 'maintenance of the human world'." (Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 243).

[34] For an extensive discussion and Christian appreciation of Erik Erikson's concept of identity from a Lutheran perspective, see Walter Steele, "A Theological Dialogue with and Evaluation of Erik H. Erikson's Theory of Identity Development in Light of Pauline Baptismal Theology in Romans and Some Implications for Pastoral Care," (PhD diss., Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 2017), http://scholar.csl.edu/phd/40.

insistence on dramatizing the dependence of children on adults often blinds us to the dependence of the older generation on the younger one. Mature man needs to be needed, and maturity needs guidance as well as encouragement from what has been produced and must be taken care of."[35] There is a natural impulse in the human being to guide the next generation on the path they have traveled so far. This impulse is played out primarily in the parent-child relationship but not exclusively. "Generativity, then, is primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation, although there are individuals who, through misfortune or because of special and genuine gifts in other directions, do not apply this drive to their own offspring."[36] With or without children of their own, the human being is hardwired to learn from the previous generation and teach the next, and human society finds various ways to make this happen. "Parenthood is, for most, the first, and for many, the prime generative encounter yet the perpetuation of mankind challenges the generative ingenuity of workers and thinkers of many kinds."[37] For this reason, Erikson calls the human being "the teaching species,"[38] which extends

> his solicitude over the long, parallel and overlapping childhoods of numerous offspring united in households and communities. As he transmits the rudiments of hope, will, purpose and competence, he imparts meaning to the child's bodily experiences, he conveys a logic much beyond the literal meaning of the words he teaches, and he gradually outlines a particular world image and style of fellowship.[39]

To ignore this inborn design in-built from nature is not without consequence. "Once we have grasped this interlocking of the human life stages, we understand that adult man is so constituted

---

[35] Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 240.

[36] Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 240.

[37] Erikson, "The Cycle of Generations," 130–31.

[38] In *Childhood and Society* Erikson remarks, "In this book the emphasis is on the childhood stages, otherwise the section on generativity would of necessity be the central one, for this term encompasses the evolutionary development which has made man the teaching and instituting as well as the learning animal" (240).

[39] Erikson, "The Cycle of Generations," 130.

as to *need to be needed* lest he suffer the mental deformation of self-absorption in which he becomes his own infant and pet."[40]

In his observations of the human being, Erikson noticed a trait of God's creation, that the human being is inherently inclined to learn what it means to be human from the previous generation and pass it on to the next generation.

Psychologist and family physician Dr. Leonard Sax, in *Why Gender Matters*, goes so far as to suggest that even the identity of boys as males and girls as females is rightly built up in the intergenerational socialization between boys with older men and girls with older women.[41] Even something so core to human nature such as male and female identity is to be, in a certain sense, passed to the next generation. Biologically speaking, the foundational realities of maleness and femaleness are built-in to each person. Contrary to what is commonly assumed and taught, sexual identity is not a social construction. One is born as male or female and that is who one is. Even so, as Sax says, boys need to learn from older men what it means to be a male and girls need to learn from older women what it means to be female. Otherwise, discovering the truth of one's sexual being is like exploring in a trackless wilderness without a compass, unsure of the path or the destination.[42]

Sax's point leads us to two observations. The first is that we occupy a place in the world which is simply God-given: we are *human beings*. The status of human being is a very specific place to occupy in God's creation, and is just given to us by God. Second, we are or male or female. To be one or to be other makes a great difference in how our humanity is lived out. As

---

[40] Erikson, "The Cycle of Generations," 130. Emphasis original.

[41] In Titus 2:1ff, Paul puts under the umbrella of the "sound doctrine" that older women teach "what is good, and so train young women to love their husbands and children, be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled."

[42] Leonard Sax, *Why Gender Matters* (New York: Broadway, 2005), 236–39.

we walk into and through life, we assume more vocations which further refine the specific way in which one will live out his humanity. One is a child, a student, a professional, a wife or husband, a parent, and so on. In some of these vocations one had greater freedom of choice (one can choose to be a teacher or an architect) while others are just given by God (one cannot choose whether to be male or female, despite all the challenges made to this affirmation currently). We learn what it means to occupy a particular space in creation from those who already are in the world when we arrive. In that sense, Paul advises older women "to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands" (Titus 2:3–5). One learns from the community in which one is raised what it means to be male and female and what it means to be a human being in God's creation.

The second observation is that the natural tendency of the human being to learn these things from the previous generation and then to teach them to the next generation is as God-given as the biological reality of being male or female. Each person must be shaped into either a mature man or woman, respectively, as God intended. This shaping and cultivation of biological "givens" happens intergenerationally. The intergenerational aspect of this nurturing and shaping that is required to bring each person to maturity is as hardwired in creation (inherent) as the biological realities of maleness and femaleness. The human being is hardwired for intergenerational transmission. Chesterton countered those who, already at the beginning of the past century, argued that education was not about transmitting something to the next generation, but helping the child to find within him or herself what he or she was born to be.

> I know that certain crazy pedants have attempted to counter this difficulty by maintaining that education is not instruction at all, does not teach by authority at all. They present the process as coming, not from the outside, from the teacher, but entirely from inside the boy. … But I am much more certain that I do not agree with

> the doctrine; I think it would be about as sane to say that the baby's milk comes from the baby as to say that the baby's educational merits do. There is, indeed, in each living creature a collection of forces and functions; but education means producing these in particular shapes and training them to particular purposes, or it means nothing at all.[43]

Chesterton's point is not to deny the hardwired givens of creation, such as biological traits, but to underscore that education means to transmit what it means to live even those biological givens of our humanity out in particular ways. That is what education is: the transmission to the next generation of what it means to be human.

Passing on What It Means to Be Human

The proposition that education is to teach what it means to be human is based on the assumption that there is an objective reality in which the human being has a place. This objective reality is what C. S. Lewis tries to conceptualize in *The Abolition of Man*[44] and refers to, for the sake of brevity, simply as the *Tao*. "It is the doctrine of objective value, the belief that certain attitudes are really true, and others really false, to the kind of thing the universe is and the kind of things we are."[45] Although some may not recognize it, there is an objective scheme of all things that is true and to be human is to occupy one's place within this scheme. "In the *Tao* itself, as long as we remain within it, we find the concrete reality in which to participate is to be truly human."[46] This, Lewis remarks, is essential to understand what education is at all, because "the educational problem is wholly different according as you stand within or without the Tao. For

---

[43] Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World*, 249–51.

[44] C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man or Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.88346/.

[45] Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, 12.

[46] Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, 46–47.

those within, the task is to train in the pupil those responses which are in themselves appropriate, whether anyone is making them or not, and in making which the very nature of man consists."[47] An education that recognizes that there is an objective reality that has been passed down to us from the previous generations and that we ought to pass on to the next generations, i.e. an education within the *Tao*, deals "with its pupils as grown birds deal with young birds when they teach them to fly," it is "a kind of propagation—men transmitting manhood to men," transmitting what it means to be human.[48]

Lewis is writing this to counter what he sees as a new kind of education, an education outside the *Tao*. Educators of this sort "have been emancipated from all that [the *Tao*]. It is one more part of Nature which they have conquered. The ultimate springs of human action are no longer, for them, something given."[49] They do not see themselves inside, as part of, the *Tao*, but outside and above the *Tao*, in a place where they are able to handle and mold reality at will. On the other hand, for the educator within the *Tao*, not only what is taught but even their role of teaching is shaped by the *Tao*.

> In the older systems both the kind of man the teachers wished to produce and their motives for producing him were prescribed by the *Tao*—a norm to which the teachers themselves were subject and from which they claimed no liberty to depart. They did not cut men to some pattern they had chosen. They handed on what they had received: they initiated the young neophyte into the mystery of humanity which over-arched him and them alike. It was but old birds teaching young birds to fly.[50]

Since the human being is creature, not Creator, he cannot, as much as he would like it, create something out of the nothing. All he can do is manipulate what God created. When he does it in sync with God's design, he accomplishes the task of having dominion over (taking care

[47] Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, 13.

[48] Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, 14–15.

[49] Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, 39.

[50] Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, 38–39.

of) creation. When he tries to do it outside the *Tao*, as if creating something out of the nothing (in some sort of nihilistic way), what he ends up doing, at best, is distort what God created. It is what Lewis notes the human being is doing with morality.

> This thing which I have called for convenience the *Tao*, and which others may call Natural Law or Traditional Morality or the First Principles of Practical Reason or the First Platitudes, is not one among a series of possible systems of value. It is the sole source of all value judgements. If it is rejected, all value is rejected. If any value is retained, it is retained. The effort to refute it and raise a new system of value in its place is self-contradictory. There has never been, and never will be, a radically new judgement of value in the history of the world. What purport to be new systems or (as they now call them) 'ideologies', all consist of fragments from the *Tao* itself, arbitrarily wrenched from their context in the whole and then swollen to madness in their isolation, yet still owing to the *Tao* and to it alone such validity as they possess.[51]

When the human being tries to manipulate creation as if he were God instead of caring for it, as God commissioned him to do, he is going against the whole structure of creation of which he is a part. "The rebellion of new ideologies against the *Tao* is a rebellion of the branches against the tree: if the rebels could succeed, they would find that they had destroyed themselves. The human mind has no more power of inventing a new value than of imagining a new primary colour, or, indeed, of creating a new sun and a new sky for it to move in."[52] Since the design the human being is trying to rewrite is the very design in which he was created, of which he is a part, C. S. Lewis says that, those who try to do it, forsake their humanity itself. "They are, rather, not men (in the old sense) at all. They are, if you like, men who have sacrificed their own share in traditional humanity in order to devote themselves to the task of deciding what 'Humanity' shall henceforth mean."[53] But there is not another objective reality besides the one God created. By

[51] Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, 28–29.

[52] Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, 29.

[53] Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, 40.

relinquishing the humanity that God intended them to live they gave up true humanity. "It is not that they are bad men. They are not men at all. Stepping outside the *Tao*, they have stepped into the void."[54] One is only truly and fully human when he recognizes his place in the *Tao* and occupies it. This, as we have seen before, is learned by intergenerational socialization. One learns from the previous generation what it means to be human.

To pass on to the next generation what it means to be human is to teach the next generation the place the human being occupies in this whole of reality. MacIntyre remarks that "any adequate teleological account must provide us with some clear and defensible account of the *telos*" and mentions "Aristotle and Nietzsche, Hume and the New Testament [as] names which represent polar oppositions on these matters."[55] For nihilist and psychological worldviews, the task can mean little more than to build up from scratch anything capable of making one happy.

Robert Kolb and Charles Arand, in *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, give a Lutheran account of what it means to be human in terms of passive and active righteousness. "Luther's distinction of two dimensions of humanity, in relationship to God and in relationship to God's creation, determined how he viewed both his Creator and himself, along with other human beings."[56] To be truly human one needs to be righteous before God and before the world. The righteousness before God is received by grace through the faith created and sustained by the Holy Spirit through the means of grace.

> Working within the matrix of the two kinds of righteousness, the reformers clarified the nature of the relationship between the Creator, who bestows "passive righteousness" on his creatures (first in creation and then in redemption) through the

[54] Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, 41.

[55] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 163.

[56] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 222. Luther's account of what it means to be human is the subject-matter of part 1 of the book, pages 21–128.

> creative and re-creative Word, and the human creature, who responds in faith and trust.[57]

The righteousness we receive from God in order to be righteous before Him is called passive because the human being is totally receptive, not collaborating in anything, to acquire this righteousness. "As such, the righteousness that we receive is an 'alien' righteousness, a righteousness that is acquired by someone else and belongs to someone else. It is given to us from outside of us."[58] It is acquired by Christ and bestowed upon us through the means of grace (Word and Sacraments).

The righteousness before the world is lived out as we fulfill the vocations we receive from God, doing the good works "which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). With the distinction between active righteousness and passive righteousness, the reformers "clarified the relationship of the human creature to the world in which God had placed him or her to live a life of 'active righteousness' for the well-being of the human community and the preservation of the environment."[59] The righteousness before the world is called active because we participate actively by playing out, in accordance with God's intention, the roles (vocations) we are placed in the world to occupy. As Biermann puts it,

> justification returns the newly forgiven sinner to God's original intent for humanity. Justification not only makes a person right with God, it also makes the person the kind of human that God had created in the beginning. This restored creature serves God and fellow creatures according to God's plan for creation.[60]

Active righteousness is not a question of salvation (that depends solely on the passive righteousness we receive without collaboration from our part) but of living out before the world

---

[57] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 26.

[58] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 39.

[59] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 26.

[60] Biermann, *Case for Character*, 60 (referencing Reinhard Hütter).

the humanity God created. It is not a question of justification but of sanctification.

It is not as if one would choose between righteousness before God and righteousness before the world. To be fully and truly human one needs both passive and active righteousness. "Luther did not see them as alternatives to one another as if we could be fully human by possessing only one kind of righteousness, either the passive or the active."[61] To be the human being God created us to be is to be righteous before God *and* before the world. "Simply put, to be righteous is to be the human person God envisioned when he created us. It has to do with meeting God's 'design specifications' for being a human creature and fulfilling the purpose for which God created us."[62]

The righteousness before God (or passive righteousness) cannot be passed from one person to another since this salvific faith is the work exclusively of God. The Holy Spirit creates and sustains this faith through the means of grace (Word and Sacraments). But even here there is an intergenerational aspect involved. One generation is supposed to expose the next generation to the means of grace through which God "gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when he wills, in those who hear the gospel."[63] The righteousness before the world (or active righteousness) is passed to the next generation when one generation teaches the next what it means to be human within creation as God originally intended us to be, even though it often goes against the desires of our hearts tainted by sin. A righteousness grounded in God's intention for his creation includes things like what it means to be male or female, what it means to be someone's child, what it means to be a honest professional and a faithful spouse, what it means to be a parent, etc. Passive and active righteousness make up the Christian life because this is the

[61] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 29.

[62] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 26.

[63] AC V, 2 in Kolb and Wengert, 40–41.

human life created by God. “Christian life is human life, as God designed it for all his human creatures.”[64]

According to Biermann, this passive/active-righteousness framework is but another way to unpack the trinitarian account of what our basis, background and *telos* is. “The creed takes into account humanity’s purpose from divine as well as human perspective and binds them both under a singular goal: to become fully human. To be fully human, the creed teaches, is to be righteous before God and before humanity; that is, to be fully human is to be rightly related to God and to humanity, to Creator and to creation.”[65] Hence the *telos* of the human being is to live out the humanity God created. “Simply put, human destiny, our telos, is to be all that God designed and created us to be—in other words, to be fully human.”[66] To be human is to occupy humanity’s God-ordained place in the whole scheme of things. There is an objective reality designed by God in which we have a place, and to live our humanity in its plenitude is to be right(eous) with Creator and creation.

The Faith We Received from Our Parents and Will Pass on to Our Children

To pass on the faith to the next generation means to transmit a clear understanding of our place in the whole scheme of things. God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them. God sent His only begotten Son to live, die, and rise for us and for the salvation of the whole creation. God gives us the Holy Spirit who makes us children of God through faith guaranteeing that for all eternity we will live with our God and Savior. Since the beginning, God has gathered a people for Himself and made it holy, from Adam and Eve, through Abraham,

[64] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther’s Theology*, 103.

[65] Biermann, *Case for Character*, 155.

[66] Biermann, *Case for Character*, 144.

Isaac and Jacob and all the people of God in the Old (Israel) and New (the Christian Church) Testaments. God gathers His people through the work of the Holy Spirit bringing it to faith in His Son. One day the Son, Jesus Christ, will come back to judge the living and the dead and we, who have been regenerated (i.e., born again, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God) through the Spirit and therefore have been given the right to become children of God (John 1:12–13), will live forever in the new heavens and the new earth. This is the whole of history and we have a place in it. To pass on the faith to the next generation is to pass on this particular place and what it means to occupy this place.

Because the human being is designed both to pass it to the next generation and to get it from the previous generation, young generations acquire from their parents an understanding of the whole scheme of things and their place in it, whether this is done intentionally or not. As sociologist Christian Smith points out, "Most teenagers and their parents may not realize it, but a lot of research in the sociology of religion suggests that the most important social influence in shaping young people's religious lives is the religious life modeled and taught to them by their parents."[67] In a national study of youth and religion, he discovered, against the stereotypical idea that in order to build their own identity at their own will teens are rebels ready to go against anything their parents try to impress upon them, that teenagers at the beginning of the new millennium get their beliefs about God from *their parents*. "Contrary to popular misguided cultural stereotypes and frequent parental misperceptions, we believe that the evidence clearly shows that the single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents."[68] Although "the most widespread and persistent stereotype about

[67] Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 57.

[68] Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 261. "It seems that many parents of teens rely primarily on the

teenagers in American culture is that they are intractably rebellious," when it comes to religion most adolescents "simply believe what they were raised to believe; they are merely following in their family's footsteps and that is perfectly fine with them."[69]

But it is not the trinitarian account nor the passive/active righteousness account of the faith that teens are getting from their parents. It is not an "inside of the *Tao*" vision but an instrumentalist view of religion. "What we hardly ever heard from teens was that religion is about significantly transforming people into, not what they feel like being, but what they are supposed to be, what God or their ethical tradition wants them to be."[70] Smith and Denton described the faith of American youth at the beginning of the third millennium with the concept of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD). They codified what emerged from their interviews into what they call the creed of this MTD religion, which consists of five points:

> 1. A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth.
> 2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.
> 3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself.
> 4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem.
> 5. Good people go to heaven when they die.[71]

These youngsters have quite a definite image of the good life and the aim of their being: to

---

immediate evidence of the overt attitudes, statements, and sometimes behaviors that their teenage children dole out to them on a daily basis in order to estimate their current level of parental influence. Many of the attitudes and statements that teenagers communicate to their parents do not exactly express great admiration and gratitude for and readiness to listen to, emulate, or freely obey their parents. Many parents therefore appear to come to the conclusion that they have lost their influence in shaping the lives of their teenage children, that they no longer make any significant difference. But for most, this conclusion is mistaken. Teenagers' attitudes, verbal utterances, and immediate behaviors are often not the best evidence with which to estimate parental influence in their lives. For better or worse, most parents in fact still do profoundly influence their adolescents—often more than do their peers—their children's apparent resistance and lack of appreciation notwithstanding." (57)

[69] Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 119–20.

[70] Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 148–49.

[71] Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 162–63.

be happy and to avoid suffering. They hold a commonsense morality that one's rights end where the other's rights begin. Which means that, as long as I do not hurt anyone (halting his or her right to be happy and avoid suffering), it is fine to pursue any kind of selfish aim. This is the trait that Smith and Denton rightly labeled as "therapeutic." The idea of the therapeutic is finely summarized by Phillip Rieff in his famous statement, "Religious man was born to be saved; psychological man is born to be pleased"[72] (the psychological man is the one driven by this therapeutic trait). As Christopher Lasch puts it, "The contemporary climate is therapeutic, not religious. People today hunger not for personal salvation, let alone for the restoration of an earlier golden age, but for the feeling, the momentary illusion, of personal well-being, health, and psychic security."[73] The "moralistic" part of Smith's MTD concept lies in that, if my right ends where the others' rights begin, it still makes me accountable to the other and his or her right to be happy and avoid suffering, which implies a moral behavior on my part. Different from the classical Deism, in which God is the watchmaker that does not get involved at all after putting the watch to work, in this version of Deism the watchmaker provides a lifelong warranty for his work. He still is the impersonal Creator that does not get that much involved in our everyday lives watching over every minimum detail, but He can be called upon when we need Him to help us attain our goal (i.e., to be happy and avoid suffering). However, He is rarely depicted as the All-Almighty. That is not the kind of God Moralistic Therapeutic Deism knows. This is a scheme of things different from the Christian version.

This is the functional religion of most American teenagers since it is the functional religion of most American adults. Smith and Denton

[72] Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: The Uses of Faith after Freud* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966, 1987), 24–25.

[73] Lasch, *Culture of Narcissism*, 7.

> are not suggesting that Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is a religious faith limited to teenage adherents in the United States. To the contrary, it seems that it is also a widespread, popular faith among very many U.S. adults. Our religiously conventional adolescents seem to be merely absorbing and reflecting religiously what the adult world is routinely modeling for and inculcating in its youth.[74]

Based on their findings, Smith and Denton are convinced that

> the best general rule of thumb that parents might use to reckon their children's most likely religious outcomes is this: "We'll get what we are." By normal processes of socialization, and unless other significant forces intervene, more than what parents might *say* they *want* as religious outcomes in their children, most parents most likely will end up getting religiously of their children what they themselves *are*.[75]

It may not be a sound faith that is being passed on to the next generation, but the new generation is nevertheless getting their faith from the previous generation. If the rebellious young generations of the last decades of the second millennium turned against receiving their identity from the previous generation, more recent young generations are taking up the older pattern again, lending support to the fact that the pattern is creationally in-built. As Chesterton remarked, it is not only that parental authority has to be maintained but that it is just unavoidable, "the important point here is only that you cannot anyhow get rid of authority in education; it is not so much (as poor Conservatives say) that parental authority ought to be preserved, as that it cannot be destroyed."[76] Even if the human being tries to escape this formation for a period of time, what God established in creation reaffirms itself and comes back. For this reason, Smith remarks that the influence one generation is exerting upon the next should not be taken lightly. "Adults inescapably exercise immense influence in the lives of teens—positive and negative, passive and active. The question therefore is not whether adults exert influence, but what kinds of influence

[74] Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 166.

[75] Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 58.

[76] Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World*, 252.

they exert."[77] The question is not whether one generation is passing on what it means to be human to the next generation, but what vision of what it means to be human is being handed down.

The Vision of the Good Life Our Children Are Getting

This leads us to the question of what the young generations are learning to envisage as the whole scheme of things in which they have their place. Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, or the normal nihilism of liberal individualism, introduces the new generations that arrive in the world to a scheme of things different from the trinitarian or passive/active-righteousness Christian frameworks mentioned. "For liberal individualism a community is simply an arena in which individuals each pursue their own self-chosen conception of the good life, and political institutions exist to provide that degree of order which makes such self-determined activity possible."[78] This framework described by MacIntyre is the one into which most from the younger generation are being habituated.

In *Desiring the Kingdom*,[79] James K. A. Smith emphasizes that there always will be a "liturgy" forming the basis, background, and *telos* (which he calls "the vision of the good life") on which and toward which one lives one's life: "humans are liturgical animals, whose desire is shaped by rituals of ultimacy that we described as liturgies."[80] With "liturgies" he does not mean only religious liturgical practices in worship but all those practices that, due to their natural and

[77] Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 28.

[78] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 195.

[79] James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009).

[80] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 195.

routine repetition, create a kind of second nature in us that make us predisposed to act in particular ways following certain patterns whose rationale we do not always explicitly elaborate.

> [L]iturgies or worship practices are rituals of ultimate concern that are formative of our identity—they both *reflect* what matters to us and *shape* what matters to us. They also inculcate particular visions of the good life through affective, precognitive means, and do so in a way that trumps other ritual formations. In short, they are the rituals that grab hold of our *kardia* and want nothing less than our love.[81]

The vision of the good life (or the kingdom we desire) is the unsaid *telos* toward which we are heading that is inscribed in us by habituation (the "liturgies"). These liturgies direct us toward "a particular vision of the kingdom, a particular take on what constitutes the good life. … of what it means to be happy, fulfilled, and flourishing; in short, … an understanding of what it means to be *really* human."[82] Whether we recognize it or not, we all work with such a *telos* inscribed in us, "we are *teleological* creatures. … In other words, what we love is a specific vision of the good life, an implicit picture of what we think human flourishing looks like."[83] James K. A. Smith provides

> a philosophical anthropology that recognizes that we are, ultimately, liturgical animals because we are fundamentally desiring creatures. We are what we love, and our love is shaped, primed, and aimed by liturgical practices that take hold of our gut and aim our heart to certain ends. … we are liturgical animals—embodied, practicing creatures whose love/desire is aimed at something ultimate.[84]

Human beings are not born with their basis, background, and *telos* wholly in-built in the same way animals are equipped with instincts, but they have an inborn propensity to learn their vision of the good life from the previous generation, from the surrounding human society that is already here when we arrive in the world.

---

[81] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 93. Emphasis original.

[82] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 94. Emphasis original.

[83] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 52. Emphasis original.

[84] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 40.

> At the heart of our being is a kind of "love pump" that can never be turned off—not even by sin or the Fall; rather, the effect of sin on our love pump is to knock it off kilter, misdirecting it and getting it aimed at the wrong things. Our love can be aimed at different ends or pointed in different directions, and these differences are what define us as individuals and as communities.[85]

To be formed to desire a specific vision of the good life amounts to learn to be human in a specific way, a way that may or may not be in sync with God's original intent, that may or may not coincide with what it means to be truly and fully human in accordance with the Creator's design. "The structure of love can take different directions, which means that such love can also be misdirected. It depends upon how our love is aimed. What distinguishes us (as individuals, but also as 'peoples') is not whether we love, but what we love."[86] The "love pump" is just there and it leads the human being to desire a certain vision of the good life, but the direction this desire will take depends on the liturgies that form it. "Secular liturgies don't *create* our desire; they point it, aim it, direct it to certain ends."[87] The modern vision is that the good life is to be free to choose one's own destiny without any specified, normative goal toward which the human being is directed. "The secular liturgies of late modern culture are bent on forming in us a notion of autonomy—a sense that we are a law unto ourselves and that we are only properly 'free' when we can choose our own ends, determine our own *telos*."[88] Christian education, on the other hand, has a very specific basis, background and *telos* guiding toward the one correct version of the kingdom to which our "love pump" should be directed.

> [H]umanity and all of creation flourish when they are rightly ordered to a *telos* that is not of their own choosing but rather is stipulated by God. … we inhabit not "nature," but *creation*, fashioned by a Creator, and that there is a certain grain to the universe—grooves and tracks and norms that are part of the fabric of the world. And all of

[85] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 52.

[86] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 52.

[87] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 122. Emphasis original.

[88] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 175.

> creation flourishes best when our communities and relationships run with the grain of those grooves.[89]

Christian education aims to pass on to the next generation what it means to be truly and fully human according to God's design. Many parents who may have a fairly clear cognitive notion of the Christian faith nevertheless inscribe in their children a version of what it means to be human that does not cohere with orthodox Christianity but looks in fact like Moralistic Therapeutic Deism because the vision of the good life actually inscribed in them differs from the cognitive worldview they endorse with their words. James K. A. Smith emphasizes that education ought not operate as if the human being is merely a cognitive machine, a thinking thing.

> In particular, I've been suggesting that education is not primarily a heady project concerned with providing *information*; rather, education is most fundamentally a matter of formation, a task of shaping and creating a certain kind of people. What makes them a distinctive kind of people is what they love or desire—what they envision as "the good life" or the ideal picture of human flourishing. An education, then, is a constellation of practices, rituals, and routines that inculcates a particular vision of the good life by inscribing or infusing that vision into the heart (the gut) by means of material, embodied practices.[90]

Cultural liturgies are forming us and our children all the time. "If education is primarily *formation*—and more specifically, the formation of our desires—then that means education is happening all over the place (for good and ill)."[91] *Formation* will happen anyway, in the right or the wrong direction. As Chesterton observed, the children "are not like sheep without a shepherd. They are more like one sheep whom twenty-seven shepherds are shouting at. All the newspapers, all the new advertisements, all the new medicines and new theologies, all the glare and blare of

---

[89] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 176. Emphasis original.

[90] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 26. Emphasis original.

[91] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 19. Emphasis original.

the gas and brass of modern times" are forming them all the time.[92] To this, add television, cinema, the Internet and all the media innovations that have emerged since Chesterton wrote these words more than a century ago to get an idea of how many voices surround the children of our time to form their desire for a certain vision of the good life, a vision that, more often than not, is not the Christian one. "From the perspective of Christian faith, these secular liturgies will often constitute a *mis*-formation of our desires—aiming our heart away from the Creator to some aspect of the creation as if it were God."[93] If Christian parents fail to pass on the Christian vision of the good life (*telos*) to the next generation, the surrounding culture will take care of it.

As we have seen in Christian Smith's study, children are getting the vision of the good life of their parents, whether they are intentional in doing it or not, "parents and other adults exert huge influences in the lives of American adolescents—whether for good or ill, and whether adults can perceive it or not—when it comes to religious faith and most other areas of teens' lives."[94] James K. A. Smith directs our attention to the point that we have to be intentional in passing to our children the Christian vision of the good life; otherwise they will get the vision of the good life of the surrounding culture. These horizons and this background are not hardwired givens, but habits intentionally acquired from others over time.

> Our habits incline us to act in certain ways without having to kick into a mode of reflection; for the most part we are driven by an engine that purrs under the hood with little attention from us. This precognitive engine is the product of long development and formation—it's *made*, not some kind of "hard wiring"—but it functions in a way that doesn't require our reflection or cognition. … So when we say that to be human is to love, to desire the kingdom, we're suggesting that this vision of the kingdom's good life becomes inscribed and infused in our habits and dispositions and thus woven into our precognitive (second) nature. … They are not the same as mere

[92] Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World*, 266.

[93] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 88. Emphasis original.

[94] Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 28.

> biological instincts or "natural" responses to stimuli because they are learned; they are part of our "second" nature, not the first.[95]

As we have emphasized, we are naturally inclined to get from the previous generation what it means to be human (i.e., the vision of the good life). This happens primarily, although not exclusively, through the parent-child relationship. As we could surmise from Christian Smith's study, it is happening even though parents and children are not conscious that it is happening. But if parents are not intentional in passing the Christian vision of the good life, what it means to be human in accordance with God's original intent, children will invariably end up getting another vision of the good life from the previous generation through the surrounding culture.

In Loco Parentis

James Davison Hunter shows us how in the progression of the history of character education in America, "an important transition both in the substance of moral instruction and the institutional locus of moral education—away from the family and churches to state-sponsored public schools,"[96] took place.

> The *sanctions* through which morality is validated changed—from the institutions and codes of the community to the sovereign choices of the autonomous individual. The primary *institutional location* through which moral understanding is mediated changed as well—from the family and local religious congregation and their youth organizations, to the public school and popular culture.[97]

Chesterton, in a treatise first published in 1910, already complained that in the popular schools of his time "the only persons who seem to have nothing to do with the education of the children are the parents."[98] He did not deny that children need skilled people trained to be in

---

[95] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 56–57, 80. Emphasis original.

[96] Hunter, *Death of Character*, 47. This history is explored in part two of the book, pp. 29–148.

[97] Hunter, *Death of Character*, 146.

[98] Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World*, 308.

charge of particular aspects of children's education, but he remarked that these people should not usurp parental authority. "Nobody expects of course that the cabmen and coal-heavers can be complete instructors of their children any more than the squires and colonels and tea merchants are complete instructors of their children. There must be an educational specialist *in loco parentis*." But the schoolmaster is to be *in loco parentis*, not *contra parentem*.[99]

> It is the parents that are primarily responsible for their children's education. It was to them that God bequeathed this responsibility. But somehow recent educational theories have convinced parents that their responsibility is precisely the opposite, that is, not to interfere in the self-discovery of their children. As Vigen Guroian observed,
>
> Some well-meaning educators and parents seem to want to drive the passion for moral clarity out of children rather than use it to the advantage of shaping their character. We want our children to be tolerant, and we sometimes seem to think that a too sure sense of right and wrong only produces fanatics. Perhaps we have become so resigned to flailing about in the culture's muddy waters of moral compromise and ethical obscurantism that it is hard for us to imagine other possibilities for our children. … Mostly we fall back on the excuse that we are respecting our children's freedom by permitting them to determine right from wrong and to choose for themselves clear goals of moral living. But this is the paean of a false freedom that pays misdirected tribute to a deeply flawed notion of individual autonomy. We end up forfeiting our parental authority and failing to be mentors to our children in the moral life. This, I fear, is the actual state of things.[100]

What Guroian says about moral education can be applied to the whole of education, to the whole task of passing on to the next generation what it means to be human. To use Leonard Sax's imagery, parents have been convinced that it is their duty to release their children in the middle of a trackless wilderness without a compass, unsure of the path or the destination.[101]

In a chapter called "The Socialization of Reproduction and the Collapse of Authority,"[102] Christopher Lasch argues that it has not been only to the school that parents forfeited their

---

[99] Chesterton, *What's Wrong with the World*, 311.

[100] Guroian, *Tending to the Heart of Virtue*, 3–4.

[101] Sax, *Why Gender Matters*, 236.

[102] Lasch. *Culture of Narcissism*, 154ff.

creationally grounded authority. “Until recently, the work of reproduction, which includes not merely the propagation of the species but the care and nurture of the young, took place largely in the family.” But that has changed to what he calls “the socialization of reproduction itself–the assumption of childrearing functions by surrogate parents responsible not to the family but to the state, to private industry, or to their own codes of professional ethics.” As a result, “the advertising industry, the mass media, the health and welfare services, and other agencies of mass tuition took over many of the socializing functions of the home and brought the ones that remained under the direction of modern science and technology.”[103]

Since parents have been convinced that their role is precisely the opposite of what they are creationally endowed to carry out, i.e. that they are not to socialize their children to become like them, parents are no longer able to perform their natural role. As Lasch noted, “men and women no longer manage even to raise their children without the help of certified experts.”[104]

Within the church and among Christian families it has not been different. Wayne Wentzel, in his overview of the role of parents in the religious instruction of their children,[105] describes how, from the home-oriented Jewish transmission of the faith in later Old Testament times through the history of the Church, although “the biblical emphasis on parental involvement speaks clearly to us of the intent that God has for teaching His Word to children,” the Christian education of children was taken more and more from the home to the school and the Church. “While we can certainly make use of religious schools for teaching the faith to our children today, the primary mandate and responsibility for such instruction is given to the parents.”[106]

---

[103] Lasch. *Culture of Narcissism*, 154.

[104] Lasch. *Culture of Narcissism*, 10.

[105] Wentzel, “Using Parents in Preparing their Children,” 4–15.

[106] Wentzel, “Using Parents in Preparing their Children,” 9–10. It is worth remembering that nowadays, to a

Nevertheless, "today, as in most of the church's history, the responsibility for educating the children in preparation for 'communicant membership' rests squarely on the shoulders of the pastor."[107]

In sync with the wider culture, Christian parents have been following the same procedure as the surrounding culture. Many parents who have drunk from the sources of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism or even from the sources of normal nihilism are certain that they are duty-bound to allow their children to discover on their own what spirituality (if any) their children will want to follow. But even committed Christian parents often fail to pass on the faith to their children on the assumption that they will get it anyway.

On the one hand are those that are convinced that, as they simply drop their children at school to learn math and grammar and, later on, a profession in college, in the same way they simply drop their children at church to learn the faith. As Wentzel observed, "Parents have backed out of the program and have let the pastor or church staff handle the religious instruction of their children."[108] Parents like this are convinced that their children's education is completely outsourced. And in the "faith department" the church is the external source and the expert that will be in charge of teaching what the children need to know. They fail to understand two things. First, the primary responsibility is theirs. To the extent that school and church collaborate on some aspects of their children's education, they do so *in loco parentis*, under parental responsibility and supervision, not independently of them. Second, education is not a compartmentalized concept, as if we can send children to learn math and grammar at school, faith in the church, and so on. Education is teaching what it means to be human. Although this

---

great extent, the education offered in schools (especially state-sponsored schools) is hostile to Christian education.

[107] Vigen Guroian, *Tending to the Heart of Virtue*, 3–4.

[108] Wentzel, "Using Parents in Preparing their Children," 2.

encompasses many sub-concepts, in the end all of them work together to teach a vision of the good life. Even parents who view their children's education in this outsourced way do have a vision of the good life and are passing it on to their children; the "utilitarian and instrumentalist" one mentioned by Guroian, which "seeped to the tap roots of our culture." Parents and educators who have this vision of the good life inscribed in them "persist in teaching ethics as if it comes from a 'how to' manual for successful living. Moral educators routinely introduce moral principles and even the virtues themselves to students as if they are practical instruments for achieving success."[109]

On the other hand, there are those parents who just assume that children will get the Christian vision of the good life naturally, mostly because that is how it happened with themselves.

Passing on the Faith in a Post-Constantinian World

An often-repeated African saying is that it takes a village to raise a child. The passing on of what it means to be human happens intergenerationally. That is how God created things to be. This intergenerationality happens primarily in the parent-child relationship, but not exclusively. The whole generation which is already here when we arrive in the world participates in it. If the world was perfect, just as God created it, the whole human race would reflect the God-intended way to be human in the world and the new generations would naturally be shaped into it by the previous generation and pass it to the next generation. But, because of sin, the world is not that way. Not everyone around us will collaborate to pass the God intended way of what it means to be human. In the world, we have those around us who instill in the new generations (even in our

[109] Guroian, *Tending to the Heart of Virtue,* 23.

own children) a different version of what it means to be human and who may even prevent us from passing on the Christian vision of the good life. Luther had even included the world in the unholy trinity "that would not allow us to hallow God's name and would prevent the coming of his kingdom."[110]

But a lot of people assume that they live in a world in which the Christian faith is socially transmitted in the perfect way just mentioned. Mainly because they themselves were instructed in the faith in a society in which Christianity was not as counter cultural as it is today. As David Kinnaman puts it, "In other words, while far from perfect, Christianity was the culture's autopilot."[111] To be Christian was the order of the day and the whole community was watching to make sure the next generation was receiving the faith once delivered to them. However, that is not the world in which we live anymore.[112] Younger generations "face an environment in which Christianity's authority has been greatly diminished in both obvious and subtle ways."[113] This is the argument of Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon in *Resident Aliens*.[114] They call this fading era "Constantinianism." With Constantine, in the fourth century, a change began in which Christianity ceased to be persecuted and eventually became the official religion of the state. To be Christian became the order of the day. This condition remained true in the West until very recently; so recently that many have not yet realized the change and still live as if being a

---

[110] SC, The Lord's Prayer, 11, in Kolb and Wengert, 357.

[111] David Kinnaman with Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church… and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 50.

[112] "According to writer Cheryl Russell in American Demographics, 'Parents of the 1950s could afford to be laissez-faire about child-rearing. The schools, the media, the neighbors–all worked together to ensure the success of their offspring. Parents in the 1990s know only too well the danger lurking behind a stranger's smile, the undertow of failure awaiting children whose parents are not vigilant.'" Freudenburg and Lawrence, *Family-Friendly Church*, 27.

[113] Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 51.

[114] Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1989).

Christian is simply the normal basis of daily life while not being a Christian is a discrepancy.

There is no point in fighting for the maintenance of Constantinianism. The Church must face the challenge of passing on the faith and teaching the new generations what it means to be human in accordance with God's original design in a world increasingly unchristian. As Freudenburg and Lawrence point out, this plight should not discourage us from investing in the God-designed way of passing the faith on to the next generation either.

> Now you may be thinking, "If we lived in a perfect world, maybe this new paradigm shift [to home-centered, church-supported Christian education] would be relevant in my situation. But we don't live in a perfect world, and what do I do about all of the imperfect people who will block this from happening in my church? I'm talking about non-Christian parents, unsupportive and threatened pastors, and parents who are not yet mature enough in their own faith to teach others about it.
>
> Here's the point: If we don't make it our goal to move with a paradigm shift that reflects God's original pattern for faith development, we'll soon become irrelevant. And if we don't start the journey, how can we ever get to our destination? We can't let the obvious exceptions to God's original plan for families become roadblocks. For example, just because many kids abuse drugs or alcohol, we don't give up working to build a drug-free culture. Just because divorce is rampant, we don't give up the fight to strengthen marriages. Just because the world can be a brutal place to grow up in, we don't stop having babies and raising children.[115]

It is time to retrieve the parental role in passing on what it means to be human to the next generation.

Retrieving the Parental Role in the Passing on of the Faith to the Next Generation

In a "concluding unscientific postscript," Smith and Denton suggest that, as one of the consequences of the findings of their research, Christian churches and families should be moved to retrieve the parental role in the faith formation of the young.

> For decades in many religious traditions, the prevailing model of youth ministry has relied on pulling teens away from their parents. In some cases, youth ministers have come to see parents as adversaries. There is no doubt a time and place for unique teen

[115] Freudenburg and Lawrence, *The Family Friendly Church*, 104.

> settings and activities; still, our findings suggest that overall youth ministry would probably best be pursued in a larger context of family ministry, that parents should be viewed as indispensable partners in the religious formation of youth. … For in the end, they most likely will get from teens what they as adults themselves are. Like it or not, the message that adults inevitably communicate to youth is "Become as I am, not (only) as I say.[116]

There is surely a concern on the part of the Church about the parental engagement in the Christian education of their children. Ben Freudenburg's *The Family-Friendly Church* is an example of it.[117] When it comes to Christian education, confirmation classes play an important role in the Lutheran church. In the section suggesting models for confirmation, Concordia Publishing House's *Confirmation Basics,* dedicates two chapters to models centered on the home and the family.[118] In 1995, in a Major Applied Project for a DMin at Concordia, St. Louis, Wayne Wentzel addressed the use of parents in preparing children for confirmation and first communion.[119] But these studies focused specifically on the confirmation process without taking into consideration the broader sense of the faith being passed on to the next generation as I am considering it here. More recently, two other Major Applied Projects dealt with the role of parents in passing the faith to the next generation. Concordia student Rocco Mallardi turned his attention to family devotions using Luther's Small Catechism as a family devotional.[120] And not only in Lutheran corners does this subject arouse interest. Assemblies of God Theological Seminary student M. Jason Fullerton, in 2019, addressed the issue under the title,

---

[116] Smith and Denton, *Soul Searching*, 267.

[117] Freudenburg and Lawrence, *The Family Friendly Church*.

[118] Mark S. Sengele, ed., *Confirmation Basics: Updated and Expanded* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2016), especially chapters 4 and 5, "Family-Based Confirmation" by R. J. Grunewald (pages 51–58), and "Home/Family-Based Model" by Carolyn Bira (pages 59–75).

[119] Wayne Wentzel, "Using Parents in Preparing their Children."

[120] Rocco Mallardi, "'Using Luther's Small Catechism as a Family Devotional' A Study of Family Prayer at Messiah Lutheran Church Hays, Kansas 2018" (DMin major applied project, Concordia Seminary, 2019), https://scholar.csl.edu/dmin/122.

"Intergenerational Transmission of Faith: The Biblical Role of The Godly Parent in The Spiritual Formation of The Child."[121]

Despite all this interest, cases such as the one reported by Freudenburg, mentioned in the Introduction, demonstrate the Church's propensity to focus its efforts on a church-centered Christian education while parental involvement is regarded in the church more as a good idea than as something primary. However, if faith has a creationally grounded intergenerational character (i.e., that is the way God designed faith to be passed on to the next generation) the church's attitude towards the parental role in Christian education should look very different. Home-centered Christian education (as opposed to church-centered Christian education) so often championed by Christian educators should not be merely ranked as a possibility but handled as the standard way faith in all its nuances is in fact actually passed to the next generation, and the God-given role of parents in their children's Christian upbringing should be reiterated, encouraged, and advanced.

Therefore, we will now turn to evaluate, compare, and contrast the approaches of two highly esteemed theologians of Church history (John Chrysostom and Martin Luther) to the parental role in the Christian education of children in order to apply their insights to the question at hand.

[121] Fullerton, "Intergenerational Transmission of Faith."

CHAPTER THREE

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ON THE INTERGENERATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE FAITH

Odd Magne Bakke notices that beyond "general admonition to form their children by means of exhorting or teaching them, neither the New Testament nor the apostolic fathers discuss the means and the contents of the upbringing of children." Even "among the writings of the church fathers" there is no "heavy focus on children in general and on the upbringing of children in particular." One exception is John Chrysostom.[1] Besides addressing the question time and again in his sermons, he dedicated an entire treatise to the question, *An Address on Vainglory and the Right Way for Parents to Bring Up Their Children*.[2] Vigen Guroian calls this treatise "a landmark in Christian pastoral theology devoted to the religious education and formation of children,"[3] and Frederick Eby and Charles Flinn Arrowood regard it as "the finest pedagogic treatise of the patristic era."[4] This treatise complements his earlier *Against the Opponents of Monastic Life*,[5] and brings a more mature position.

Chrysostom's approach is helpful in that he speaks from the standpoint of someone living at the beginning of the era Hauerwas and Willimon label "Constantinianism."[6] "Chrysostom illustrates the ethical teaching of the Christian church shortly after it had come to power and the

---

[1] Odd Magne Bakke, "Upbringing of Children in the Early Church: The Responsibility of Parents, Goals and Methods," *Studia Patristica – Nordic Journal of Theology* 60 (2006): 148–49.

[2] Saint John Chrysostom, *Address on Vainglory*.

[3] Vigen Guroian, "The Ecclesial Family: John Chrysostom on Parenthood and Children," in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 69.

[4] Arthur C. Repp, "John Chrysostom on the Christian Home as a Teacher," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 22, no. 12 (December 1951): 937–48.

[5] Saint John Chrysostom, *A Comparison Between a King and a Monk and Against the Opponents of Monastic Life: Two Treatises by John Chrysostom*, trans. David G. Hunter (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1988), 77–176.

[6] See the section "Passing on the Faith in a Post-Constantinian World" in the previous chapter.

new problems that its close association with the empire produced."[7] While we are at the end of this era, Chrysostom is seeing its implementation. This makes the environment of the church in Chrysostom's time very similar to ours. Therefore, Vigen Guroian believes that Chrysostom's "insights in this area [family] constitute a valuable and often overlooked resource for Christians endeavoring to live faithful lives and build Christian community in a post-Christendom era."[8] Chrysostom did not comply with the fusion of the worldly vision with the Christian understanding of what the good life looks like.

> Chrysostom lived at a moment of genuine cultural crisis. The pagan culture of antiquity was in decline, and Christianity was beginning to exert a social force, but it was not yet clear what shape a Christian culture might take. Chrysostom was among a minority of Christian writers (St. Basil was another) who voiced serious misgivings about the emerging Christian order. Like Basil, he brought the spirit of monastic reform into his critique of society. He inveighed against the moral laxity of self-professed Christians and their excessive preoccupation with material possessions, power, and social status. Chrysostom's ecclesiology powerfully expressed a spirit of reform as he struggled to steer a course that would lead neither to an imperial church nor a cake-frosting version of Christianity for the masses. His example is relevant all over again for churches today as they enter an era marked by cultural deterioration and are faced with difficult choices about how to relate to the emerging hegemonic secularity.[9]

This makes Chrysostom's contribution to the subject of Christian education and the upbringing of children in the faith worthwhile as he "speaks to our time when he urges the churches to make strenuous and sustained efforts to cultivate and restore the vision of the family as an ecclesial entity and mission of the kingdom of God."[10] John Chrysostom's insights on Christian education, coming from an era of great historical similarity with ours, are accessible in

---

[7] George W. Forrel, ed., *Christian Social Teachings: A Reader in Christian Social Ethics from the Bible to the Present*, 2nd ed. rev. James M. Childs (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 40.

[8] Vigen Guroian, *Ethics after Christendom: Toward and Ecclesial Christian Virtue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 133.

[9] Guroian, *Ethics after Christendom*, 134.

[10] Guroian, *Ethics after Christendom*, 135.

writing. Therefore, let us now consider his contributions to the question of intergenerational transmission of the faith.

The Intergenerational Character of the Faith

In his *Address on Vainglory*, John Chrysostom mentions as one of the reasons for bringing up one's children in the ways of the Lord the fact that the faith is intergenerational. He encourages fathers to follow his advice in in this treatise because if the father succeeds in training his son, "he himself will learn to train his own sons in this way, and they theirs in turn, and the result will be a golden cord."[11] This "golden cord" is the intergenerational character of the faith God wove into the very fabric of creation. In a similar way, in Homily IX on 1 Timothy he orients mothers to bring up their daughters:

> Mothers, be specially careful to regulate your daughters well; for the management of them is easy. Be watchful over them, that they may be keepers at home. Above all, instruct them to be pious, modest, despisers of wealth, indifferent to ornament. In this way dispose of them in marriage. For if you form them in this way, you will save not only them, but the husband who is destined to marry them, and not the husband only, but the children, not the children only, but the grandchildren. For the root being made good, good branches will shoot forth, and still become better, and for all these you will receive a reward. Let us do all things therefore, as benefiting not only one soul, but many through that one. For they ought to go from their father's house to marriage, as combatants from the school of exercise, furnished with all necessary knowledge, and to be as leaven able to transform the whole lump to its own virtue.[12]

On Homily VII on 1 Timothy, commenting 1 Tim. 2:2, Chrysostom lets us know that the faith he intends to learn encompasses sound doctrine as well as righteousness of life: "what sort of life he [Paul] really means is plain from the sequel, and plain too, in that he speaks not simply of godliness, but adds, of *all godliness*. For in saying this he seems to insist on a godliness not

[11] Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory*, 26.

[12] Homily IX on 1 Timothy, *LFC* 12, 74.

only of doctrine, but such as is supported by life, for in both surely must godliness be required. For of what advantage is it to be godly as to doctrine, but ungodly in life?"[13]

Chrysostom taught that there was a natural order of things created by God which served as the basis for our way rightly to live out our humanity. This order is inscribed in our hearts and was also revealed in the Scriptures. In a sermon, *Concerning the Statutes*, Chrysostom pointed out that God:

> both implanted within us a natural law, and afterwards gave us a written one, in order that He might demand an account of sins, and that He might crown those who act rightly. Let us then order our conduct with the utmost care, and as those who have soon to encounter a fearful tribunal; knowing that we shall enjoy no pardon, if after a natural as well as written law, and so much teaching and continual admonition, we neglect our own salvation.[14]

In Homily X on Colossians, Chrysostom notes that, beyond the natural law to obey one's parents, God left written in Colossians [3:20] that children should obey their parents, for this, says Paul, "is well-pleasing to the Lord. See how he would have us do all not from nature only, but, prior to this, from what is pleasing to God, that we may also have reward."[15] In the same fashion, Chrysostom points out in another sermon that the love between spouses is naturally in-built in us as well as commanded by Scripture. "Paul reads us this law in order to surround us and drive us toward this love. See the wisdom of the apostle. He does not lead us to the love of our wives by divine laws only, or by human reasoning only, but by interchanging them he makes a combination of both."[16] Chrysostom knows that God's plan for all things is in-built in creation but, because of sin that obfuscate it, God also stipulated it in His written revelation. In *Against*

---

[13] Homily VII on 1 Timothy, *LFC* 12, 55.

[14] Chrysostom, "Concerning the Statutes, Homily XII," in Forrel and Childs, *Christian Social Teachings*, 43.

[15] Homily X on Colossians, *LFC* 13, 295.

[16] Chrysostom, "How to Choose a Wife," *On Marriage and Family Life*, trans. Catherine P. Roth and David Anderson (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1986), 94.

the Opponents, Chrysostom includes the parental role in this created order pointing out "that God has seen fit to establish parents' obligation for the care and nurture of their own offspring through nature as well as by divine statute." This is hardwired in creation, since God "has endowed nature with powerful desire which by a kind of inescapable necessity leads parents to care for their children"; and, also, revealed in Scripture, since God "has left commandments which fortify this natural bond and make care for one's children every bit as much a duty as caring for oneself."[17]

Chrysostom shows a consciousness of the fact that the humanity that is given to us at birth must be trained by the previous generation to be lived out in the way God intended it. "He attributes to children complete human status (the image of God), but he also reminds parents and adults that much remains for the completion (increase in likeness to God) of these 'wondrous statues of ours.'"[18] For this God-given task, Chrysostom likes to use the provocative imagery of the sculptor or the painter:

> To each of you fathers and mothers I say, just as we see artists fashioning their paintings and statues with great precision, so we must care for these wondrous statues of ours. Painters when they have set the canvas on the easel paint on it day by day to accomplish their purpose. Sculptors, too, working in marble, proceed in a similar manner; they remove what is superfluous and add what is lacking. Even so must you proceed. Like the creators of statues do you give all your leisure to fashioning these wondrous statues for God. And, as you remove what is superfluous and add what is lacking, inspect them day by day, to see what good qualities nature has supplied so that you will increase them, and what faults so that you will eradicate them.[19]

The tendency to do it is hardwired by God in parents and children. As Guroian observes, commenting on Chrysostom's concept of ecclesial family, "God has instilled in human beings a

[17] Vigen Guroian. "The Ecclesial Family," 74; Chrysostom, *Against the Opponents*, 131–32.

[18] Guroian. "The Ecclesial Family," 69.

[19] Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory*, 9. For the use of the imagery of sculptors and painters for the parental role, see also Homily XXI on Ephesians, *LFC* 6, 345.

natural bond between parents and their offspring that can help children grow in a likeness to God rather than diminish further from it."[20]

Monasticism or Married Life

The whole treatise *Against the Opponents of Monastic Life*, probably written when Chrysostom was still a monk, is aimed to parents who hinder their children's entrance into the monastic life. Although this treatise is aimed at endorsing the entrance into monastic life, even here Chrysostom remarks that he wished the young did not need to flee to the desert to live the Christian life. "I myself have wished for this, no less then you, indeed, much more than you. Often I have prayed that there would be no needs of monasteries and that such good order would reign in the cities that no one would ever be forced to flee to the desert."[21] Some paragraphs later, Chrysostom states that in an ideal situation there would be no need to flee to the desert and that those who entered monastic life could return to life in the cities.

> "What then?" is the reply. "Will all who live in the cities perish, tossed by a storm? Must everyone leave the cities and desert them to flee to the desert and populate the mountain tops? Is this what you are commanding, is this the law you are laying down?" Not at all! As I said before, it is exactly the opposite that I wish, and I pray that we would enjoy such peace and freedom from the tyranny of these evils that not only would the city-dwellers have no need to flee to the mountains, but also that those who inhabit the mountains, like fugitives returning from a long exile, would return to their native cities.[22]

Chrysostom is saying that his reason for championing entrance in monastic life is because the cities are not the kind of place that makes it possible to live the Christian life in earnest. In his *Address on Vainglory and the Right Way for Parents to Bring Up Their Children*, he states a

[20] Vigen Guroian, "St. John Chrysostom," in *Christianity and Family Law: An Introduction*, ed. John Witte, Jr and Gary S. Hauk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 97.

[21] Chrysostom, *Against the Opponents*, 90.

[22] Chrysostom, *Against the Opponents*, 91–92.

shift in his thinking. Although the world remains a place prone to hinder the Christian life, instead of flying to the desert, Chrysostom comes to advocate that children be instructed to live the Christian life amidst this context. "I do not mean by this, hold him back from wedlock and send him to desert regions and prepare him to assume the monastic life. It is not this that I mean. I wish for this and used to pray that all might embrace it; but as it seems to be too heavy a burden, I do not insist upon it. Raise up an athlete for Christ and teach him though he is living in the world to be reverent from his earliest youth."[23] *An Address on Vainglory* was written later in his life, after he had had the experience of pastoring families for a time in Antioch and maybe even in Constantinople. His shift in his thinking is also perceptible in his sermons on Hanna and Samuel. "Chrysostom's use of the story [of Hannah and her son, Samuel] shifted over the years from an early defense of monasticism to a later focus on the responsibility of Christian parents to attend consciously to raising their children as true Christians, and not just nominal ones."[24]

Chrysostom never opposed the married estate in favor of monastic life. Even though throughout his career he favored celibacy above marriage, he nevertheless argued that Scripture allows "Christians a choice between two legitimate courses of life, celibacy and marriage." Guroian points out that already, "in his youthful tract *On Virginity*, which he wrote during his first years in Antioch, when the monastic life was still fresh in his mind, Chrysostom warns rigid proponents of celibacy that the 'detractor of marriage reduces the glory of virginity . . . For what appears good in comparison with something inferior would not be very good.'"[25] For this reason, Chrysostom criticized "a form of cohabitation called 'spiritual marriage' (*syneisaktism*), in which

[23] Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory*, 8–9.

[24] Guroian, *Ethics after Christendom*, 141.

[25] Guroian, "St. John Chrysostom," 88–89.

a man and woman who had both taken vows of sexual continence lived together in a chaste but non-legalized partnership,"[26] about which Chrysostom says, "Even the expression 'living together' offends me."[27] If one desired to follow the married life, then that person should do it right in order not to dishonor the estate of marriage. "If you want to have men live with you, then you ought not to choose virginity but proceed on into matrimony, for it is far better to marry in that fashion than to be a virgin in this. God does not condemn such a marriage nor do men disparage it, for it is a matter worthy of honor in which no one is injured, no one is wounded."[28]

But Chrysostom's work as a pastor dealing extensively with families in his parish made him appreciate even more the married estate. "Although he continued to hold up ascetic ideals, his view of marriage and family life, however, changed in his later writings from his time in Antioch. This reflects his experiences with well-off families in the city."[29] Catherine Roth suggests that it is probably this first-hand experience, which he previously lacked, that was the catalyst of this change. "His early life as the son of a widow and as a young monk perhaps failed to give him the opportunity to fully appreciating the potential for grace in married life. Later, his experience as a pastor at Antioch and at Constantinople corrected this imbalance in his understanding, and later he became the great apologist for Christian marriage."[30]

On the one hand, Chrysostom stressed the God-given responsibility of Christian parents to bring up their children in the faith. The greatest honor of being a parent is to lead their children

---

[26] Patricia Cox Miller ed., *Women in Early Christianity: Translations from Greek Texts* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 117.

[27] Chrysostom, "On the Necessity of Guarding Virginity," in Miller, *Women in Early Christianity*, 142.

[28] Chrysostom, "On the Necessity of Guarding Virginity," in Miller, *Women in Early Christianity*, 141.

[29] Bakke, "Upbringing of Children," 153.

[30] Catherine Roth, "Introduction" of Chrysostom, *On Marriage and Family Life*, 8.

to salvation. As Repp says, Chrysostom warned parents that God will hold them "personally responsible for their neglect and on Judgment Day would ask them pointedly why they were guilty when He had set them up as teachers, had given them the children while 'still tender' when they could be molded, and had clothed them with authority and power. Parents could not hope for forgiveness when they were guilty of such neglect."[31] Chrysostom understood that parents are placed by God over their children and given the responsibility to train them to be the kind of people God intends them to be; holding them accountable for their performance as parents, "for it is no light praise," says Chrysostom, "to devote to God those children which are given them of God. For if the basis, the foundation which they lay be good, great will be their reward; as great, if they neglect it, will be their punishment."[32] Therefore, parents should not neglect to so train their children which God gave them when they still are malleable enough to be rightly molded. "The education of the child," says Repp about Chrysostom's teachings, "must begin with infancy, for then the mind could best be impressed with good principles which could not readily be effaced."[33] In Chrysostom's words, "If good precepts are impressed on the soul while it is yet tender, no man will be able to destroy them when they have set firm, even as does a waxen seal."[34] In *Against the Opponents*, Chrysostom says that parents that fail to mold their children rightly when they are still malleable are inexcusable and of the worst kind of person.

> Since he received the child in his tender years, and since he was the first and the only one to have authority over him, and since he has the child at home with him all the time, his job as guardian is quite easy and manageable. Therefore, there is no other reason that children become corrupted than from madness over worldly things. When

[31] Repp, "John Chrysostom on the Christian Home," 941.

[32] Homily IX on 1 Timothy, *LFC* 12, 72–73.

[33] Repp, "John Chrysostom on the Christian Home," 944.

[34] Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory*, 9.

> parents are concerned only with their own affairs and do not wish to give priority to their children's, they necessarily neglect their children, as well as their own souls.
>
> I would say that these parents (and do not think that I am speaking out of anger) are even worse than those who kill their children.[35]

On the other hand, Chrysostom's appreciation of married life influenced his understanding of the goal of child-rearing. In *Against the Opponents*, monastic life still figured as the most desirable path for children. "Therefore, since we have clearly demonstrated that we bear the same responsibilities as the monks, let us run upon the easier road [monasticism]; let us lead our sons upon it; let us not throw them into the sea, let us not lead them into the depths of evil, as if we were their enemies and opponents."[36] In *An Address on Vainglory*, although he mostly deals with the education in the faith, he makes some remarks in the last paragraphs on educating children to civic and economic life in a godly way. "Let us teach him to attend to political affairs, such as are within his capacity and free from sin. If he serve as a soldier, let him learn to shun base gain; and so too, if he defend the cause of those who have suffered wrong, or in any other circumstance."[37]

The Ecclesial Family

We are used to hearing talk about the church as a family, the family of God. To be sure, Chrysostom himself also used this imagery. In Homily X on 1 Timothy, he says:

> For the Church is, as it were, a small household, and as in a house there are children and wife and domestics, and the man has rule over them all; just so in the Church there are women, children, servants. And if he that presides in the Church has partners in his power, so hath the man a partner, that is, his wife. Ought the Church to provide for her widows and virgins? so there are in a family servants, and daughters, to be provided for. And, in fact, it is easier to rule the house; therefore he asks, *if a*

[35] Chrysostom, *Against the Opponents*, 133.

[36] Chrysostom, *Against the Opponents*, 161.

[37] Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory*, 27.

> *man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?*"[38]

But more frequent in Chrysostom's writings is talk about the family as a church. For Chrysostom, "the man who properly oversees his whole household can make it a little church which will promote the spiritual growth of all its members."[39] Teaching his hearers to develop the custom of making vigils over the night, he argues that the house may be turned into a little church if the family just habituates itself accordingly.

> Let the house be a Church, consisting of men and women. For think not, because thou art the only man, or because she is the only woman there, that this is any hindrance. *For where two,* He saith, *are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them*. Where Christ is in the midst, there is a great multitude. Where Christ is, there needs must Angels be, needs must Archangels also and the other Powers be there. Then ye are not alone, seeing ye have Him Who is Lord of all. … If thou hast children wake up them also, and let thy house altogether become a Church through the night: but if they be tender, and cannot endure the watching, let them stay for the first or second prayer, and then send them to rest: only stir up thyself, establish thyself in the habit.[40]

Based on Chrysostom's writings, scholars speak about the concept of ecclesial family or domestic church.[41] The husband continues the work of the pastor in the home. "Let your prayers be common. Let each go to Church; and let the husband ask his wife at home, and she again ask

---

[38] Homily X on 1 Timothy, *LFC* 12, 79. Similarly in Homily XX on Ephesians, "Seek the things which are of God, and those which are of man will follow readily enough. Govern thy wife, and thus will the whole house be in harmony. Hear what Paul saith. *And if they would learn any thing, let them ask their own husbands at home.* If we thus regulate our own houses, we shall be also fit for the management of the Church. For indeed a house is a little Church. Thus it is possible for us by becoming good husbands and wives, to surpass all others." (*LFC* 6, 324–25)

[39] Roth, *On Marriage and Family Life*, 18.

[40] Homily XXVI on Acts, *LFC* 33, 379. It is not difficult to notice that the devotional discipline suggested by Chrysostom for the home resembles the monastic routine. In fact, Chrysostom's ecclesial family could easily be called monastic family since Chrysostom presumes that the Christian way of life for families is the same as followed by the monks since they are shaped by the same divine pattern established in Scripture. See section "The Monastic Family" below.

[41] For example, Vigen Guroian. "The Ecclesial Family," 61–77; Vigen Guroian, *Ethics after Christendom*, chapter "Family and Christian Virtue: Reflections on the Ecclesial Vision of John Chrysostom," 133–54; Norbert Widok, "Christian Family as Domestic Church in the Writings of St. John Chrysostom" *Studia Ceranea* 3 (2013): 167–75.

her husband, the account of the things which were said and read there."[42] Chrysostom closes Homily 2 on Genesis asking his hearers to develop their learning with the household by rehearsing the sermon during the meal.

> So it's better to conclude our sermon at this point, exhorting you in your goodness to remember what has been said and keep it ever in your mind; when you go home from here, layout with your meal a spiritual meal as well. The father of the family might repeat something of what was said here; his wife could then hear it, the children too could learn something, even the domestics might be instructed. In short, the household might become a church, so that the devil is driven off and that evil spirit, the enemy of our salvation, takes to flight; the grace of the Holy Spirit would rest there instead, and all peace and harmony surround the inhabitants.[43]

The household Chrysostom has in mind goes beyond the concept of family we are used to. Domestic servants were as much part of the household as children and, therefore, the head of the house was responsible for their instruction in the ways of the Lord as well.

> Therefore let us also take thought for [our servants'] salvation, and let us make it our duty to care for our servants, that they may be good: and let our servants also be instructed in the things pertaining to God. … from all these shall all things proceed that are pleasing to God, and thus shall the whole house be filled with blessing, and we, performing things pleasing to God, shall enjoy abundant succor from above, unto which may we all attain, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ…[44]

Those who God put as head over a household will also be held accountable before the Lord if they fail to guide the ones God gave them in the path of salvation. "If the man who omitted to put out the one talent gained nothing, and yet was punished even then, it is plain that one's own individual virtue is not enough in order to salvation, but there is need of that of another also. Let us therefore entertain great solicitude for our wives, and take great care of our children, and of our servants, and of ourselves."[45]

---

[42] Homily XX on Ephesians, *LFC* 6, 332.

[43] Homily 2 on Genesis, *FC* 74, 36–37.

[44] Homily XLV on Acts, *LFC* 35, 613.

[45] Homily XXI on Ephesians, *LFC* 6, 345.

Chrysostom was convinced that parents were the most fit to train the children in the Christian faith. In the church, Chrysostom aimed to prepare parents for their task at home. As Repp points out,

> Because he conceived the home's influence as potentially the most important environment for good, he employed every device he could think of to place the home on a firmer footing. Using the pulpit as a platform for adult education, he instructed parents in the training of their children. By means of sound instruction, the inculcation of good habits, the erection of acceptable standards and a consistent life of Christian philosophy, children should receive the major portion of their education under the direction of their parents. In the home every phase of education could normally be rooted with success. John's views on the importance of the home as an educational agency and his stress on domestic training were among his finest contributions to education.[46]

Chrysostom had nothing to do with the current notion that parents send their children to church to get all the religious instruction they need. At home, children already are in the church and the parents are the ministers appointed in the domestic church to train them in their faith. But Chrysostom has nothing to do with a notion of a domestic church (the household as a little church) severed from the communal church (the congregation of believers gathered for public worship) either. Besides the passing on of the faith that happens at home, parents bring their children to hear the preaching in the church, where the pastor also gives parents themselves instructions on their parental task. "Let each go to Church; and let the husband ask his wife at home, and she again ask her husband, the account of the things which were said and read there."[47] One of the proofs that Chrysostom just assumed the interdependence between home and church is that a fair amount of evidence of Chrysostom's approach to childrearing come from *his sermons*. From the standpoint of his calling as a pastor, Chrysostom did not fail to give the

[46] Repp, "John Chrysostom on the Christian Home," 946.

[47] Homily XX on Ephesians, *LFC* 6, 332.

necessary instruction, "whether you heed my words or reject them … I did everything in my power: I went to some expense, I gave the proper warning."[48]

The Monastic Family

Although "the ecclesial family" (the family as a little church) is an adequate concept to describe Chrysostom's idea, "the monastic family" may come closer to what Chrysostom has in mind. Chrysostom speaks emphatically against the notion that monastic life represents the expectation of a higher level of holiness that only those who enter this estate have to pursue. "You certainly deceive yourself and are greatly mistaken if you think that there is one set of requirements for the person in the world and another for the monk. The difference between them is that one is married and the other is not; in all other respects they will have to render the same account."[49] Many times, he reiterates that the only difference between monastic life and married life is the responsibility to care for a spouse and bring up children. In Homily VII on Matthew, Chrysostom emphasizes that, by urging chastity on his hearers, he is not urging them to flee to the desert, but to live a chaste life in the estate of marriage.

> "Well," saith one, "and what dost thou require us to do? to occupy the mountains, and become monks?" Why it is this which makes me sigh, that ye think them alone to be properly concerned with decency and chastity; and yet assuredly Christ made His laws common to all. Thus, when He saith, *if any one look on a woman to lust after her*, He speaks not to the solitary, but to him also that hath a wife; since in fact that mount was at that time filled with all kinds of persons of that description. Form then in thy mind an image of that amphitheater, and hate thou this, which is the devil's. Neither do thou condemn the severity of my speech. For I nether *forbid to marry*, nor hinder thy taking pleasure; but I would have this be done in chastity, not with shame, and reproach, and imputations without end. I do not make it a law that you are to occupy the mountains and the deserts, but to be good and considerate and chaste, dwelling in the midst of the city. For in fact all our laws are common to the monks also, except marriage; yea rather, even with respect to this, Paul commands us to put

[48] Homily 6 on Genesis, *FC* 74, 77–78.

[49] Chrysostom, *Against the Opponents,* 156.

> ourselves altogether on a level with them; saying, *For the fashion of this world passeth away: that they that have wives be as though they had none*.[50]

In Homily VII on Hebrews he is also very clear that Jesus' sayings (especially those of the Sermon on the Mount) and Paul's exhortations apply to those who choose both monastic life and married life. Married life, argues Chrysostom, is not a hindrance to a virtuous life at all since the Lord Himself made marriage an honorable estate.

> What then are these things to us (saith one) who are not leading monastic lives? Sayest thou this to me? Say it to Paul, when he saith, *Watching with all perseverance and supplication*, when he saith, *Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof*. For surely he wrote not these things to solitaries only, but to all that are in cities. For ought the man who lives in the world to have any advantage over the solitary, save only the living with a wife? In this point he has allowance, but in others none at all, but it is his duty to do all things equally with the solitary.
>
> Moreover the Beatitudes [pronounced] by Christ, were not addressed to solitaries only: since in that case the whole world would have perished, and we should be accusing God of cruelty. And if these beatitudes were pronounced to solitaries only, and it be not possible for the secular person to succeed in [attaining] them, while at the same time He Himself permitted marriage, the conclusion is that He has Himself destroyed all men. For if it be not possible, with marriage, to perform the duties of solitaries, all things have perished and are destroyed, and the [functions] of virtue are shut up into a narrow [compass].
>
> And, how can marriage be honorable, which so greatly impedes us? What then? It is possible, yea very possible, even if we have wives to pursue after virtue, supposing we have the will. How? If having *wives, we be as though we had none, if we rejoice not over our possessions, if we use the world as not abusing [using] it.*
>
> And if any persons have been hindered by marriage state, let them know that it is not marriage which is the hindrance, but their will which made an ill use of marriage.[51]

In *Against the Opponents*, Chrysostom says that it is even an advantage to live a chaste live if one is married. "For it is not the same thing for the man who has a wife and who enjoys such consolation to be brought to ruin by a woman's beauty, and for a man who has withdrawn from

[50] Homily VII on Matthew, *LFC* 11, 105.

[51] Homily VII on Hebrews, *LFC* 44, 98–99.

all this help to be conquered by sin."[52]

Chrysostom considers it a shame that those who call themselves Christians are not able to live a life consistent with it and instead point to the desert as the place were Christian life is lived out. That is not to be so. Those who do not choose a monastic life must live a Christian life among society in order that those who see a Christian may know what a Christian life looks like. The Christian life is to be displayed before all men and not hidden in mountains and deserts.

> For the Gentile will next ask thee, How am I to know that God's commands are feasible? For thou that art of Christian extraction, and hast been brought up in this fine religion, do not do anything of the kind. And what will you tell him? You will be sure to say, I will shew you others that do; monks that dwell in the deserts. And art thou not ashamed to confess to being a Christian, and yet to send to others, as unable to shew that you display the temper of a Christian? For he also will say directly, What need have I to go to the mountains, and to hunt up the deserts? For if there is no possibility for a person who is living in the midst of cities to be a disciple, this is a sad imputation on this rule of conduct, that we are to leave the cities, and run to the deserts. But shew me a man who has a wife, and children, and family, and yet pursueth wisdom. What are we then to say to all this? Must we not hang down our heads, and be ashamed? For Christ did not so order things; but how? *Let your light shine before men*, not mountains, and deserts, and wildernesses, and out-of-the-way places. And this I say, not as abusing those who have taken up with the mountains, but as bewailing those that dwell in cities, because they have banished virtue from thence. Wherefore I beseech you let us introduce the discipline they have there here also…[53]

Christian families should display the Christian life before the world. Therefore, the kind of discipline Chrysostom hopes to instill in the home is the discipline of the cloister. J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz remarks that "the entire composition of the treatise [*on Vainglory*] reflects the ascetic ideal, for its argument is structured on the disciplining of the senses, the disciplining of tongue and speech, hearing, smell, and sight, and touch being discussed in turn."[54] Chrysostom

[52] Chrysostom, *Against the Opponents*, 156.

[53] Homily XXVI on Romans, *LFC* 7, 441–42.

[54] J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose & John Chrysostom: Clerics Between Desert and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 200–01.

likens the child's soul to a city and the senses to its gates:

> The child's soul then is a city, a city but lately founded and built, a city containing citizens who are strangers with no experience as yet, such as it is very easy to direct … Suppose that the outer walls and four gates, the senses, are built. The whole body shall be the wall, as it were, the gates are the eyes, the tongue, the hearing, the sense of smell, and, if you will, the sense of touch. It is through these gates that the citizens of the city go in and out; that is to say, it is through these gates that thoughts are corrupted or rightly guided.[55]

This discussion is the very structure of most of the treatise, lingering through paragraphs 27 until 63 (out of 90, more than two thirds of the paragraphs) or from page 10 to 20 (out of the 27 pages of this edition, again more than two thirds of the length of the treatise). Chrysostom is pointing out what James K. A. Smith also stresses, the bodily character of formation: "habits are inscribed in our heart through bodily practices and rituals that train the heart, as it were, to desire certain ends."[56]

That is in sync with Chrysostom's remark that he wished that no one needed to flee to the desert to practice the Christian life. For Chrysostom, to choose a monastic life is to choose to live the Christian life separated from society in a situation in which society makes it impossible to live the Christian life in the world. Consequently, Christians who choose the married life undertake the natural challenge to live the Christian life in the world, which is not a different life from that monastic life offers "in the desert." Thus, Chrysostom interprets Paul's advice what "those who have wives should live as if they had none" (1 Cor. 7:29) as meaning that those who have their families among the sinful world should not manage their married life in the world's ways, but should have the same sound life they would have if they had chosen a monastic life.

> "Wherefore" (so he [Paul] speaks) "I do not bid you take possession of the summits of the mountains; it is true I could wish it, since the cities imitate the things that were

[55] Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory*, 10.

[56] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 58.

> done in Sodom; nevertheless, I do not enforce this. Abide, having house and children and wife; only do not insult thy wife, nor put thy children to shame, neither bring into thine house the infection from the theater."[57]

Chrysostom simply could not see the Christian life in the world as distinct from the monastic life (besides the fact that married life includes responsibility for spouse and children) because, for Chrysostom, to choose to follow the monastic life is simply to choose to live the Christian life that the world was seemingly making impossible to live. Those who do not opt for a monastic life naturally remain with the task to live this same Christian life in the midst of a wicked society.

Vainglory

If we follow Hauerwas and Willimon's account of Constantinianism, Chrysostom was watching in the first row its implementation. While Christianity was enduring persecution, only sincere Christians assumed the faith. Under such conditions, only those who were convinced of the Christian faith professed it. There was no worldly advantage attached that would lead the person to profess the Christian faith unless that was what the person believed. But by Chrysostom's time this picture had changed. "By the late fourth century, to be a Christian was no longer a social liability. Indeed, it was becoming not just a preferred means to social status, wealth, and power, but also a prerequisite to these ends."[58] To be a Christian was not just allowed but even socially desirable. With this new change in status, came a new problem. The new, favored, status of the Christian faith mixed a lot of water with the wine. "Many were entering the church without the religious and moral discipline Chrysostom expected of persons baptized in

[57] Homily VII on Matthew, *LFC* 11, 105.

[58] Guroian, "St. John Chrysostom," 88.

the faith."[59] Christianity was losing its distinctiveness and looking increasingly more like the normal way of the world. For those shaped in monasticism, with its concerted effort to cultivate the distinction between Christians and the world, this was not a welcome change.

Therefore, one of the things Chrysostom criticizes severely is the tendency of Christian parents to bring up their children in the ways of the world instead of the ways of God. This is seen primarily in the efforts of parents to make their children economically successful and admired. Parents teach their children, "nothing else but what is at the base of all evils, inculcate in them what are the two most tyrannical lusts, I mean the love of money and—what is even more wicked—the love of vain and empty glory. … who, then, will be able to extirpate this disease, especially when even the parents do and say everything, not for these wicked plants to be uprooted, but for them to be made secure?"[60]

"Vainglory" is a concept to which Chrysostom returns frequently. What Chrysostom calls vainglory is what Jesus condemns in Matthew 6. "For, when He says, *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth*, it is not the hands that He considers, but He is bidding them use the utmost caution against ostentation: and He is doing the like here; He did not limit prayer to one place, but required one thing alone, the absence of vain-glory."[61] The pursuit of vainglory is what makes someone wear a golden chain in order to be seen and to be admired. "Is it the less a chain, because it is of gold? does the material make any difference? whether it be gold or iron, it is still a chain; nay the gold is the heavier. What then makes it light, but vain-glory, and the pleasure of

[59] Guroian, "St. John Chrysostom," 88.

[60] Chrysostom, *Against the Opponents*, 135–36.

[61] Homily VIII on 1 Timothy, *LFC* 12, 62–63.

being seen to wear a chain, of which you ought rather to be ashamed?"[62] As Liebeschuetz observes, "Chrysostom insists that it must be the aim of education from the earliest years to make sure that the child will not pursue vainglory. … It is Chrysostom's aim as educator to teach boys to despise applause, instead of training them to develop an appetite for it."[63]

Chrysostom complains that, due to the pursuit of vainglory, one cannot any longer tell apart those of the church from those of the world, since this pursuit leads Christian women to look not very different from harlots.

> These things and many others, invented only to be seen and to attract beholders, are more alluring than golden ornaments. These are no trifling faults, but displeasing to God, and enough to mar all the self-denial of virginity. … This is meretricious, and disgraceful. We can no longer distinguish harlots and virgins, to such indecency have they advanced. … Thou excusest thyself to me, but what canst thou say to God, who knows the heart and the spirit with which thou doest these things? 'It is not done for fornication!' Perhaps not, but for admiration; and dost thou not blush for shame to be admired for such things?[64]

In Homily X on Colossians, Chrysostom points out that girls will be formed according to the mores of their mothers. Therefore, women should make sure to reflect Christ and not vainglory since their daughters would be formed accordingly. "Hast thou a little daughter? see that she inherit not the mischief, for manners are wont to be formed according to nurture, and daughters to imitate their mothers' characters. Be then a pattern to thy daughter of modesty, deck thyself with that adorning [Christ], and see that thou despise the other [vainglory]; for that is in truth an ornament, the other a disfigurement."[65]

Chrysostom's main writing on education is called *An Address on Vainglory and the Right Way for Parents to Bring Up Their Children*. Even though these concepts may seem somewhat

---

[62] Homily VII on 1 Timothy, *LFC* 12, 60–61.

[63] Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose & John Chrysostom*, 206.

[64] Homily VIII on 1 Timothy, *LFC* 12, 66.

[65] Homily X on Colossians, *LFC* 13, 305.

unrelated at first sight, for Chrysostom the connection is very clear. What he calls vainglory is *the wrong way for parents to bring up their children*. And worse, it is the way he sees many Christian parents bringing up their children.

> The man-child has lately been born. His father thinks of every means, not whereby he may direct the child's life wisely, but whereby he may adorn it and clothe it in fine raiment and golden ornaments. Why dost thou this, O man? … There is need for a strict tutor to direct the boy, no need for gold. … I have told you already that vice is hard to drive away for this reason, that no one takes thought for his children, no one discourses to them about virginity and sobriety or about contempt of wealth and fame, or of the precepts laid down in the Scriptures. … In our own day every man takes the greatest pains to train his boy in the arts and in literature and speech. But to exercise this child's soul in virtue, to that no man any longer pays heed.[66]

Chrysostom is asking parents if they want to bring up their children to money, luxury and other worldly attractions or if they want to bring up their children to God. Consequently, Chrysostom has a very negative vision of the theater and other entertainment places of his time, like horse races. In Homily 6 on Genesis, he departs from the text and proceeds to reproach his congregation "for their attendance at horse racing—an amusement that was not altogether innocent in the Antioch of those days."[67]

Chrysostom's vision fits James K. A. Smith's exhortations for the necessity of counter-formation to cultural liturgies.[68] As Roth observed about Chrysostom's vision, "If parents expect their children to be obedient, they must train the children in virtue. Above all, they should read the Bible together, to provide good examples which may counteract the bad examples offered by worldly entertainments."[69] Liebeschuetz also observes that, for Chrysostom,

> a child is to be made good by being carefully shielded from seeing or learning about the evil and cruelty in the world. The underlying idea is that when a young person

[66] Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory*, 7–8.

[67] Homily 6 on Genesis, *FC* 74, 77–90. The quote is from the footnote on page 77.

[68] See the section "The Vision of the Good Life Our Children Are Getting" in the previous chapter.

[69] *On Marriage and Family Life*, 19.

> sees or hears nothing other than what is good and right during childhood, the good and right becomes an integral part of his or her character, so that when the young adult goes into the world and experiences what is really going on there, he or she will not be tainted.[70]

Chrysostom's teaching resembles James K. A. Smith's concept of impressing a vision of the good life in the person which, as his or her second nature, leads him or her to navigate life and make decisions according to the notion of what it means to be human that is inscribed in him or her. Chrysostom did firmly believe that this "second nature" was easily created if the habituation begins early in life. "And do not, I pray, think that this takes a long time. If from the first thou dost firmly lay on thy behests and threats and dost appoint so many guardians, two months suffice, and all is in good order and the habit is firmly established as his second nature."[71] Contrary to the widely accepted assumption of our time, Chrysostom did not believe that what is in the child has to be developed, rather what is in the child needs to be restrained, "For all the passions are tyrannous in children (for as yet they have not that which is to bridle them), vainglory, desire, irrationality, anger, envy…"[72] The child must be trained so that another "law" habituated into him shall guide him.

> Hear this, ye fathers, bring your children up with great care *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. Youth is wild, and requires many governors, teachers, directors, attendants, and tutors; and after all these, it is a happiness if it be restrained. For as a horse not broken in, or a wild beast untamed, such is youth. But if from the beginning, from the earliest age, we fix it in good rules, much pains will not be required afterwards; for good habits formed will be to them as a law.[73]

The child should not listen to talk with immoral contents "for he that hears no base or wicked

---

[70] Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose & John Chrysostom*, 200.

[71] Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory*, 12.

[72] Homily IV on Colossians, *LFC* 13, 233.

[73] Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose & John Chrysostom*, 200.

words does not utter base words either."[74] For Chrysostom, to succeed as a parent is to develop in the child the Christian vision of the good life.

The School and the Family

Chrysostom does not say that parents should not send their children to the school, but he makes very clear that parental influence must correct undesired influences the school can have in the education of a Christian child. "The programme of Chrysostom's treatise [*on Vainglory*] is not intended to provide a substitute for the traditional education. It is in fact going to be a supplement to the normal upper-class schooling."[75] Liebeschuetz reminds us that in *Against the Opponents*, Chrysostom "had rejected traditional education on the ground that its aim was to instill an ambition for what he calls 'vainglory', and he advocated (with very considerable rhetorical exaggeration) education by monks as an alternative." But in *An Address on Vainglory*, "he shows how parents can achieve the same end, that is to make their children grow up into good Christians by early training in the home."[76] Parents have the task of counter-formation. "What Chrysostom is doing is instructing parents, especially fathers, to take a more direct part in the education of their children by providing them with a totally Christian upbringing at home, which will supplement and in important respects neutralize the educational impact of the traditional schooling, and of society at large."[77]

Chrysostom thought it important that all the residents of the household should be in accord and together habituate the child in the Christian way of life. "And let there be many on all sides

[74] Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory*, 13.

[75] Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose & John Chrysostom*, 202.

[76] Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose & John Chrysostom*, 199.

[77] Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose & John Chrysostom*, 202.

to spur the boy on, so that he may be exercised and practiced in controlling his passions among the members of the household."[78] They should all approach the child as an art object being made to God; since their attitude toward the child would leave an impression in the child, "let those who are participating with us in training stand out clearly, as though they were approaching a holy statue. … Let those of the servants who are well fitted take part. If there be none, then hire someone who is free, a virtuous man, and entrust the task especially to him, so that he may have a full share in the undertaking."[79]

He insisted that someone who shares the Christian faith should be hired to train the child at home in the Christian faith. "When it became necessary to choose a pedagog or a nurse," Repp remembers, "parents were in duty bound to take great care to choose such as were able to lay a good foundation. John lamented the fact that parents were often careless in their choice."[80]

Chrysostom complained that parents were so prone to guide their children in all things but in the ways of the Lord. "How is it not absurd to send children out to trades, and to school, and to do all you can for this object, and yet, not to *bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?*"[81] That is to raise children for vainglory instead of to the Lord. He saw parents caring much more about their possessions, which they intend to bequeath to their children, while failing to bequeath to them what is immensely more important.

> In children we have a great charge committed to us. Let us bestow great care upon them, and do everything that the Evil One may not rob us of them. But now our practice is the very reverse of this. We take all care indeed to have our farm in good order, and to commit it to a faithful manager, we look out for it an ass-driver, and muleteer, and bailiff, and a clever accomptant. But we do not look out for what is

[78] Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory*, 21.

[79] Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory*, 13.

[80] Repp, "John Chrysostom on the Christian Home," 940.

[81] Homily XXI on Ephesians, *LFC* 6, 339.

> much more important, for a person to whom we may commit our son as the guardian of his morals, though this is a possession much more valuable than all others. It is for him indeed that we take such care of our estate. We take care of our possessions for our children, but of the children themselves we take no care at all. What an absurdity is this! Form the soul of thy son aright, and all the rest will be added hereafter. … Wouldest thou leave him rich? teach him to be good.[82]

For Chrysostom, there is no greater richness for parents than the children God gives them and there is no greater richness parents can bequeath to their children than to hand down to them the Christian faith.

Telling Stories and the Bible

One of the main methods that Chrysostom suggests using to educate children is a very ancient one: to tell stories. In his Major Applied Project on intergenerational transmission of faith, M. Jason Fullerton experienced first-hand the importance stories have in teaching children when he failed to provide them.

> One struggle I observed came from failing to provide illustrative stories for the parents. I had provided them with quality, high-level teaching about various subjects, yet I did not give parents stories to share with their children. Parents needed stories or examples to give their children to aid the discussion of these principles. Academic information did not suffice. As a result, parents had a difficult task in keeping their children's attention. The more illustrations and examples parents can have, the more effective the lessons will be.[83]

The method of telling stories Chrysostom allies with teaching the Bible. The stories told to children should not be bad examples but related to the Scriptures "The Bible, said Chrysostom, is the basic primer and lesson book for the virtues of the kingdom that God charges parents to teach their children."[84]

---

[82] Homily IX on 1 Timothy, *LFC* 12, 73–74.

[83] Fullerton, "Intergenerational Transmission of Faith," 127.

[84] Guroian, *Ethics after Christendom*, 149.

In *An Address on Vainglory* he orients parents on how to tell children the stories. They should be age appropriate and told repeatedly. Sometimes the parent should ask the child to conclude the story as a way to make the child remember the story.[85] To learn the Scriptures is not something only monks should know. If anyone is to be a Christian it is necessary to be trained in the Scriptures. Parents should not fail to teach God's word to their children.

> Would you have a son obedient? From the very first *bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. Never deem it an unnecessary thing that he should be a diligent hearer of the divine Scriptures. … Never say, this is the business of monks. Am I making a monk of him? No. There is no need he should be made a monk. Why be so afraid of a thing replete with so much advantage? Make him a Christian. For it is of all things necessary for persons in the world to be acquainted with the lessons derived from this source; but especially for children.[86]

From the Scriptures, children will learn God's scheme of all things and which place they occupy in it. This shall be their compass to navigate life. Therefore, "let us listen to this blessed Apostle's admonition. *Let us bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. Let us give them a pattern. Let us make them from the earliest age apply themselves to the reading of the Scriptures."[87] From the Scriptures, children will learn to pursue what is good according to the Lord instead of vainglory. "Seek not how to give him reputation and high character in outward learning, but consider deeply how you shall teach him to despise the glory that is confined to this present life. … These are lessons which a man does not learn from a master, nor by art, but by means of the divine oracles."[88] These are not things only monks need to know. Quite the opposite, those exposed to the world are deeply in need of being equipped to weather the storms of life. "Do not imagine that the monk alone stands in need of these lessons from Scripture. Of

---

[85] Chrysostom, *Address on Vainglory*, 13–16.

[86] Homily XXI on Ephesians, *LFC* 6, 338.

[87] Homily XXI on Ephesians, *LFC* 6, 339.

[88] Homily XXI on Ephesians, *LFC* 6, 340.

all others, the children just about to enter into the world specially need them."[89] It is precisely because they are not shielded in monastic life that they need so much more to be equipped with the knowledge of Scriptures.

As Liebeschuetz remarks, "For Chrysostom the contents of education are essentially prescribed by God, and revealed in the Bible."[90] The Scriptures are the foundation to guide the training of the human being into what it means to be human in accord with God's intent. According to Repp, "John believed that the realization of man's ultimate purpose could under the guidance of the Spirit of God come only through an education based on the one true source of knowledge, the Scriptures. While man's innate knowledge, reason, and experiences supplied important sources of truth, they were at best only supplementary to the Scriptures and had to be modified accordingly."[91]

Leading Children to Marriage

As has been the assumption in most of human history, the responsibility for rearing a child continued until "a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). If the child should not enter monastic life, it was natural to assume that in due time the parents would provide a marriage for him or her. Chrysostom has something to say about the responsibility of parents in providing a spouse for their children.

Regarding male children, Chrysostom says it is a good idea to provide a fiancée early for pedagogical reasons. The idea was that the boy, knowing his wife-to-be, would strive to make a

[89] Homily XXI on Ephesians, *LFC* 6, 340–41.

[90] Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose & John Chrysostom*, 202.

[91] Repp, "John Chrysostom on the Christian Home," 937.

good impression on her. “Bind him then with this fetter, the fetter that makes virtue secure. Then, even if he cannot have a wife from his earliest manhood, let him have a betrothed from the first and let him strive to show himself a good man. This is enough safeguard to ward off every evil.”[92]

In “The Kind of Women Who Ought to be Taken as Wives,”[93] Chrysostom criticizes those who choose a wife in order to become rich. “I have heard many people say, ‘So-and-so who used to be poor became very prosperous from his marriage. Since he married a rich woman, he’s well off and now he fares sumptuously.’… You neither feel shame nor do you blush, though you wish to make a profit from a wife? … How can these be the words of a real man?”[94] Chrysostom insists that wives should not be chosen due the economic advantages that would come with the marriage. In the same way, Chrysostom orients husbands to make their wives understand the same. “If any poverty should overtake you, allege those holy men, Paul and Peter, who were more glorious than any kings or rich men; and yet how did they spend their lives, yea, in hunger and in thirst.” Chrysostom’s conviction that the life of the family should be directed by the same premises as the monastic life applies also here. “Teach her that there is nothing in life terrible, save only offending against God. If any marry thus, marry with these views, he will be but little inferior to solitaries; the married but little below the unmarried.”[95]

Chrysostom points out that marriage is not an economic transaction but the God-designed complementarity of human life.

---

[92] Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory*, 25–26.

[93] Chrysostom, “The Kind of Women Who Ought to be Taken as Wives,” in Miller, *Women in Early Christianity*, 270–72.

[94] Chrysostom, “Kind of Women,” in Miller, *Women in Early Christianity*, 270.

[95] Homily XX on Ephesians, *LFC* 6, 332.

> Indeed, this is a work of God's love and wisdom … taking precautions at one and the same time for peace and decency, God maintained the order of each sex… God's plan was extremely desirable for us… Understanding all these things, let us thus strive for just one goal, virtue of soul and nobility of behavior, so that we may enjoy peace, live in concord, and maintain ourselves in love unto the end.[96]

In this text, Chrysostom argues that God designed man for public life and woman for the household life, "and often she is more shrewd about household matters than her husband." One thing Chrysostom extols in the woman's task in the household is her role in the education of children. "[A woman] can raise children correctly, and children are our principal wealth."[97]

In Homily 61 on John, Chrysostom points out woman's influence in molding her husbands as well. "Indeed, nothing—nothing, I repeat—is more potent than a good and prudent woman in molding a man and shaping his soul in whatever way she desires."[98] Chrysostom teaches the biblical doctrine of man's primacy and responsibility. The wife "is a second authority, possessing indeed an authority, and a considerable equality of dignity; but at the same time the husband has somewhat of superiority."[99] He recognizes that in God's original design the man was instituted as the head also when it came to instruction in the faith, but due to man's sinful disposition to fail in his task woman may have to eventually take it up, which does not denigrate the woman but shames the man.

> I would commit you to your own wives, that they may instruct you. It is true, according to Paul's law, you ought to be the teachers. But since that order is reversed by sin, and the body has come to be above, and the head beneath, let us even take this way.
>
> But if thou art ashamed to have a woman for thy teacher, fly from sin, and thou wilt quickly be able to mount up on the throne which God hath given thee. … for the

---

[96] Chrysostom, "Kind of Women," in Miller, *Women in Early Christianity*, 271–72.

[97] Chrysostom, "Kind of Women," in Miller, *Women in Early Christianity*, 271. See also Chrysostom, "How to Choose a Wife," *On Marriage and Family Life*, 96–97.

[98] Homily 61 on John, *FC* 41, 161.

[99] Homily XX on Ephesians, *LFC* 6, 324.

> present we will commit thee to thy wife; but if thou despise her, we will send thee away to the school of the very brutes, and will point out to thee how many birds, fishes, four-footed beasts, and creeping things are found more honorable, and chaster than thou.[100]

Although Chrysostom acknowledges that a Christian spouse can lead the other to the right path, he counsels those considering marriage to take into account whether the chosen one shares the Christian faith. "You too, you see, when you are looking for a bridegroom or a bride, ask this first of all, whether your intended is loved by God and enjoys good will from above. If these blessings are present, everything else follows. If they are absent, even if the goods of this life are present in great abundance, they are of no benefit." [101]

Chrysostom offers Isaac and Rebecca as an example for parents to follow in providing a marriage for their children. "You fathers, imitate the foresight of Abraham, the care which he used to find an unaffected woman for Isaac's wife. He did not look for money, for high birth, for beauty of body, or anything else but nobility of soul. You mothers, bring up your daughters as Rebecca was brought up."[102] Chrysostom even advises couples not to celebrate their weddings with the music, dances and customs of the world. For Chrysostom, such a course would amount to beginning the marriage in vainglory. But if a marriage is directed from its very beginning to the Lord, a household is prepared that will train a new generation in the ways of the Lord as well. "If marriages are begun in this way, we will be able to raise our children to virtue with great ease."[103] The choosing of a spouse is at the same time the final step in the education of one generation and the first step in the education of the next. This is the place where one link of the

---

[100] Homily VII on Matthew, *LFC* 11, 104.

[101] Chrysostom, "How to Choose a Wife," *On Marriage and Family Life*, 110–11.

[102] Chrysostom, "How to Choose a Wife," *On Marriage and Family Life*, 113.

[103] Chrysostom, "How to Choose a Wife," *On Marriage and Family Life*, 114.

chain of the intergenerational character of the faith is connected with the next. “In this way each man together with his household (I mean his wife, children, and servants) will be able to finish the course of this life without fear and to enter the kingdom of heaven.”[104]

John Chrysostom supports the thesis that the transmission of faith is inherently intergenerational. From the standpoint of someone witnessing the implementation of Christendom, he seeks to apply the discipline of the monastery to the household. In this sense, his “ecclesial family” may be rightly conceptualized a monastic family. Parents must train their children in the distinctiveness of the Christian faith while avoiding and counteracting the socialization in what he calls “vainglory.” The influence of the surrounding world, including the school, must be balanced with instruction in the divine precepts revealed in Scripture so that the child may be trained to see the world and history as God’s project in which they occupy a place. Parents guide their children in the ways of the Lord until they form their own families and have their own children to whom they will retransmit what they have received from their parents. Thus faith is passed on intergenerationally as God has instituted it to be.

[104] Chrysostom, “How to Choose a Wife,” *On Marriage and Family Life*, 115.

CHAPTER FOUR

MARTIN LUTHER ON THE INTERGENERATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE FAITH

Martin Luther is regarded by many as an educational reformer as much as a theological reformer. According to Robert Rosin,

> Education was important for Luther's reform efforts. Faith was trust—*fiducia*—but people must trust in something. Belief has content, something to lay hold of. The Holy Spirit does not convert and keep in the faith without means, without the message proclaimed and tied to sacraments. That message of the Word has to be learned. Clearly Luther saw a relationship between faith (as both activity and content) and education, between theology and pedagogy.[1]

Luther wrote two treatises on formal education, *To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools* (1524) and *A Sermon on Keeping Children in School* (1530).[2] But he also wrote about the parental role as primary in the education of children. Well known are the headings of his Small Catechism (1529) which read, "In a simple way in which the head of a house is to present [it] to the household."[3] Luther's developments on the subject can be drawn from his Large Catechism (1529) as well as from other works such as *The Estate of Marriage*.[4] It is from this last one that come the often quoted words of Luther:

> Most certainly father and mother are apostles, bishops, and priests to their children, for it is they who make them acquainted with the gospel. In short, there is no greater or nobler authority on earth than that of parents over their children, for this authority is both spiritual and temporal. Whoever teaches the gospel to another is truly his apostle and bishop.[5]

---

[1] Robert Rosin, "Luther on Education," *Lutheran Quarterly* 21 (2007): 206.

[2] *LW* 45:339–78; *LW* 46:207–58.

[3] SC, Kolb and Wengert, 351, 354, 356, 359, 362. The same is also stated for the prayers and thanksgivings (pp. 363, 364).

[4] *LW* 45:11–49.

[5] *LW* 45:46.

The Intergenerational Character of the Faith

Luther describes the faith as intergenerational in the context of the third article of the Creed, in his discussion about the Church.

> How does such sanctifying take place? Answer: Just as the Son obtains dominion by purchasing us through his birth, death, and resurrection, etc., so the Holy Spirit effects our being made holy through the following: the community of saints or Christian church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. That is, he first leads us into his holy community, placing us in the church's lap, where he preaches to us and brings us to Christ.[6]

God bequeathed the gospel to the Church. In the Church the gospel is preached and the Sacraments are administered. In that sense, the Church is the mother who begets God's children, for God "has a unique community in the world, which is the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God, which the Holy Spirit reveals and proclaims, through which he illuminates and inflames hearts so that they grasp and accept it, cling to it, and persevere in it."[7] With the phrase, "the intergenerational character of the faith" I mean the inherent inclination hardwired by God through which one generation passes the faith down to the next generation primarily, but not exclusively, through the parent-child relationship. Therefore, the community has a role in the intergenerational character of the faith as well. "Indeed," ponders Luther, "for what purpose do we older folks exist, other than to care for, instruct, and bring up the young? It is utterly impossible for these foolish young people to instruct and protect themselves. This is why God has entrusted them to us who are older and know from experience what is best for them. And God will hold us strictly accountable for them."[8]

The Church is the community gathered by the Holy Spirit around Word and Sacraments,

[6] LC The Creed, in Kolb and Wengert, 435–36.37.

[7] LC The Creed, in Kolb and Wengert, 436.42.

[8] *LW* 45:353.

through which God creates and sustains salvific faith.

> This is the meaning and substance of this phrase: I believe that there is on earth a holy little flock and community of pure saints under one head, Christ. It is called together by the Holy Spirit in one faith, mind, and understanding. It possesses a variety of gifts, and yet is united in love without sect or schism. Of this community I also am a part and member, a participant and co-partner in all the blessings it possesses. I was brought into it by the Holy Spirit and incorporated into it through the fact that I have heard and still hear God's Word, which is the beginning point for entering it. Before we had come into this community, we were entirely of the devil, knowing nothing of God and of Christ.[9]

The creating and sustaining of the faith through which we receive the gift of salvation is the exclusive work of God through the means of grace, "we wait in faith for this to be accomplished through the Word."[10] But God chose to work it out in the context of His holy community, "for this purpose he has appointed a community on earth, through which he speaks and does all his work."[11] Inside this holy community the Word is preached and the Sacraments administered (through which passive righteousness is bestowed)[12] and among which the God-intended way to live out our humanity is habituated by the older generation into the younger (active righteousness is trained).

It was Luther's conviction that the Christian community must transmit the rudiments of the Christian faith to the next generation since they are still young, when they are more easily molded.

> Let this serve as an exhortation, then, not only for us who are old and advanced in years, but also for the young who must be brought up in Christian teaching and in the

[9] LC The Creed, in Kolb and Wengert, 437–38.51–52.

[10] LC The Creed, in Kolb and Wengert, 439.62.

[11] LC The Creed, in Kolb and Wengert, 439.61.

[12] "Therefore everything in this Christian community is so ordered that everyone may daily obtain full forgiveness of sins through the Word and signs appointed to comfort and encourage our consciences as long as we live on earth. Although we have sin, the Holy Spirit sees to it that it does not harm us because we are a part of this Christian community. Here there is full forgiveness of sins, both in that God forgives us and that we forgive, bear with, and aid one another." LC The Creed, in Kolb and Wengert, 438.55.

> right understanding of it. With such training we may more easily instill 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. For it is completely useless to try to change old people.[13]

The present generation of the Christian community hands down what they once also received in order that the next generation in turn will pass it on again. That is the way God designed to preserve a people for Himself on earth. "We cannot perpetuate these and other teachings unless we train the people who come after us and succeed us in our office and work, so that they in turn may bring up their children successfully. In this way God's Word and a Christian community will be preserved."[14] This duty of the community of faith rests primarily on the shoulders of parents. "Therefore let heads of a household remember that it is their duty, by God's injunction and command to teach their children or have them taught the things they ought to know."[15] Although not exclusively, the intergenerational transmission of the faith remains primarily, by God's design, under parental responsibility. "Remember and help to raise up good people, that you, father, may raise up a devout son, you, mother, a devout daughter, who in turn will raise up their children in piety."[16]

Luther urged the use of a variety of means to pass the faith on to those that do not know it yet in order that the following generations would not fail to receive it as well, "since we certainly must commend Christian doctrine in every way, by preaching, reading, singing, etc., so that young and unlearned people may be formed by it, and thus in this way it will always remain pure and passed on to our descendents."[17] Conversely, if one generation does not take heed to pass the

---

[13] LC The Sacrament of the Altar, in Kolb and Wengert, 475–76.85–86.

[14] LC The Sacrament of the Altar, in Kolb and Wengert, 476.86.

[15] LC The Sacrament of the Altar, in Kolb and Wengert, 476.87.

[16] *LW* 51:151.

[17] Luther quoted in Charles P. Arand, *That I May Be His Own: An Overview of Luther's Catechism* (St.

faith to the next generation, a mistaken version of what it means to be human is transmitted to the next generation, "one fool raises another, and as they have lived, so live their children after them."[18]

Luther even demonstrated some awareness of the cycle of stages of life on which the intergenerational cycle of faith transmission rests.

> When Hans had arrived at his seventh year his father [Luther] said: "My boy Hans is now entering upon his seventh year. Every seven years a person changes; the first period is infancy, the second childhood. At fourteen they begin to see the world and lay the foundation of education; at twenty-one the young men seek marriage; at twenty-eight they are householders and paterfamilias, at thirty-five they are magistrates in Church and State, until forty-two, when they are kings. After that the senses begin to decline. Thus every seven years brings a new condition in body and character."[19]

It is certainly not as sophisticated and well-grounded in empirical research as the scheme of Erikson or other contemporary scholars, but it reveals that Luther recognized inscribed in the fabric of creation the cycle of life whose links, as in a chain, are intertwined intergenerationally.

The Blessed Estate of Marriage and the Christian Household

Luther could conceive no higher estate than marriage. "Luther extolled marriage and family life (domus) as the foundational order that God established 'before all others as the first of all institutions.'"[20] Nothing could surpass it, least of all, the monastic life which Luther regarded as a trap from the devil. As Ozment and Witte observe,

> Drawing on his own and his wife, Katherine's, bitter experiences with monastic life, Luther rejected the medieval Church's subordination of marriage to celibacy and its elevation of spiritual contemplation over corporal action. We are all sinful creatures,

---

Louis: Concordia, 2000), 80.

[18] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 403.124.

[19] Ewald M. Plass, *This Is Luther: A Character Study* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1948, 1984 reprint), 258–59 quoting Martin Luther.

[20] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 59.

> he argued. Lust has pervaded the conscience of everyone. Marriage is not just an option; it is a necessity for sinful humanity. For without it, a person's distorted sexuality becomes a force capable of overthrowing the most devout conscience. A person is enticed by nature to concubinage, prostitution, masturbation, voyeurism, and other sinful acts. "You cannot be without a [spouse] and remain without sin," Luther thundered from his Wittenberg pulpit. You will test your neighbor's bed unless your own marital bed is happily occupied and well used.[21]

Unlike Chrysostom, Luther regarded celibacy as inferior to the estate of marriage. "Luther concurred with the Apostle Paul that a celibate person 'may better be able to preach and care for God's word.' But, he immediately added, 'It is God's word and the preaching which makes celibacy—such as that of Christ and of Paul—better than the estate of marriage. In itself, however, the celibate life is far inferior.'"[22] Luther does not consider celibacy a sin either. What he condemns as "against the freedom of the gospel" and "forbidden by divine commands" is that "by your vow you make celibacy lifelong, as well as obligatory under the law. … Indeed, you may take and keep all the vows you like, as long as you do no violence to the freedom commanded by God. You have no right at all either to take away that freedom or to set up sin where God has not willed sin to be."[23]

For Luther, the monastery meant the opposite of an appropriate training in the faith. He said that when he sees "the young people, both boys and girls, grow up so well instructed in the Catechism and the Scriptures" it makes him "deeply moved … that young boys and girls can pray, believe, and speak more of God and Christ than they ever could in the monasteries, foundations, and schools of bygone days, or even in our day."[24]

---

[21] Steven Ozment and John Witte, Jr., "Martin Luther," in *Christianity and Family Law: An Introduction*, ed. John Witte, Jr and Gary S. Hauk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 198–99.

[22] Ozment and Witte, "Martin Luther," 200, quoting Martin Luther.

[23] *LW* 44:310–11.

[24] *LW* 49:307.

In *The Estate of Marriage*, based upon the report of creation (Gen. 1:27–28), Luther demonstrates that the estate of marriage was designed by God and, more than a law to be obeyed, is simply the way God established things to be. It is an estate "from [which] we all trace our origin, we have all had need of [it]. Without [it] no man would exist."[25] In the first place, God bestowed upon each human being the vocation of male or female. "From this passage we may be assured that God divided mankind into two classes, namely, male and female, or a he and a she. … Therefore, each one of us must have the kind of body God has created for us. I cannot make myself a woman, nor can you make yourself a man; we do not have that power. But we are exactly as he created us: I a man and you a woman."[26] In the second place, God created them to "be fruitful and multiply," meaning that man and woman have been created for each other, in order to become one flesh, a necessary estate for the continuity of the human race.

> From this passage we may be assured that man and woman should and must come together in order to multiply. … Hence, as it is not within my power not to be a man, so it is not my prerogative to be without a woman. Again, as it is not in your power not to be a woman, so it is not your prerogative to be without a man. For it is not a matter of free choice or decision but a natural and necessary thing, that whatever is a man must have a woman and whatever is a woman must have a man.[27]

Therefore, Luther understands marriage and the begetting of children not as a command to be obeyed but as the way God ordained things to be. "It is more than a command, namely, a divine ordinance [*werck*] which it is not our prerogative to hinder or ignore. … It is a nature and disposition just as innate as the organs involved in it." More than commanding the human being for this estate, He created the human being for it, "just as God does not command anyone to be a man or a woman but creates them the way they have to be, so he does not command them to

[25] *LW* 45:42–43.

[26] *LW* 45:17.

[27] *LW* 45:18.

multiply but creates them so that they have to multiply." In another place, Luther also highlights "that a man is created for marriage, to beget fruit of his body (just as a tree is created to bear apples or pears), unless his nature is altered or hindered by God's supreme grace and special miracle."[28] To try to ignore or to fight it is not without consequences, "wherever men try to resist this, it remains irresistible nonetheless and goes its way through fornication, adultery, and secret sins, for this is a matter of nature and not of choice."[29]

Nevertheless, Luther points out that to be fruitful and multiply goes beyond simply begetting a child. "It is not enough, however, merely for children to be born… Heathen, too, bear offspring. But unfortunately it seldom happens that we bring up children to serve God, to praise and honor him, and want nothing else of them."[30] In *To the Councilmen of All Cities*, Luther points out that the upbringing of children also pertains to this scheme of how God created things to be. Hence, on the one hand, "nature itself" drives us "to educate our children and young people and to seek their best interests," and, on the other hand, there is also "the command of God, who through Moses urges and enjoins parents so often to instruct their children."[31] Among the duties attached to the blessed estate of marriage was the upbringing of children in the fear of God. According to Kolb and Arand, Luther saw three main purposes for God to have established the estate of marriage:

> First, God created man and woman "to be true to each other." In creating them "differently (as is evident)," he "implanted in each the desire and urge for the other." … Second, God bound man and woman together in order "to be fruitful, to beget children, and to nurture and bring them up to the glory of God." … Third, Luther

[28] *LW* 45:390.

[29] *LW* 45:18.

[30] *LW* 44:12.

[31] *LW* 45:353.

noted that after the fall into sin, marriage serves another purpose for those who have not received the extraordinary gift of the single life (1 Cor. 7:7).[32]

To fail to bring the children up in the Christian faith was to put in peril one's own salvation. Luther "sternly reminds parents of their responsibilities" for "God will hold them accountable for the discharge of their duty as 'superiors' to bring up their children 'to usefulness and piety.'"[33] "Therefore," remarks Luther, "do not imagine that the parental office is a matter of your pleasure and whim. It is a strict commandment and injunction of God, who holds you accountable for it."[34] To emphasize the accountability of parents in the upbringing of their children Luther goes so far as to say that "heaven itself could not be made nearer or achieved more easily" and "hell is no more easily earned than with respect to one's own children."[35] All married people should know that they "can do no better work and do nothing more valuable either for God, for Christendom, for all the world, for themselves, and for their children than to bring up their children well."[36]

Luther noted, in the appendix to the first commandment, the impact for good or for ill of the intergenerational mark on the formation of children into God's account of what it means to be human. "His wrath does not subside until the fourth generation, but, in contrast, his kindness and goodness extend to many thousands."[37] Luther noticed that "where there are fine, old

---

[32] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 59–60. From the explanation of the Sixth Commandment, LC 6th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 414–15.207, 216.

[33] Jane E. Strohl, "The Child in Luther's Theology: 'For What Purpose Do We Older Folks Exist, Other Than to Care for… the Young?'" in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 147–48.

[34] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 409.169.

[35] *LW* 44:12–13.

[36] *LW* 44:12.

[37] LC 1st Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 390.32. See also LC 1st Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 390–91.32–34, 37, 39–40; LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 405.137–39.

families who prosper and have many children, it is certainly because some of them were brought up well and honored their parents. … Therefore, let it be a warning to you how important obedience is to God, because he treasures it so highly, delights so greatly in it, rewards it so richly, and besides is so strict about punishing those who transgress it."[38]

Luther's conception of a household, similar to Chrysostom's, encompassed not only parents with their children (like our conception of family) but all the members living in the house, including servants. Just as parents are duty-bound to take care for the transmission of the faith to their children, they also were to transmit it to their servants. Parents "should keep in mind that they owe obedience to God, and that, above all, they should earnestly and faithfully discharge the duties of their office, not only to provide for the material support of their children, servants, subjects, etc., but especially to bring them up to the praise and honor of God."[39] The servants, in return, owed honor to their masters in the same way children owed to their parents.

> What a child owes to father and mother, all members of the household owe them as well. Therefore menservants and maidservants should take care not just to obey their masters and mistresses, but also to honor them as their own fathers and mothers and to do everything that they know is expected of them, not reluctantly, because they are compelled to do so, but gladly and cheerfully. They should do it for the reason mentioned above, that it is God's commandment and is more pleasing to him than all other works.[40]

Luther even thought that it was appropriate for servants to call their masters "father." "If you are a servant, then honor your master like a father; the commandment applies to you. If you are a maid, remember to let your mistress be your mother. It would not be a bad thing at all if servants called their masters and mistresses father and mother, especially the minors and orphans."[41]

---

[38] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 405.138–39.

[39] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 409.168.

[40] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 407.150.

[41] *LW* 51:148.

Passing on the Catechism

Luther insisted on teaching the Scripture to children, just as Chrysostom had. But Luther was primarily interested in the teaching of the Catechism, the Bible of the laymen.

For Luther, the catechism was not the little book written by him in 1529. Years before Luther composed his Catechisms he spoke about the knowledge of the Catechism. For example, in the *Personal Prayer Book* (1522) and in the *German Mass* (1526).[42] What Luther had in mind as the Catechism were the parts which compose it, primarily the Ten Commandments, the Creed and The Lord's Prayer. "These are the most necessary parts that we must first learn to repeat word for word. The children should be taught the habit of reciting them daily, when they arise in the morning, when they go to their meals, and when they go to bed at night."[43] As Charles Arand points out, "the idea of 'catechism' should be defined less in terms of its form (a book of questions and answers) and more in terms of its contents (a collection of texts, notably, the Ten Commandments, Creed, and Lord's Prayer)." In other words, it can be said that Luther's Small Catechism is his short explanation of the Catechism while his Large Catechism is its longer explanation.[44] The catechism is, for Luther, "a brief digest and a summary of the entire Holy Scriptures,"[45] that which everyone had to know to name himself or herself among the Christians.

Luther composed his catechisms aiming to aid those whom God charged with the responsibility of handing down the faith once received. He directed the catechisms to pastors and parents that they, in turn, could share its contents orally with those to them entrusted. "With this oral communication in view, Luther not only wrote the Small Catechism in the vernacular, but

---

[42] *LW* 53:64–65; *LW* 43:13.

[43] LC Preface, in Kolb and Wengert, 385.15–16.

[44] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 22.

[45] LC Introduction, in Kolb and Wengert, 382.18.

composed it more for the ear than the eye."[46]

Luther considered the duty of a pastor to teach properly the Catechism a weighty and primary responsibility. Lecturing on Zechariah, Luther stated that one ought to regard "as the best and the paragons of their profession" those pastors "who present the catechism well—that is, who teach properly the Our Father, the Ten Commandments, and the Creed. But such teachers are rare birds."[47] And, as Arand reports, "The title pages and prefaces of Luther's catechisms identify pastors as their immediate target audience. More precisely, the title page of the Small Catechism reads: 'Enchiridion. The Small Catechism for secular (*gemeine*) Pastors and Preachers.' … By calling upon them, Luther placed a renewed emphasis on the importance of pastors for teaching the young."[48] In the Introduction to the Small Catechism, Luther urges pastors not to fail in their responsibility: "Therefore, my dear sirs and brothers, who are either pastors or preachers, I beg all of you for God's sake to take up your office boldly, to have pity on your people who are entrusted to you, and to help us bring the catechism to the people, especially to the young."[49] In the Introduction to the Large Catechism, Luther criticizes those pastors who despise the Catechism and, doing so, despise their office with the souls God entrusted them.

> But this I say for myself: I am also a doctor and a preacher, just as learned and experienced as all of them who are so high and mighty. Nevertheless, each morning, and whenever else I have time, I do as a child who is being taught the catechism and I read and recite word for word the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Psalms, etc. I must still read and study the catechism daily, and yet I cannot master it as I wish, but must remain a child and pupil of the catechism—and I also do so gladly. These fussy, fastidious fellows would like quickly, with one reading, to be doctors above all doctors, to know it all and to need nothing more. Well this, too, is a sure sign that they despise both their office and the people's souls, yes, even God and

[46] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 92.

[47] *LW* 20:157.

[48] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 93.

[49] SC Preface, in Kolb and Wengert, 348.6.

> his Word. They do not need to fall, for they have already fallen all too horribly. What they need, however, is to become children and begin to learn the ABCs, which they think they have long since outgrown.[50]

But, as the headings of the Small Catechism show, it is the head of the house who should train the members of the household in the Catechism. As Luther says explicitly in the Large Catechism, "it is the duty of every head of a household at least once a week to examine the children and servants one after the other and ascertain what they know or have learned of it, and, if they do not know it, to keep them faithfully at it."[51] In this sense, the head of the house is, in the home, pastor and bishop.

> While Luther addressed the catechisms to pastors, he still envisioned the head of the household as the primary teacher. When the catechism first appeared in January 1529 on large sheets of paper, each sheet bore the title, "How the House Father Should Present the Ten Commandments [or Creed, etc.] to the members of the household." These headings for the five chief parts carried through into the Small Catechism.[52]

Luther's appreciation of the household as the place for faith formation puts him, as Arand points out, at once right in the tradition of the church and revolutionary in the field. On the one hand, "Luther's focus on the family was not new. He simply took over the concept of domestic catechization from the Middle Ages and before that from the ancient church. Within the history of the church, families had always been considered an important setting for catechizing the young in the faith."[53] In this sense, he is not far from Chrysostom. Both share this in common. On the other hand, "Luther gave the head of the household an emphasis and value not seen before. He ascribed to the housefather all of the titles that were at one time reserved exclusively for the clergy. For example, in his Third Catechism Series of 1528 Luther refers to the father and

---

[50] LC Introduction, in Kolb and Wengert, 380–81.8–9.

[51] LC Preface, in Kolb and Wengert, 383.4.

[52] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 95.

[53] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 95. See also, Ozment and Witte, "Martin Luther," 202.

mother as the bishop and bishopess of the household."[54]

Therefore, the idea of a domestic church (or ecclesial family) is not strange in Luther. For example, when he says:

> Here Jesus is saying that he does not only want [the condemnation of sin and proclamation of the forgiveness of sins] to take place in the church, but he also gives this right and freedom where two or three are gathered together, so that among them the comfort and the forgiveness of sins may be proclaimed and pronounced. He pours out [his forgiveness] even more richly and places the forgiveness of sins for them in every corner, so that they not only find the forgiveness of sins in the congregation but also at home in their houses, in the fields and gardens, wherever one of them comes to another in search of comfort and deliverance.[55]

Arand remarks that "By assigning the role of the housepastor to the head of the house, Luther shows that he envisioned the home as something of a house-church with the head of the house as the pastor. Again, there were precedents such as Stephan of Landskron"[56] and, as we have seen, John Chrysostom. Nevertheless, this was not a commonplace in the history of the church (and so it mostly remains), but Luther is remarkable in recovering the parental role in the passing on of the faith to the next generation. The Catechism was composed by Luther precisely with the aim of helping to make such a reality possible.

> Luther had composed the Small Catechism "in an effort to create just such a scene: the pious family gathered around this digest of biblical teaching, praying and studying it together in preparation for daily service to God."
>
> To that end, the Small Catechism provides the household with something of a liturgy, that is to say, the parts of the catechism framed and shaped a Christian ethos for daily living: Upon waking, make the sign of the cross and say the invocation followed by thanks for protection the previous night with prayer to be kept from sin during the coming day. Go to work joyfully. At meals, fold hands and pray. In the evening, call upon the triune Name. Give thanks for the day. Pray for protection during the night. Go to sleep in peace.[57]

---

[54] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 96.

[55] WA 47:297.36–298.14 as quoted in Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 187.

[56] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 96.

[57] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 96.

Children should grow up being trained in the Catechism because it contained in a nutshell the whole of the divine precepts.

> It contains what every Christian should know. Anyone who does not know it should not be numbered among Christians nor admitted to any sacrament, just as artisans who do not know the rules and practices of their craft are rejected and considered incompetent. For this reason young people should be thoroughly taught the parts of the catechism (that is, instruction for children) and diligently drilled in their practice.[58]

When Luther regarded the knowledge of the Catechism as necessary for those who would receive the Sacrament of the Altar, he did not consider it as the highest point to be reached, as we usually do in teaching the Catechism to children in confirmation class, but as the minimum one should know even to be called a Christian; and he held that those who failed to master this minimum, should not be allowed to the Sacrament. In the Preface to the Small Catechism, Luther stresses that those who refuse to learn this minimum, "should be told that they are not Christians, and should not be allowed to be sponsors for children in Baptism nor admitted to the sacrament."[59] But from this minimum, Luther assumed that a Christian would further grow into the knowledge of the faith. "When these parts have been well learned, one may assign them also some psalms or hymns, based on these subjects, to supplement and confirm their knowledge. Thus young people will be led into the Scriptures and make progress every day."[60] In the *German Mass,* Luther even suggests that "When a child begins to understand this, it should be encouraged to bring home verses of Scripture from the sermon and repeat them at mealtime for the parents, even as they formerly used to recite their Latin."[61]

---

[58] LC Preface, in Kolb and Wengert, 383.2–3.

[59] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 98; SC Preface, in Kolb and Wengert, 348–49.11–12.

[60] LC Preface, in Kolb and Wengert, 386.25.

[61] *LW* 53:66.

The Place of the Rod

Times and attitudes change, and almost any writer prior to our own age will seem harsh when dealing with children's education compared to the current conceptions on the issue. Luther, however, was not cruel in his pedagogical approach. As Painter tells us, "Luther's views of domestic discipline, based at once on nature and Scripture, were of the soundest. While strictly requiring obedience, parents should temper their government with moderation and love. We should curb and direct our children rather than break their spirit—a course that renders them pusillanimous."[62]

In the Large Catechism, Luther insists that "our young people should be strictly required and trained to hold [the Ten] commandments in high regard. Whenever they violate them, we must be after them at once with the rod, confront them with the commandment, and continually impress it upon them, so that they may be brought up not merely with punishment but with reverence and fear of God."[63] The rod has been placed by God himself in the hand of parents as an extension of divine authority itself. God gave it "to persons who function in God's stead, that is, parents and governing authorities. Anger, reproof, and punishment are the prerogatives of God and his representatives and are to be meted out to those who transgress"[64] the will of God. Luther advises and urges "that by means of warning and threat, restraint and punishment, children be trained in due time,"[65] i.e. it should be done since they are of tender age by means of words and rod as necessity requires. But Luther's recognition of the place of physical

[62] F. V. N. Painter, *Luther on Education: Including A Historical Introduction and a Translation of the Reformer's Two Most Important Educational Treatises* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1889), 123.

[63] LC 2nd Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 394.61.

[64] LC 5th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 411.182.

[65] LC 2nd Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 395.69.

punishment in the upbringing of children does not mean that he can be interpreted as condoning violence toward children. Quite the opposite, Luther is critical of the overuse of corporal punishment. Children should "be brought up, not only with blows and compulsion, like cattle, but in the fear and reverence of God."[66] Commenting on Paul's words in Colossians 3:21, "Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged," Luther states,

> He forbids that parents should provoke their children to anger, and thus discourage them. This is spoken against those who use passionate violence in bringing up their children. Such discipline begets in the child's mind, which is yet tender, a state of fear and imbecility, and develops a feeling of hate towards the parents, so that it often runs away from home. What hope can we have for a child that hates and distrusts its parents? Yet St. Paul does not mean that we should not punish children, but that we should punish them from love, seeking not to cool our anger, but to make them better.[67]

Luther recognizes the place of physical punishment in the training of children but highlights as well the habituation into Christian practices, from early in life, through the use of liturgical and devotional language and rituals.

> This is why the Benedicite, the Gratias, and other evening and morning blessings were also introduced and have continued among us. From the same source comes the custom learned in childhood of making the sign of the cross when something dreadful or frightening is seen or heard, and saying, "LORD God, save me!" or, "Help, dear Lord Christ!" and the like. Likewise, if someone unexpectedly experiences good fortune—no matter how insignificant—he or she may say, "God be praised and thanked!" "God has bestowed this upon me!" etc. … See, with simple and playful methods like this we should bring up young people in the fear and honor of God so that the First and Second Commandments may become familiar and constantly be practiced. Then some good may take root, spring up, and bear fruit, and people may grow to adulthood who may give joy and pleasure to an entire country. That would also be the right way to bring up children, while they may be trained with kind and agreeable methods.[68]

Although Luther recognizes the place of the rod, he also underscores that physical

---

[66] LC Ten Commandments, in Kolb and Wengert, 430.330.

[67] Luther quoted in Painter, *Luther on Education*, 123–24.

[68] LC 2nd Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 395–96.73–76.

punishment alone is even detrimental to the aim of bringing children up in the faith. "Luther would not have harshness employed in this religious instruction," Painter points out, "knowing that rigorous severity is apt to defeat its purpose. On the contrary, he would have it made a pleasure to the children; and to this end we should adapt ourselves to their ways, prattle with them, and enter into their plays."[69] One thing is to enforce a behavior out of fear, another is to train it to become part of who a person is. "For what a person enforces by means of beatings and blows," says Luther, "will come to no good end. At best, the children will remain good only as long as the rod is on their backs." However, "this kind of training takes root in their hearts so that they fear God more than they do rods and clubs."[70]

In Loco Parentis

While Chrysostom stressed that parents must correct the negative influences of a worldly school, Luther wrote two important treatises, one urging civil authorities to establish schools and the other urging parents to keep their children in school. In *To the Councilmen of All Cities*, he addresses civil authorities, "Ah, you say, but all that is spoken to the parents; what business is it of councilmen and the authorities? Yes, that is true; but what if the parents fail to do their duty? Who then is to do it? Is it for this reason to be left undone, and the children neglected? How will the authorities and council then justify their position, that such matters are not their responsibility?"[71] Luther understands that God appointed teachers, preachers, and other authorities to, in some circumstances, act *in loco parentis*, i.e. in the place of the parents. One such situation is when parents fail in the fulfilling of their parental task. Another possibility is

[69] Painter, *Luther on Education*, 122.

[70] LC 2nd Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 395–96.76–77.

[71] *LW* 45:354.

that the parents might not be skilled in fulfilling certain tasks for their children themselves. "He appeals to the authorities to act *in loco parentis* when the natural parents prevent able youngsters from pursuing an education. … Moreover, even when the will to educate their children is present, Luther doubts that parents generally have the competence, breadth of knowledge, or time to do so."[72]

Luther had a very positive regard toward schools that in no way undermined the primary responsibility of parents in the education of children.

> The training and education of children, Luther held, should begin at an early age. He considered child training the immediate responsibility of parents. To him education was not identical to going to an organized school. Luther believed that the educating process should begin in the mother's arms and at—or over, if need be—the father's knees. Deep, lifelong impressions ought to have been made upon the plastic little soul long before the child must toddle off to school. Nor could parents even thereafter transfer the ultimate responsibility for the spiritual and moral welfare of their children from themselves to anyone else.[73]

Teachers and the State did not have authority over parents in the education of children. The authority of teachers and the State is an extension of the authority of parents, which remain primarily responsible for their children's education.

Charles Arand points out that although Luther calls, in the preface to the Small Catechism, "upon a coalition consisting of three groups—government officials, pastors, and parents—to take responsibility for the teaching and training of the young in the faith," the greatest emphasis he placed upon the family. "Luther regarded the family as the fundamental, legitimate, and divinely ordained locus for good and useful works in a clear rejection of monastic values and piety." His calling upon other authorities to participate in the task is due to the failure of parents and even

[72] Strohl, "Child in Luther's Theology," 152. See *LW* 354–55.

[73] Plass, *This Is Luther*, 262–63.

pastors to fulfill their responsibility. As Arand notes, too often, "They did not have the time, were unskilled, or were unwilling to carry out their task."[74] Jane Strohl also points out how the 1520's brought to Luther's attention the great need of parents to receive help in carrying out their parental duties.

> Luther was at first rather insouciant, confident of the power of the gospel rightly preached to move hearts and generate energy for its cause. He saw the family as a natural locus of education: parents catechizing their children and household dependents, joining them in prayers, teaching them their proper duties, and administering discipline. But Luther's naivete was dispelled by the radicalism of the 1520s and the depressing results of the church visitations in Saxony in the latter half of the decade."[75]

As a result, Luther turned to other authorities also instituted by God to step in and ensure that the education of the children in what it means to be human would be properly achieved. In a sermon on the Catechism, Luther vented, "The fault lies with us householders. Necessity has forced us to engage teachers because the parents have not assumed this responsibility."[76] As Arand explains,

> Recognizing the failure of parents to carry out their responsibilities, the Reformers turned increasingly to other authorities for assistance: pastors, schoolteachers, and secular authorities. … These other authorities were to supplement, not replace, the role of parents. In the coalition, each must tend to their respective duties: pastors must see to their congregations, housefathers, acting as pastors and bishops in their own homes, must attend to their households. Despite this reality, Luther continued to affirm the centrality of the home. "Education begins in the home, and is reinforced in church through catechism classes, sermons on the catechism, and the learning of hymns that reinforce catechetical teachings."[77]

In turn, in line with Chrysostom, Luther also asked parents themselves not to fail to seek those more skilled to help them to bring up their children properly. "If you cannot do so, seek out

---

[74] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 92–93.

[75] Strohl, "Child in Luther's Theology," 145–46.

[76] *LW* 51:140.

[77] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 93.

other people who can and ask them to do it. Spare yourself neither money nor expense, neither trouble nor effort."[78]

Kolb and Arand remark that Luther's approach meant a major shift from the Middle Ages when commentators perpetually debated which authority was higher, civic or spiritual. Luther placed parental authority above all and put other authorities at the service of this higher one. Indeed, all the other authorities stemmed from parental authority.[79] As Luther puts in the explanation to the fourth commandment in the Large Catechism:

> Where a father is unable by himself to bring up his child, he calls upon a schoolmaster to teach him; if he is too weak, he seeks the help of his friends and neighbors; if he dies, he confers and delegates his responsibility and authority to others appointed for the purpose. In addition, he has to have servants—menservants and maidservants—under him in order to manage the household. Thus all who are called masters stand in the place of parents and must derive from them their power and authority to govern. They are all called fathers in the Scriptures because in their sphere of authority they have been commissioned as fathers and ought to have fatherly hearts toward their people.[80]

Expounding on the fourth commandment, Luther explained that any authority in the world is an extension of parental authority: "in connection with this [the 4th] commandment, we must mention the sort of obedience due to superiors, persons whose duty it is to command and to govern. For all other authority is derived and developed out of the authority of parents."[81] But it is on parental authority that rests the first place and highest responsibility. That is the way God designed things to be. "God has given this walk of life, fatherhood and motherhood, a special position of honor, higher than that of any other walk of life under it." God established parental authority as, next to His own, the highest authority on earth. God "distinguishes father and

---

[78] *LW* 44:14.

[79] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 60.

[80] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 405–06.141–42.

[81] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 405.141.

mother above all other persons on earth, and places them next to himself." By honoring father and mother, we recognize "a majesty concealed within them," the majesty of God Himself.[82] "The round halo which is painted around the heads of saints is around the heads of parents too."[83] Hence, we are required to "respect them very highly, and that next to God we give them the very highest place."[84] Fatherhood and motherhood are placed as representatives of God Himself on earth. "God has exalted this walk of life above all others; indeed, he has set it up in his place on earth."[85] For this reason, Luther places respect for any authority under the umbrella of the fourth commandment. Consequently, "fatherhood and motherhood and governmental authority" must be seen "not according to the crude, external mask (as we see the shell of a nut)" but according to the majesty hidden behind the mask.

> If we regard these people with reference to their noses eyes, skin, and hair, flesh and bones, they look no different from Turks and heathen, and someone might come and ask, "Why should I think more of this person than of others?" But because the commandment is added, "You shall honor father and mother," I see another person, adorned and clothed with the majesty and glory of God. The commandment, I say, is the golden chain around the neck, yes, the crown on the head, which shows me how and why I should honor this particular flesh and blood.[86]

By the extension of the authority of parents to other authorities, Luther recognized four kinds of fathers: "fathers by blood, fathers of a household, and fathers of the nation. In addition, there are also spiritual fathers … those who govern and guide us by the Word of God."[87]

No authority can surpass the authority which is above it. "After faith in God there is

---

[82] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 400–01.105–06.

[83] *LW* 51:184

[84] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 400–01.107.

[85] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 403–04.126.

[86] LC Baptism, in Kolb and Wengert, 459.19–20. See also LC Baptism, in Kolb and Wengert, 461, 464.38, 58.

[87] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 408.158.

nothing greater than obedience to parents."[88] Teachers in the school are under the authority of parents and cannot overpass it. In the same way we should be respectful to civil authorities insofar as they do not transgress God's authority which is the ultimate authority no authority can go beyond, not even parental authority which is second in rank under God's ultimate authority. "If God's Word and will are placed first and are observed, nothing ought to be considered more important than the will and word of our parents, provided that these, too, are subordinated to God and are not set in opposition to the preceding commandments."[89]

Since Luther himself was one of these authorities, he also gave his contributions to better the estate of faith formation from within his vocation without transgressing the parental vocation. Besides teaching and preaching about it, he gave as his most enduring contribution the Small Catechism as an aid for parents to undertake their God-given task.

> Luther did not simply scold or exhort parents to carry out their duties, as had often been done by church leaders during the Middle Ages (and would be later by too many of his adherents). He also recognized that many parents were simply ill-equipped to carry out their divinely ordained task and so Luther provided them with assistance for doing so. The explanations in the Small Catechism were thus "aimed more at adults than children and were to be used by them so that they could explain the various texts of the lay Bible to their children."[90]

This is the duty of those called by God to act *in loco parentis*, i.e. assist them to play out their tasks, not to take it over to themselves.

Bringing Children Up to Be Fully Human

[88] *LW* 44:326.

[89] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 402.116. Also: "…were your parents or neighbor to command you to deny the faith, the name and the work of God, which we said are commanded in the First Table, that would be the occasion, of which they now boast, when obedience to parents and all else ought to give way to the worship of God." (*LW* 44:332)

[90] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 96.

Like Chrysostom, Luther spoke about a natural order of things, an objective reality that was also revealed by God in His Scriptures. This objective reality or scheme of all things is the assumption behind the premise that education means to pass on to the next generation what it means to be human.[91] Within this reality the human being knows his place, what his duty to his neighbor is, and what to expect from others. Kolb and Arand suggest calling it "the law of creation":

> The tasks required to meet my neighbor's need and the responsibilities entailed in formal roles such as being a parent or an employee are given substance and form by the law that God wove into the very fabric of creation itself—most commonly known as natural law or the law of creation. As law, its authority is derived from its congruence with God's design of creation. It describes the grain of the universe and serves the universal good. For this reason the phrase "law of creation" may be preferable to "natural law," which in our time "has come to mean a law which 'Mother Nature' imposes, one which is impersonally 'natural' to what we are or have evolved to be at this stage of nature's unfolding."[92]

For Luther, the commandments found in Scripture are the revealed version of this same "law of creation" inscribed in the very fabric of creation. "Luther interprets the Ten Commandments as part of God's creation within the context of natural Law. They are, so to say, built into the very structure or woven into the fabric of creation itself."[93] The commandments were to be obeyed not simply because God says so, but because they are inscribed in creation itself, "the Commandments are valid not because God had written them onto tables of stone for Moses, but because God 'had written them into the warp and woof of human existence.'"[94] The

---

[91] See the section "Passing on What It Means to Be Human" in the second chapter.

[92] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 64–65.

[93] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 137.

[94] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 154, quoting Robert Kolb, *Teaching God's Children His Teaching: A Guide for the Study of Luther's Catechism* (Hutchinson, Minn.: Crown Publishing, 1992). Also, Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 66–67. For Luther's thorough treatment on the subject, see his "How Christians Should Regard Moses, 1525" (*LW* 35:161–174). For example: "Therefore it is natural to honor God, not steal, not commit adultery, not bear false witness, not murder; and what Moses commands is nothing new. For what God has given the Jews from heaven, he has also written in the hearts of all men. Thus I keep the commandments which

commandments are the written account of what it means to be human. "When we look at natural law, we see how right and universal the commandments all are. They require nothing toward God or our neighbor but that which anyone would want to see done, either from a divine or from a human point of view."[95] This is a teaching which remained constant through Luther's whole career.[96] Since the commandments are the very account of what it means to be human, Luther placed them in the sphere of the First Article.

> By interpreting the commandments in the horizon of the First Article, Luther makes clear that the Decalogue may not be regarded as a heteronomous imposition of a set of rules and regulations. They do not apply simply because "God says so." Instead they describe who we are and how we were created to be. They delineate the shape of life as God created it. Life begins, is lived, and ends under the force of the Law, under the objective moral order. … Expressing the Law of creation, the Commandments describe the obligations and responsibilities of our creaturely life from birth to death.[97]

As we have seen, the vocation to be male or female, the inclination of male and female to be with each other and beget children, and the tendency to care for and educate one's offspring to which nature drives us and Scripture orients us, is all part of this "law of creation," the whole scheme of all things as God created them.[98]

Moses has given, not because Moses gave commandment, but because they have been implanted in me by nature, and Moses agrees exactly with nature, etc." (*LW* 35:168); and: Thus we read Moses not because he applies to us, that we must obey him, but because he agrees with the natural law and is conceived better than the Gentiles would ever have been able to do. Thus the Ten Commandments are a mirror of our life, in which we can see wherein we are lacking, etc." (*LW* 35:172–73).

[95] *LW* 43:16

[96] "In his lectures on Exodus in 1525, he asserted that what Moses had written in the Ten Commandments 'we feel naturally in our conscience' (WA 16:431.28–29). 'I keep the commandments which Moses has given, not because Moses gave the commandments, but because they have been implanted in me by nature, and Moses agrees exactly with nature' (*LW* 35:168). Toward the end of his life, in his Second Disputation against the Antinomians, Luther again reiterated that the Decalogue 'does not come from Moses; he is not the author but the interpreter and illustrator of the biblical commandments in the minds of all men'" (Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 67 n52).

[97] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 138.

[98] See section "The Blessed Estate of Marriage and the Christian Household" above.

Passing on to the next generation to live a life in accordance with God's revealed law amounts to passing on to the next generation what it means to be human. For Luther, the habituation into what it means to be human the way God intended us to be is rendered in terms of living out our baptismal identity. Baptism "has been appointed not only so that it may work powerfully on us but also so that it may point to something."[99] This "something" is what it means to be truly human, to be the human being God created us to be both before Himself and before the world. Into this "something" children should be trained and the sinful inclinations in the child restrained.

> This is the right use of baptism among Christians, signified by baptizing with water. Where this does not take place but rather the old creature is given free rein and continually grows stronger, baptism is not being used but resisted. Those who are outside of Christ can only grow worse day by day. It is as the proverb says, and it is the truth, "The longer evil lasts, the worse it becomes." If a year ago someone was proud and greedy, this year such a person is much more so. Vice thus grows and increases in people from youth on. A young child has no particular vices, but becomes vicious and unchaste as he or she grows older. When he or she reaches adulthood, the real vices become more and more potent day by day.
>
> The old creature therefore follows unchecked the inclinations of its nature if not restrained and suppressed by the power of baptism. On the other hand, when we become Christians, the old creature daily decreases until finally destroyed. This is what it means truly to plunge into baptism and daily to come forth again. … Where faith is present with its fruits, there baptism is no empty symbol, but the effect accompanies it; but where faith is lacking, it remains a mere unfruitful sign.[100]

To say that there is an objective reality in which we have a place means that we also may transgress this order, failing to play out our roles as human beings among creation, which amounts to being less than human. As Arand notes,

> Within creation the Law describes the structure and framework of life and sets forth how God intended it to function. For that reason, it also calls attention to the disorder that occurs within our lives when creation does not function according to God's

[99] LC Baptism, in Kolb and Wengert, 465.72.

[100] LC Baptism, in Kolb and Wengert, 465.68–71, 73.

> ordering of it. This disorder occurs in all the relationships of the human creature, the vertical with God and the horizontal with neighbor and non-human creation. In calling attention to this disorder it accuses us of irresponsible living that results from failing to use creation as God intended it and using it for some other purpose (i.e., idolatry).[101]

For Luther, such idolatrous failure to distinguish rightly Creator from creation is at the heart of all evil. "It is a sign of God's love for his human creatures that for them he designed a life with a framework and boundaries. As Creator, God had the burden of fashioning life; he gave to his human creatures the 'burden' of performing according to his definition of what it means to be human."[102] Jesus restored our humanity before the Father and returned us to the right place in the whole scheme of things making us once again fully human.

> Because he understood the "image of God" to be grounded in true trust in God, Luther believed that sinners had lost that image even though sinners could to some extent live outwardly moral lives. Thus, Christ became incarnate in order to be the human being that God intended us to be when he created us, one who lives in complete dependence on the Father.[103]

The natural order of things is hardwired since God created man and woman and gave them the responsibility to care for the creation. "God gave Adam his Word that he was to proclaim to Eve and formed a community within creaturely life dedicated to hearing the Word and praising God together. In the New Testament the church was called into existence in order to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, and exercise Christian discipline."[104] Like Chrysostom, Luther acknowledged that women were by and large especially endowed by God for the task of child-rearing. "While developing this thought in the course of lectures on Ecclesiastes, Luther said: 'A woman handles a child much better with one finger than a man does with both fists.' Therefore

---

[101] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 158.

[102] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 149.

[103] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 39.

[104] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 62–63.

let everyone continue to perform the work to which God has called him and for which he was destined.'"[105]

To play out the God-given, creationally grounded tasks each human being has among the whole of creation is a social task.

> God created human beings as male and female to complement and complete each other. Together they formed human community, and together they were given responsibility for tending God's creation. To guide them in their task, God hardwired his law into creation and engraved it on the human heart. At the same time, God gave human beings dominion in such a way that they have the freedom to figure out how best to tailor that law to the specific challenges and questions of daily life.[106]

And it is within this same creation that, besides passing on to the next generation that which is in accordance with the First Great Commission (to take care of creation, Gen. 1:28), one generation also passes on to the next generation that which is in accordance with the Second Great Commission (Matt. 28:18–20). "Within and through their vocations, Christians carry out the second Great Commission of sharing the gospel. From within the midst of creation (as Luther confessed in his explanations of the first article of the Apostles' Creed, which is on creation), they deliver the gift of redemption, which sows into the first creation the seeds of the new creation."[107]

As already mentioned in the second chapter, Robert Kolb and Charles Arand, in *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, explain, based on the Wittenberg theology, that to be fully human the person needs both passive righteousness (before God) and active righteousness (before the world). Passive righteousness is totally received from God without merit on our part (justification) while in active righteousness we fulfill our vocation among God's creation as co-

[105] Plass, *This Is Luther*, 258, quoting Martin Luther.

[106] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 28.

[107] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 113.

workers with God (sanctification). Using systematic language, we could say that, when it comes to passing on the faith to the next generation, it amounts to passing on the faith of the heart or salvific faith (*fides qua*) and passing on the content of this faith (*fides quae*).[108]

Luther knew nothing about the current notion that it is the duty of parents to allow their children to discover and choose which religion or spirituality (if any) they want to follow. "Parents are responsible for teaching the gospel to their children rather than giving in to the fear that they shouldn't impose their beliefs on their children. For this reason Luther wrote his Small Catechism."[109] Jane Strohl notes Steven Ozment's remark that in the sixteenth century it was assumed that children needed to be habituated into what it means to be human.

> Ozment rejects the imposition on the sixteenth century of contemporary values with regard to individual autonomy and the rights of children vis-a-vis parents. Pervasive concern for morals and discipline characterized the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the vision of the good life was one of clear boundaries, good order, and social duty. Being born into the species did not make one a *human* being in the eyes of the adult world; a child "was a creature in search of humanity." The major fear of those responsible for the rearing of children was that they might grow up to pursue their individual desires at the expense of their community's common good. They were equally concerned about parents who placed their own interests above the welfare of their offspring.[110]

Luther stressed that the primary goal of parental upbringing of the children God gives them is to make sure that they will be saved, i.e., to make sure to pass the *fides qua* to the next generation. The *fides qua* is equivalent to receiving passive righteousness or, to use more specific systematic language, passive righteousness is received through the faith created and sustained by God through the means of grace. This is a gift from God without any merit on the part of the human being. Parents cannot create or sustain salvific faith in their children any more than they

---

[108] See section "Passing on What It Means to Be Human" in chapter two.

[109] Strohl, "Child in Luther's Theology," 149.

[110] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 28.

can create and sustain it in themselves. The parental responsibility for passing on the *fides qua* to the next generation means that parents are careful to expose their children to the means of grace through which God "gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when he wills, in those who hear the gospel."[111] As Kolb and Arand point out, "Because the human person cannot give birth to self but only passively receives birth, others are involved. In his Small Catechism, Luther says that the Spirit brings me to faith even as he has gathered the entire Christian church. We do not come to faith in isolation from other believers. They bring us to the baptismal font or place the Word within our hearts."[112]

But since to be fully human encompasses being right before both Creator and creation, besides exposing children to the means of grace through which the Holy Spirit creates and sustains salvific faith, parents are also responsible for passing on to their children an understanding of how to play out their roles within creation. "According to Luther," remarks Marcia Bunge, "as priests and bishops to their children, parents have a twofold task: to nurture the faith of their children, and to help them develop their gifts to serve others."[113] In other words, parents have to take into account both the passive righteousness that makes them righteous before God and the active righteousness that makes them righteous before men, both of which are essential for someone to be fully human. Jane Strohl is more detailed in her exposition of what Luther regarded as the God-given parental responsibility. "For Luther, parental responsibility to serve one's children as their 'apostle and bishop' manifests itself in four crucial

[111] AC V, 2 in Kolb and Wengert, 40–41.

[112] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 97.

[113] Marcia J. Bunge, "Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Children, Parents, and 'Best Practices' for Faith Formation: Resources for Child, Youth, and Family Ministry Today," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 47, no. 4 (Winter 2008), 352.

duties: to provide the sacrament of baptism for infants, to form children in the true faith as they mature, to attend to their education for vocation, and to provide them with a suitable spouse in a timely fashion (i.e., before lust puts them at significant risk of sin)."[114] In other words, parents must expose their children to the means of grace through which the Holy Spirit creates and maintains *fides qua* ("provide the sacrament of baptism for infants"), pass on to them the content of this faith (*fides quae*) created and sustained by God ("form children in the true faith as they mature"), pass on what it means to live this faith out in the world as God designed it ("attend to their education for vocation"), and be attentive for providing that their children will take the next natural step of human life in chastity ("provide them with a suitable spouse in a timely fashion"), a step in which the linking of the chain with the next generation will take place, when children will begin the stage of their lives when they themselves will do the same with their own children.

Notwithstanding that salvific faith is the exclusive work of God, it is the divine design that the transmission happens inside the community of believers. "'When faith comes, baptism is complete;' writes Luther. Although the growth must be left to God, the church, and particularly parents, are responsible for planting and watering. Luther provided his catechisms as aids for this cultivation of the life of faith among the young."[115] The passing on of the *fides quae* begins, for Luther, with the passing on of the Catechism which is the minimum necessary for one to be counted among the number of the Christians, as discussed earlier in this chapter. As Arand remarks, "In the catechism, the church has gathered the fundamental components of Scripture that go to the heart of defining what it means to be a Christian. It identifies those elements that constitute the very identity of a Christian. This is who we are."[116] Luther wanted it to be repeated

[114] Strohl, "Child in Luther's Theology," 140–41.

[115] Strohl, "Child in Luther's Theology," 144.

[116] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 27.

until the point it that became engraved into the very nature of the person. "The reason we take such care to preach on the catechism frequently is to impress it upon our young people, not in a lofty and learned manner but briefly and very simply, so that it may penetrate deeply into their minds and remain fixed in their memories."[117] As Arand puts it, "he wants it learned 'by heart' which suggests a 'repetition which has been internalized, which has become part of us, that is second nature, and thus something which is literally spoken or sung 'from the heart.'"[118] With the internalization of the Catechism, it is not meant simply that the words be memorized but that the content be embedded into the foundation of our being. As Oswald Bayer highlighted, "It is evident that the Catechism is not only to be learned by rote, but to be daily and inwardly 'practiced,' 'prayed,' and 'meditated upon' (if by meditation we mean nothing other than the interaction with God's Word)."[119]

But this content of the faith summarized in the Catechism and which can be expounded from there as one grows in knowledge is not yet the full content of the *fides quae* and is also not yet all that it means to be fully and truly human. To bring up children to fulfill their vocations and occupy their place within creation as God intended and be co-workers with God living out their active righteousness performing the "good works, which God prepared beforehand," for which we have been (re)created in Jesus Christ, "that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10), is an essential part in bringing up children to be fully human. Christ's work to restore our humanity

[117] LC Preface, in Kolb and Wengert, 386.27.

[118] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 99, quoting Carl Schalk. In the Preface to the Small Catechism, Luther writes, "with the young people, stick with a fixed, unchanging version and form. To begin with, teach them these parts: the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, etc., following the text word for word, so that they can also repeat it back to you and learn it by heart." (SC Preface, in Kolb and Wengert, 348.10)

[119] Oswald Bayer, "I Believe That God Has Created Me with All That Exists. An Example of Catechetical-Systematics," *Lutheran Quarterly* 8, (1996), 134.

encompasses active as well as passive righteousness. "According to the Reformation narrative of the gospel, God restored us to the fullness of our humanity—restored our righteousness—by sending his Son … to restore what it means to be human."[120] Luther also was aware of the fact that passing on to the next generation what it means to be human includes teaching what it means to live out certain God-given, creationally grounded vocations, such as what it means to be male or female. Although it is true that certain features of our humanity are simply built in to each person, the task of passing on to the next generation how to fulfill specific vocations in the way intended by the Lord nevertheless remains to be done. God "gives offspring, which are born and grow because of the blessing of God and must nevertheless be cherished, cared for, brought up, and instructed by the parents. But when we have done what is in us, then we should entrust the rest to God and cast our care on the Lord; for He will take care of us."[121]

Luther fully grasps the fulness of the work of parents: that parents provide for the salvation of their children, that parents teach their children in the Catechism, and that parents train their children to fulfill their vocations within creation.

Bringing Children Up to Fulfil Their Vocations

In *To the Councilmen of All Cities* as well as in the *Sermon on Keeping Children in School*, Luther stresses that children should be educated to undertake the many vocations available in society. "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."[122] Therefore, in *To the Councilmen of All Cities*, Luther remarks, "in order to maintain its temporal

[120] Kolb and Arand, *The Genius of Luther' Theology*, 38–39.

[121] Luther quoted in Kolb and Arand, *The Genius of Luther' Theology*, 122.

[122] *LW* 45:336.

estate outwardly the world must have good and capable men and women, men able to rule well over land and people, women able to manage the household and train children and servants aright. Now such men must come from our boys, and such women from our girls. Therefore, it is a matter of properly educating and training our boys and girls to that end."[123]

Children must be brought up to serve God and neighbor. "Therefore," says Luther, "let all people know that it is their chief duty—at the risk of losing divine grace—first to bring up their children in the fear and knowledge of God, and, then, if they are so gifted, also to have them engage in formal study and learn so that they may be of service wherever they are needed."[124]

Luther emphasizes "how very necessary it is to devote serious attention to the young. For if we want capable and qualified people for both the civil and the spiritual realms, we really must spare no effort, time, and expense in teaching and educating our children to serve God and the world."[125] In the Preface to the Small Catechism, Luther calls upon parents and civic authorities to provide for the education for the young for all vocations.

> In particular, at this point also urge governing authorities and parents to rule well and to send their children to school. Point out how they are obliged to do so and what a damnable sin they commit if they do not, for thereby, as the worst enemies of God and humanity, they overthrow and lay waste both the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world. Explain very clearly what kind of horrible damage they do when they do not help to train children as pastors, preachers, civil servants, etc., and tell them that God will punish them dreadfully for this.[126]

Among all vocations, Luther emphasizes as primary the need to train boys to occupy, when they grow up, the vocation of pastor. This is due to the ultimate importance of this vocation (God established the office of preaching to save souls). God instituted this office "to his honor and

---

[123] *LW* 45:368.

[124] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 410.174.

[125] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 410.171–72.

[126] SC Preface, in Kolb and Wengert, 350.19–20.

glow and for our salvation."[127] But Luther's emphasis is due also to the great need for pastors in his time. "The old men now in the office will not live forever. They are dying off every day and there are no others to take their place."[128] God instituted the office but it would disappear from among the people if boys were not trained to occupy it, "where shall we get men for it except from those who have children? If you will not raise your child for this office, and the next man will not, and so on, and no fathers or mothers will give their children to our God for this work, what will become of the spiritual office and estate?"[129] Parents who hinder the education of a child skilled to this office are depriving the world of a servant of God. "If God has given you a child who has the ability and the talent for this office, and you do not train him for it but look only to the belly and to temporal livelihood, … you are depriving God of an angel, a servant, a king and prince in his kingdom; a savior and comforter of men in matters that pertain to body and soul, property and honor; a captain and a knight to fight against the devil."[130]

The second in rank to pastor, for Luther, was schoolmaster.

> a diligent and upright schoolmaster or teacher, or anyone who faithfully trains and teaches boys, can never be adequately rewarded or repaid with any amount of money… If I could leave the preaching office and my other duties, or had to do so, there is no other office I would rather have than that of schoolmaster or teacher of boys; for I know that next to that of preaching, this is the best, greatest, and most useful office there is. Indeed, I scarcely know which of the two is the better. … It surely has to be one of the supreme virtues on earth faithfully to train other people's children; for there are very few people, in fact almost none, who will do this for their own.[131]

But Luther did not neglect all the other vocations. There is necessity also for jurists and others in

[127] *LW* 46:222.

[128] *LW* 46:222.

[129] *LW* 46:222.

[130] *LW* 46:229.

[131] *LW* 46:252–53.

the civic realm. “In saying this I do not mean to insist that every man must train his child for this office, for it is not necessary that all boys become pastors, preachers, and schoolmasters. It is well to know that the children of lords and other important people are not to be used for this work, for the world also needs heirs, people without whom the temporal authority would go to pieces.”[132] Neither did Luther overlook the education of girls. “It is no small thing when a young woman is well reared and becomes a good mother, who is then able to bring up her children in piety.”[133] Although Luther’s attention regarding the education of girls aims mostly at preparing them for domestic functions, it is likely that even today he would not apologize for it. Even though feminists would take offense at such a suggestion, Luther would point out that, in the whole scheme of things, domestic duties and responsibilities are not counted as low and inconsequential but very high and important. How successful we each are in playing out our humanity is closely tied with how successful we are in the home, and this is true for men and women alike.

It is the duty of the heads of the households to train those whom God entrusted to them that the young people may grow to fulfill the vocations into which God places them. “If this were done,” Luther was sure, “God would also bless us richly and give us grace so that people might be trained who would be a credit to the nation and its people. We would also have good, capable citizens, virtuous women who, as good managers of the household [Titus 2:5], would faithfully raise upright children and servants. Think what deadly harm you do when you are negligent and fail to bring up your children to be useful and godly.”[134]

---

[132] *LW* 46:231.

[133] *LW* 51:152.

[134] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 410.175–76.

Luther saw all vocations, from parent, preacher, schoolmaster to servant, prince or hangman, ("God has delegated his authority to punish evildoers to the civil authorities in the parents' place"[135]) as God-given vocations. For Luther, "human activity in one God-ordained walk of life is no better or more holy in the eyes of God than works carried out in another creaturely walk of life (as long as it does not involve sin, such as stealing, prostitution, and other such vices)."[136] God is served in all these vocations and children must be trained to carry out the vocations God calls them to fulfill as they grow up. Luther even censures those who fail to let children be trained when it is clear that they are talented to pursue a given career. "The exceptional pupils, who give promise of becoming skilled teachers, preachers, or holders of other ecclesiastical positions, should be allowed to continue in school longer, or even be dedicated to a life of study… We must certainly have men to administer God's word and sacraments and to be shepherds of souls."[137] Such failure to educate capable students amounts to depriving the world of a preacher or a jurist who would be useful to society, "if you have a son who is able to learn, and you are in a position to keep him at it, but do not do so, if you go your way without even asking what is to become of worldly government and law and peace, then you are doing all in your power to oppose worldly authority. … For you are taking from empire, principality, land, and city, a savior, comforter, cornerstone, helper, and deliverer."[138] Since the household is the cradle of civilization, we get in the world what we foster in the home. "We all complain about

[135] LC 5th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 410.181.

[136] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 63. Kolb and Arand just remark that this thus not mean that there are no differences between the different walks of life established by God, or that all of them make an equal contribution to the wider society. Even though God has charged each of these four structured communities to discharge complementary tasks for the good of creation, Luther made marriage the foundational order, based on its contribution to society" (63).

[137] *LW* 45:371.

[138] *LW* 46:242.

this situation, but we fail to see that it is our own fault. We have unruly and disobedient subjects because of how we train them."[139]

Leading Children to Marriage

Luther also understood it as a parental responsibility to provide a spouse for the child. Children should be brought up to see marriage as a desirable and honorable estate. "Therefore parents and governmental authorities have the duty of so supervising the youth that they will be brought up with decency and respectability and, when they are grown, will be married honorably in the fear of God. Then God would add his blessing and grace so that they might have joy and happiness in their married life."[140] Luther was convinced that much of the indecency he saw in society was due to the failure to instill this as part of the vision of the good life that should be passed to the next generation. "I say these things in order that our young people may be led to acquire a desire for married life and know that it is a blessed and God-pleasing walk of life. Thus it may in due time regain its proper honor, and there may be less of the filthy, dissolute, disorderly conduct that is now so rampant everywhere in public prostitution and other shameful vices resulting from contempt of married life."[141] In his *Sermon on the Estate of Marriage*, Luther advises parents to "persuade their children not to be ashamed to ask their parents to find a marriage partner for them. Parents should make it clear from the start that they want to advise their children so that they in their turn may remain chaste and persevere in expectation of marriage."[142]

---

[139] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 410.177.

[140] LC 6th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 415.218.

[141] LC 6th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 415.217.

[142] *LW* 44:11.

Luther also advocated that marriage not be unduly delayed. “A young man should marry at the age of twenty at the latest, a young woman at fifteen to eighteen; that’s when they are still in good health and best suited for marriage.”[143] As he stated citing a proverb, “‘Early to rise and early to wed; that should no one ever regret.’ Why? Well because from that there come people who retain a sound body, a good conscience, property, and honor and family, all of which are so ruined and dissipated by fornication, that, once lost, it is well-nigh impossible to regain them—scarcely one in a hundred succeeds.”[144] Luther criticizes those who want to enjoy the pleasures of life before settling down to marry. “He who intends to lead a chaste life had better begin early, and attain it not with but without fornication, either by the grace of God or through marriage. We see only too well how they make out every day. It might well be called plunging into immorality rather than growing to maturity.”[145]

Luther believed the primary responsibility for providing a fit marriage for children resided with the child’s parents. “Indeed,” Strohl remembers, “because parents have primary responsibility for the care of their children’s souls (as their apostles and bishops), they are duty bound to get the child ‘a good mate who will be just right for him, or who seems to be just right for him.’”[146] In Luther’s words, parents “are in duty bound to assist their children to marry, removing them from the perils of unchastity.”[147] Therefore, Luther understands that parents are directly involved in the arrangement of their children’s marriage which is, consequently, a public affair between the families and among the whole of society.

---

[143] *LW* 45:48.

[144] *LW* 45:44.

[145] *LW* 45:45–45.

[146] Strohl, “Child in Luther’s Theology,” 156. *LW* 45:392.

[147] *LW* 45:390–91.

> The fourth commandment here stands strong and firm, "Honor and obey your father and your mother." This is why in all of Scripture we find not a single example of two young people entering into an engagement of their own accord. Instead, it is everywhere written of the parents, "Give husbands to your daughters and wives to your sons," Jeremiah 29[:6]; and Moses says in Exodus 21[:9], "If a father gives a wife to his son," etc. Thus, Isaac and Jacob took wives at the behest of their parents [Gen. 24:1–4; 28:1–2].
>
> From this the custom has spread throughout the world that weddings and the establishment of new households are celebrated publicly with festivity and rejoicing. Thereby these secret engagements are condemned, and the marriage entered into with the knowledge and consent of both families is confirmed and honored.[148]

But Luther also stressed that parental authority did not grant them the right to manage their children's lives at their pleasure. "Paul says in I Corinthians 16 that even the very highest authority, namely, to preach the gospel and govern souls, was granted by God for building up and not for destroying. How much less, then, should the authority of parents, or any other authority, have been given for destroying rather than exclusively for building up."[149] Their God-given role did not allow parents to force an unwanted marriage, to prevent a wanted one, nor to choose another path (chastity vows) for their children's lives. Parents should not act as tyrants. The will of the children should be taken into account.

> It is quite certain therefore that parental authority is strictly limited; it does not extend to the point where it can wreak damage and destruction to the child, especially to its soul. If then a father forces his child into a marriage without love, he oversteps and exceeds his authority. He ceases to be a father and becomes a tyrant who uses his authority not for building up—which is why God gave it to him—but for destroying. He is taking authority into his own hands without God, indeed, against God.
>
> The same principle holds good when a father hinders his child's marriage, or lets the child go ahead on his own, without any intention of helping him in the matter (as often happens in the case of step-parents and their children, or orphans and their guardians, where covetousness has its eye more on what the child has than on what the child needs).[150]

---

[148] *LW* 45:390.

[149] *LW* 45:386.

[150] *LW* 45:386–87.

Luther regarded a forced marriage as being against the "law of creation." According to "natural law," says Luther, God created things "in such a way that marriage partners are to be joined together without force or compulsion, but willingly and with pleasure." For "God has created man and woman so that they are to come together with pleasure, willingly and gladly with all their hearts. And bridal love or the will to marry is a natural thing, implanted and inspired by God."[151] In addition, Luther points out that a loving parent would not act otherwise anyway, "even if God and nature had not already commanded that marriage should be without compulsion, a fatherly or motherly heart should still not allow children to enter into anything other than that which takes place agreeably and with pleasure."[152]

But, should it happen that a parent compelled an undesired marriage or hindered the will of the child to marry, the Christian way of proceeding, Luther contended, was that the child should endure her fate, although Luther immediately admits that this kind of Christian is almost nowhere. "For a true Christian, one who complies with the gospel (because he is prepared to suffer injustice and oppression even though it touch body, goods, or honor; and whether it be brief or lasting, or even forever, if God wills it), would by all means neither refuse nor resist such a forced marriage. … But where are there such Christians?"[153] As a lesser evil, Luther suggests that those who do not want to submit to an unwanted marriage should run away and marry in another land. "In such a case the child is truly free and may act as if his parent or guardian were dead; mindful of what is best for himself, he may become engaged in God's name, and look after

[151] *LW* 46:304–05.

[152] *LW* 46:305.

[153] *LW* 45:387–88. "Although a Christian is in duty bound to tolerate injustice, the temporal authority is also under obligation to punish and prevent such injustice and to guard and uphold the right." (*LW* 35:389)

himself as best he can."[154] If parents failed in their task, as a lesser evil, Luther recognized that children could make their own arrangements. "If parents ignored this responsibility, or forced on their children unwanted spouses, then children could, in good conscience, take matters into their own hands."[155] However, this was seen by Luther not as the rule but as an option of last resort should parents fail in their duty.

Finally, as Strohl points out, there is still another way in which parents could act as tyrants, that is to choose a path for their children other than marriage. "Parents ought not compel their children to marry; neither may they forbid them to do so altogether. To force a child into a life of celibacy is another way of violating the child's soul and placing him at high risk, rather than protecting him from temptation and sin."[156] This was a real problem in Luther's time when many parents sent their children into the monastic life. That, Luther states, is to go right against the very humanity of the child. "I have said above that man is created—not by his father, but by God—to eat, drink, produce fruit of his body, sleep, and respond to other calls of nature. It is not within the power of any man to alter this."[157] There is a difference between the parent not allowing children to marry a given person who they do not regard appropriate and to impede their marriage altogether. "On the contrary, he is duty bound to get his child a good mate who will be just right for him, or who seems to be just right for him. If he fails to do this, the child

[154] *LW* 45:387. Also, "Should the government to prove to be negligent or tyrannical, as a last resort the child might flee to another land and abandon both parent and government, just as in former times certain weak Christians fled from tyrants into the wilderness." (*LW* 45:389)

[155] Ozment and Witte, "Martin Luther," 203. In Luther's words, "Those who treat their children otherwise are to be regarded as if they were not parents at all, or were dead; their child is free to become engaged and to marry whomsoever he fancies. Parents are guilty of unparental conduct when they see that their child is grown up and is fit for and inclined toward marriage, and yet are unwilling to assist and counsel him thereto; when they let him remain a bachelor all his days, or even urge and compel him to become a religious celibate." (*LW* 45:390)

[156] Strohl, "Child in Luther's Theology," 156.

[157] *LW* 45:391.

should and must provide for the matter himself."[158] But, again, this is not the rule but an exception made necessary only when parents fail to fulfill their God-given role. "Where they proceed in Christian fashion there will be knowledge and consent on both sides: the father will not bestow his child without the child's knowledge and consent… the child in turn will not bestow himself without the father's knowledge and consent."[159]

Martin Luther's teachings support the thesis that the transmission of faith happens intergenerationally within the community of faith primarily, but not exclusively, through the parent-child relationship. Luther upholds that the human being has been created for the estate of marriage, a blessed estate which is the foundation of a household. In the Christian household, parents play out the God-given responsibility of passing on the faith once delivered to them by exposing their children to the means of grace through which God creates and sustains salvific faith, teaching the content of what the Christian believes (especially as the Catechism summarizes it), and training them to live a life the way God intended human life to be. God gave to parents the responsibility and the authority to do this in discipline and love. Inside the community that leaves its mark on the upbringing of a child, some are called to act in the place of parents in order to, together with the parents, shape children for the vocations God is calling them. But since all other human authority stems from parental authority, no authority should overpass the authority of parents, even as parents shall not overpass God's authority. This is the scenario God created in which children are brought up to be fully and truly human by receiving passive and active righteousness in the way God designed to be received until they grow up, begin their own families and pass the faith once received to their own children. Therefore, the

[158] *LW* 45:391–92.

[159] *LW* 45:392.

research in Luther, like the research in Chrysostom, supports the assumptions of the present thesis. The points of agreement between Luther and Chrysostom notwithstanding, disagreements must be noted as well. It is to this comparison that we turn now.

CHAPTER FIVE

A COMPARISON BETWEEN CHRYSOSTOM AND LUTHER ON THE INTERGENERATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE FAITH

There are certainly many similarities between the approaches of Chrysostom and Luther to the upbringing of children in the faith, but there are also differences that cannot be overlooked.

The Surrounding World

Luther demonstrates a far more positive appreciation of the surrounding world than Chrysostom. Although Luther certainly recognizes that the world is totally broken due to sin, he is still more optimistic than Chrysostom about engaging with it.

Chrysostom is highly critical of theaters and horse races.[1] Children should not be exposed to such things at all. About the education of boys, Chrysostom champions the utmost shielding of anything that could awake the sinful passions in them or mold them in the wrong way.

> If he is not inwardly aroused, he will not wish to see outwardly. Let him not bathe in company with women—such familiarity is evil—and let him not be sent into a crowd of women. … Promise him also that thou wilt lead to him a fair maid and tell him that thou hast made him the heir of thy property. … Let him have no converse with any woman save only his mother. Let him see no woman. Do not give him money, let nothing shameful come in his way. Let him despise luxury and everything of that kind.[2]

Luther, on the other hand, has nothing against the dramatic arts or even dancing. About dramatics and theatrical performances, notes Plass, Luther

> …did not agree with those who found the dramatization of Biblical incidents and stories a profanation. He once pointed out that the Gospel had been diplomatically introduced by such presentations into a section of Lower Germany from which its public preaching had been debarred. But even to secular drama Luther was sympathetic. Upon one occasion he was told of a teacher in Silesia who had given offense to some by proposing to perform before a Christian audience a comedy

[1] See, for example, *An Address on Vainglory* and Homily 6 on Genesis.

[2] Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory*, 20.

> written by the pagan Terence. Luther was asked whether such an undertaking were proper. He answered that the pupils should be permitted to present the drama. Such plays would be of great educational value to actors and audience alike. They are a mirror of life, said Luther. Nor ought Christians be held to avoid them because at times coarse jokes and objectionable love affairs are found in them. If a man *insists* upon taking offense, even the Holy Bible may give him occasion to do so, was Luther's realistic comment. There was certainly nothing prudish or puritanical about Martin Luther.[3]

And although Luther himself did not dance, "he recognized as one of the legitimate purposes of the dance the creating of opportunities for the marriageable to become acquainted which each other under the supervision of chaperons."[4]

There is no way to know exactly what Luther would have to say about these same things in our time. As Plass remarked,

> it must be remembered that the Reformer knew nothing of our modern dances. He would certainly have condemned many of them and directed them back to the dens of vice whence some of them came. The sequence of movements of many of the dances common in Luther's days it is impossible accurately to determine, but they must have been distinctly decent, for the Reformer condemned every kind of dance in which the partners circled about in close contact.[5]

It is unlikely that Luther would see as appropriate much of what our multimedia entertainment has to offer. One thing that must be considered is that in many ways, Chrysostom lived in a society which looked more like ours than Luther's. Despite the theological confrontations of Luther's time, it is remarkable that on different sides everyone assumed the validity of a Christian worldview. The great question was exactly how it should be understood. It was within such a Christian context that Luther developed his theology which cannot be interpreted as supporting the individualistic vision of the good life which prevails in our time. As Kolb and

[3] Plass, *This Is Luther,* 285–86.

[4] Plass, *This Is Luther,* 285.

[5] Plass, *This Is Luther,* 285.

Arand point out about Luther's theology, "A person who accepts God's gracious judgment 'takes the risk of living before God on no other basis than that righteousness of Christ which God's mercy imputes to him.' There is no basis in oneself for living in confidence and joy before God. A person cannot try to find oneself, to find one's humanity within oneself."[6]

Chrysostom, in his turn, was faced with a society with basic assumptions that went directly against the Christian faith. Even worse, many people in the Church did not see how the unchristian ways of life were incompatible with the Christian faith—of course, this is a familiar problem still to this day. Vigen Guroian points out that those in our time "of a more Constantinian set of mind join Chrysostom in viewing the family as a microcosm of Christian society, but they tend to take the belief a good deal further, locating the existence and edification of the kingdom of God more in the family than in the church."[7] In other words, they tend to understand the "Christian family" as the place in which a worldly society is fostered, not the place in which the Church of Christ is fostered. What they call "Christian family" ends up being a place where the worldly account of what it means to be human is passed on, not a place where God's design of what it means to be human is passed on. Guroian mentions Brigitte and Peter Berger's *The War over the Family*[8] as an example of a new-Constantinian point of view that speaks of saving the "Christian family" as a means of "preserving the American democratic order." By saving what the Bergers regard as the Christian Protestant family, they aim to assure "the necessary social context for the emergence of the autonomous individuals who are the empirical foundation of political democracy."[9] This new-Constantinian point of view identifies

[6] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 49–50, quoting Paul Althaus.

[7] Guroian, *Ethics after Christendom,* 147.

[8] Brigitte Berger and Peter Berger, *The War over the Family* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Anchor Press, 1983).

[9] Berger and Berger quoted in Guroian, *Ethics after Christendom*, 147.

the current account of what the basis, background, and *telos* of human existence is with the Christian account. That, Guroian observes, is not Chrysostom's approach to the cultural vision of the good life.

> Chrysostom admired the historic virtues of classical culture, but he did not align himself with the company of those who considered the classical and Christian virtues to be identical, always complementary, or easily correlated with each other. When Chrysostom looked out at the culture, he saw Christians captive to its human-centered standards of success and happiness and pleaded with Christian parents to foster another kind of character in their children.[10]

Liebeschuetz also underscores that "there is not a hint in Chrysostom's treatise [*on Vainglory*] that children should be allowed to develop their own individuality and to make up their own minds about what to believe, and what to think right or wrong. The child's mind is like a wax tablet, and it is the parents' duty to inscribe it with the right knowledge and values."[11] Therefore, Chrysostom urged parents to be cautious about who was training their children and what they were hearing from them.[12] It is worth noting that children in the 21st century spend a lot of time in school. How cautious are today's Christian parents about how their children are being trained?

According to Guroian, Chrysostom subordinated the "social function of the family to its ecclesial role. The Christian family is called first of all to the kingdom of God, and in order to fulfil this vocation, it must practice a discipline of spiritual and moral *askesis*. Moreover, unlike modern politicians, Chrysostom was clear about the proper source of family morality: Christ in his life and commandments."[13]

Taking all this in account, Luther's positive approach to dramatic arts and dance, for

---

[10] Guroian, *Ethics after Christendom*, 148.

[11] Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose & John Chrysostom*, 200.

[12] See section "The School and the Family" in chapter three.

[13] Guroian, *Ethics after Christendom*, 135.

example, certainly keeps us from an overstated puritanism and pietism, but it is likely that much of Chrysostom's cautiousness with the surrounding world in the upbringing of children is also altogether appropriate in the present world.

Training for Worldly Vocations

It is true that Luther develops the theme of temporal realm vocations much more than Chrysostom both in the theological and pragmatic senses. But Chrysostom and Luther do mostly agree on this point. There is nothing wrong in training children for worldly vocations. Indeed, for Luther there is not somehow a distinction between godly and worldly vocations, "for God is a great lord and has many kinds of servants."[14] In the table of duties of the Small Catechism, Luther applies the terminology "holy orders," once used to designate monks and nuns, "to the walks of life, or estates, of the ordinary Christian: government, church, but especially the household."[15] As the title reads, "The Household Chart of Some Bible Passages for all kinds of holy orders and walks of life, through which they may be admonished, as through lessons particularly pertinent to their office and duty."[16] Luther erased the distinction between Christians who live in the midst of ordinary society and those who dedicate their life to a religious order. "In a medieval system that divided Christians into spiritual and carnal Christians, children, parents, and workers came off as second-class Christians, compared to those who were called to the monastic life and who performed special works that ordinary Christians could not. Now, even

[14] *LW* 46:246.

[15] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 152, quoting Timothy Wengert. Also, Kolb and Arand: "Luther's positive view of creation led him to heap praises on ordinary activities carried out within creaturely walks of life, praises that people had formerly heaped on the spiritual orders of the monastic or clerical life. In the Small Catechism, he referred to these walks of life as 'holy orders,' the very term people in the Middle Ages had used for clerical and monastic estates." (*Genius of Luther's Theology*, 63)

[16] SC Household Chart, in Kolb and Wengert, 365.1.

children had a vocation and were a holy order on account of Baptism."[17] All vocations are God-given. The vocations within creation are part of God's scheme for all things. "Luther believed that when God created human beings for community with each other, he placed them and bound them together in comprehensive spheres or structures of life (*genera vitae*), which might be called created orders or walks of life."[18] Godly parents teach their children to fulfill these vocations in accordance with God's will. The difference between a godly and an ungodly trader, for example, lies in the fulfillment of the seventh commandment.

The extent to which Luther may appear more optimistic and prolific in his writing on the subject of temporal vocations corresponds to the way that Luther is more optimistic regarding the dramatic arts and dance than Chrysostom is with the theater and horse races. But both Chrysostom and Luther were hopeful that Christian influence in the world, such as Christian traders and jurists fulfilling their vocations honestly, would have a positive influence in the world, far more than many Lutheran theologians in the contemporary world are prone to acknowledge. "For Luther, the home was 'no introspective, private sphere, unmindful of society, but the cradle of citizenship, extending its values and example into the world around it. The habits and character developed within families became the virtues that shaped entire lands.'"[19] "For," in Luther's words, "a whole community is nothing other than many households combined. By this term we comprehend all manner of principalities, dominions, and kingdoms, or any other grouping of people."[20]

Of course, as Robert Rosin points out, "Luther was not so naïve as to think (as some social

[17] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 169.

[18] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 58.

[19] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 60, quoting Steven Ozment.

[20] *LW* 45:328. See also Painter, *Luther on Education*, 114–15.

historians have characterized his work) that education would cleanse the world, moving toward some kind of paradise" either.

> Luther understood that with *simul iustus et peccator*, education was never finished and would never reach perfection. Growth in the Christian faith and life was complicated by the larger struggle between God and Satan in this life, so success in teaching the faith could not be measured in simple quantitative terms like measuring success in learning multiplication tables. When it came to learning theology and especially to what difference theology would make in how people lived, success for teachers, be they professionals or parents, came not in creating a perfect child but in communicating the faith and in teaching the Bible through which the Spirit works, bringing perfect righteousness of Christ.[21]

But Luther was also confident that if all human beings lived their lives as God intended them to live them, playing out the vocations God had bestowed upon them, then the whole world would look more like what God originally created. Even though we must remember that, because of sin, perfection will never be possible, as Christians, we still strive to live fully human lives in accordance with God's design in anticipation of the new heavens and new earth when God's plan will be fulfilled and complete.

In this sense, Chrysostom also says that to train a child in the ways of the Lord has as a side-effect the preparation of another person useful for society. "There is then every need of much discipline of this sort to those that are to mix in the present world, because such an one has a stronger temptation to sin than the other. And if you have a mind to understand it, he will further be a more useful person even in the world itself."[22]

However, both Luther and Chrysostom make a similar caveat about training children for worldly vocations. The aim is to train children to fulfill godly vocations within society in order to serve the neighbor, not to serve Mammon (as Luther says) or Vainglory (as Chrysostom says).

---

[21] Rosin, "Luther on Education," 206–07.

[22] Homily XXI on Ephesians, *LFC* 6, 341–42.

Luther describes parents who ruin their children as "those who teach them to love the world, and who have no other solicitude than that their children acquire an imposing bearing, learn to dance and dress, and cut a figure in society. We find but few at the present time who are as solicitous that their children be provided with those things that relate to God and the soul, as that they be provided with clothes, pleasures, wealth, and honor."[23] Therefore, Luther argues: "We must not think only of amassing money and property for them. God can provide for them and make them rich without our help, as indeed he does daily. But he has given us children and entrusted them to us precisely so that we may raise and govern them according to his will; otherwise, God would have no need of fathers and mothers."[24] Luther laments that

> some parents use enticements to be more alluring to meet the dictates of the world of fashion, so that they may please only the world, get ahead, and become rich, all the time giving more attention to the care of the body than to the due care of the soul. There is no greater tragedy in Christendom than spoiling children. If we want to help Christendom, we most certainly have to start with the children, as happened in earlier times.[25]

It is in this sense, that Luther criticizes those who do not want to allow their children that are endowed by God with the necessary skills to follow the vocation of pastor, and instead urge them to pursue a career in which they may become wealthy.

> We shamefully despise God when we begrudge our children this glorious and divine work and stick them instead in the exclusive service of the belly and of avarice, having them learn nothing but how to make a living, like hogs wallowing forever with their noses in the dung-hill, and never training them for so worthy an estate and office. Certainly we must either be crazy, or without love for our children.[26]

For Luther, to follow one's vocation is to play out the roles received by God through which

---

[23] Luther quoted in Painter, *Luther on Education*, 125–26.

[24] LC 4th Commandment, in Kolb and Wengert, 410.172–73.

[25] *LW* 44:13.

[26] *LW* 46:241.

the neighbor is served. “Christians respond to the fallen world (even as Christ did) not by flight into Christian colonies but ‘by standing tall, rolling up one’s sleeves, and saying, ‘I am not going anywhere; this world has been bought by Christ and his [work], and I am going to serve by living life as he intended it to be.’’”[27] Having erased the distinction between worldly and holy orders, within the “law of creation” the human being plays out his roles through which the neighbor is served. This, according to Luther, is true worship, “obedience to parents and service to neighbor is the real and true worship of God… For what else is the worship and service of God than the keeping of his commandments?”[28]

As Christians today apply the Reformation recovery of the doctrine of vocation in the context of creation to their lives and ponder “how their vocations were intended to function when God established them,” the ways of the world are challenged. As Kolb and Arand point out, “Christians may find it necessary to critique and warn the wider society of the dangers it brings on itself when movements and trends within the culture would undermine vocational structures.” For example, “What are the long-term effects of divorce on couples and children? What kinds of habits and character are cultivated as ‘people are captured by the consumer ethos’? As popular entertainment becomes the biggest business of the economy of North America, how does it shape culture and undermine traditional morality?”[29]

About John Chrysostom, Guroian points out, “It is possible that Chrysostom is a far more contemporary figure than he at first appears to be. For example, when he chastises parents for their obsession with educating their children in skills for worldly success—vainglory, as he calls

[27] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther’s Theology*, 110–11.

[28] *LW* 44:331.

[29] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther’s Theology*, 116.

it—is he not also speaking to us?"[30] Chrysostom is asking parents if they want to bring up their children to money, luxury and other worldly attractions or if they want to bring up their children to God. He confronts parents asking whether they will pass to their children the world's vision of the good life or God's plan. Liebeschuetz stresses that "the purpose of the education recommended by Chrysostom is to make the child into a perfect Christian. He is not interested in preparing the young person to fit comfortably into society, such as it is with all its faults and vices, nor is he concerned to prepare the young man to take an active part in political life."[31] For Chrysostom, the soul of the child comes before his place in society. "First train his soul and then take thought for his reputation in the world."[32] As impacting as it could be to the surrounding society, Chrysostom was not concerned primarily about the side-effects of his teaching on the culture, but aimed his hearers to live a Christian life: "Chrysostom's ultimate aim was to remake Antioch into what he considered a truly Christian city, with all its inhabitants living as Christian a life as they could manage."[33] There is nothing wrong with training a child to occupy diverse vocations in society, but that cannot be the primary aim. The primary aim is to pass on what it means to be human in accordance with God's design and not the world's ideas. As Guroian says,

> Parenting is not primarily about preparing children to be autonomous selves or to be successful in a trade or profession, but rather about bringing children into the communion of saints. The high duty and obligation of the office of parent, which God has ordained and effects through consanguinity, is salvific in character. Parenting is a solemn responsibility to prepare children for the kingdom of heaven and not let them slip into the hands of Satan.[34]

[30] Guroian, "The Ecclesial Family," 77.

[31] Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose & John Chrysostom*, 201–02.

[32] Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory*, 25.

[33] Liebeschuetz, *Ambrose & John Chrysostom*, 207.

[34] Guroian, "St. John Chrysostom," 97.

In the same direction, Luther also remarked that "Religious instruction" is "the first duty of the parental relation. 'See to it,' Luther says, 'that you first of all have your children instructed in spiritual things, giving them first to God and afterwards to secular duties.'"[35]

Married Life and Monastic Life

Luther and Chrysostom are basically in agreement when it comes to extolling the estate of marriage as an honorable and God-ordained walk of life. Probably the greatest disagreement between Chrysostom and Luther appears with regard to the monastic life. John Chrysostom wrote a treatise, *Against the Opponents of Monastic Life*, to persuade parents to let their children enter the monastic estate while Luther wrote his Judgement on Monastic Vows (1521) to convince parents not to send their children to the cloister.[36] As Plass notes, for Luther, the monastic constraints on marriage go directly against what it means to be human in the way God created us to be as is inscribed in our very being.

> …if the corporeal is a God-intended, integral part of man, it follows that the legitimate satisfying of its wants is not merely to be connived at as a necessary evil but is to be regarded as a sacred duty. It might have been foreseen that the suppression of such satisfaction would result in moral perversions of the gravest kind. When it was consistently carried out, it either shriveled men up into inhuman beings, suffering from emotional anemia, so to speak, or it finally made their natures forcibly break though these unnatural inhibitions and then frequently turned them into monsters of vice and indulgence. The fact that monks were frequently "jolly good fellows" does not at all disprove what has been said. It merely demonstrates the instinctive rebellion of human nature against being strapped into a straight jacket, which, it was felt, God never intended for man. The asceticism of monkery and nunnery is unnatural and inhuman.[37]

What is interesting is the similarity between Chrysostom's arguments in favor of the

---

[35] Painter, *Luther on Education*, 120.

[36] While Chrysostom, in *Against the Opponents*, argues that parents do not have the right to hinder their children's choice for monastic life, Luther stated openly that "a father or mother has a right to withdraw his son or daughter from the monastery" (*LW* 44:333).

[37] Plass, *This Is Luther*, 272.

monastic life and Luther's arguments against it. Basically, an individual enters the monastic life (for Chrysostom) or leaves and avoids the monastery (for Luther) for the same reasons. In either case, what is being left behind prevents one from living a godly life and is even ungodly and demoniac. This description fits both the world one leaves behind when entering monastic life in Chrysostom's understanding and the monasticism one leaves or avoids in Luther's understanding.

One reason for this is that the monasticism that Luther knew was far from fulfilling the function that Chrysostom had in mind. As mentioned earlier, for Chrysostom, someone entered the monastic life to live out the Christian life that the world prevented him from living.[38] As Guroian put it, the reason Chrysostom endorsed monastic life is the same that led Luther to censure it: *reform*.

> Chrysostom did not regard monasticism as an escape from culture or civilization. Nor did he think of it as a pursuit of some sort of higher spiritual perfection that obviated responsibility for the reform of society. … In Chrysostom's understanding, the motive for the "flight" of monasticism *was* reform. Likewise, the motive for Chrysostom's return to the "city" out of the monastery was conversion and reform of a decadent pagan society and the pale cultural representations of Christianity within it. He expected that this conversion and reform would be achieved through God's economy mediated from within the church.[39]

For this reason, besides the added responsibilities that accompanied married life, Chrysostom saw no difference between monastic discipline and family life. Chrysostom's "pastoral and homiletic efforts among the Christians of such great cities as Antioch and Constantinople were all founded on and centered in the conviction that, apart from the privilege of marriage, the Christian who lived in the world had the same obligations as the monk."[40] If

---

[38] See section "Monasticism or Married Life" in chapter three.

[39] Guroian, *Ethics after Christendom*, 151–52.

[40] Gerhart B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 127.

someone does not choose monastic life, he or she is basically choosing to live the same challenging Christian life out in the world rather than as a monastic. It is also worth noting that later in his career, Chrysostom even came to endorse that parents would raise their children for life in the midst of society than in a monastery. "I do not mean by this, hold him back from wedlock and send him to desert regions and prepare him to assume the monastic life" Chrysostom pointed out. "It is not this that I mean. I wish for this and used to pray that all might embrace it; but as it seems to be too heavy a burden, I do not insist upon it. Raise up an athlete for Christ and teach him though he is living in the world to be reverent from his earliest youth."[41] It is not out of place to suggest that the ecclesial (or monastic) family that Chrysostom had in mind was very similar to that household Luther had in mind whose head presented the catechism to its members.

On the other hand, Luther himself recognized that many of the intentions for which the monastic orders came into being were no longer the goal of the people who took the vows in his time. "The foundations and monasteries, established in former times with good intentions for the education of learned people and decent women, should be returned to such use so that we may have pastors, preachers, and other servants of the church, as well as other people necessary for earthly government in cities and states, and also well-trained young women to head households and manage them."[42] According to Luther, monasteries with "the character God intended them to have… would simply be Christian schools for youth, designed to establish ardent young people in the faith by means of a godly upbringing, till they reached the years of maturity."[43] That was

[41] Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory*, 8–9.

[42] SA II The Third Article, in Kolb and Wengert, 306.1.

[43] *LW* 44:355. Also in *To the Councilmen of All Cities*: "It is perfectly true that if universities and monasteries were to continue as they have been in the past, and there were no other place available where youth could study and

clearly not the aim of monasteries which imposed vows obligating the young to restrictions which violated what it means to be truly human.

The monastic vows (and the reason for which people took them[44]) are what Luther wants to do away with.

> Because monastic vows are in direct conflict with the first and chief article, they should simply be done away with. … For those who vow to live a monastic life believe that they lead a better life than the ordinary Christian, and through their works they intend to help not only themselves but others get to heaven. This is known as denying Christ, etc. They boast, on the basis of their St. Thomas, that monastic vows are equal to baptism. This is blasphemy against God.[45]

For Chrysostom, the monastic option was the path to reform a decadent world and church. For Luther, monasticism is one of the things that has to be eradicated for the sake of the reform of a decadent world and church.

Another point on which Luther and Chrysostom agree is the application of the precepts from the sermon on the mount. Chrysostom stated many times that the Sermon on the Mount was not a higher holiness asked from monastics but was intended to be lived out by all Christians.[46] Nevertheless, history showed that Chrysostom's instruction was not heeded and by the sixteenth century Luther knew a division between "counsels and precepts," according to which

---

live, then I could wish that no boy would ever study at all, but just remain dumb. For it is my earnest purpose, prayer, and desire that these asses' stalls and devil's training centers should either sink into the abyss or be converted into Christian schools." (*LW* 45:352); and, "Children are born every day and grow up in our midst, but, alas! there is no one to take charge of the youngsters and direct them. We just let matters take their own course. The monasteries and foundations should have seen to it; therefore, they are the very ones of whom Christ says, "Woe unto the world because of offenses! Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a millstone fastened round his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. 18:7, 6). They are nothing but devourers and destroyers of children." (*LW* 45:354).

[44] "For there is not one of them who has taken vows whose first and last thought is not about the masses and the worship of God. That is the reason they become monks, so that they can worship God. … In fact, the crowning point of this very worship, namely, the mass, exceeds all other impiety and abomination because they always resort to it as a sacrifice and a work." (*LW* 44:371)

[45] SA III Concerning Monastic Vows, in Kolb and Wengert, 325.1–3.

[46] See section "The Monastic Family" in chapter three.

"monasticism follows the counsels rather than the precepts" and "the precepts are meant for ordinary men."[47] Luther did not agree with this distinction. "Counsels, as they imagine, are for the most part those things which Christ teaches in Matthew 6… By what authority do they assert that these are 'counsels'? Where is it stated?"[48] In agreement with Chrysostom, Luther asserts that the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount are directed to all Christians instead of being counsels by which monastics achieve a higher state of holiness. "It is clear, therefore, that all their counsels we have just been discussing are, truly and without a shadow of doubt, obligatory precepts taught by Christ in Matthew 6."[49] Without doubt, Luther's point in debunking the notion limiting the Sermon on the Mount as counsels only for monastic holiness was not to prescribe it as a means for all Christians to achieve salvation, but as direction for all people to live out their humanity in the way God intended.[50]

The Place of the Rod

Luther and Chrysostom are also largely in agreement about the place of physical discipline

[47] *LW* 44:256.

[48] *LW* 44:256, 258.

[49] *LW* 44:259.

[50] Luther's discussion of the Sermon on the Mount as counsel is found in his Judgement on Monastic Vows, *LW* 44:256–61. It has to be pointed out as well that Luther's contention that the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount are directed to all Christians does not amount to regarding them as means of salvation. This is clear if we take into account Luther's distinction of Law and Gospel or, as he puts in in the Large Catechism, the requirements of the Commandments and the promises of the Creed: "From this you see that the Creed is a very different teaching than the Ten Commandments. For the latter teach us what we ought to do, but the Creed tells us what God does for us and gives to us. The Ten Commandments, moreover, are written in the hearts of all people, but no human wisdom is able to comprehend the Creed; it must be taught by the Holy Spirit alone. Therefore the Ten Commandments do not succeed in making us Christians, for God's wrath and displeasure still remain upon us because we cannot fulfill what God demands of us. But the Creed brings pure grace and makes us righteous and acceptable to God. Through this knowledge we come to love and delight in all the commandments of God because we see here in the Creed how God gives himself completely to with all his gifts and power, to help us keep the Ten Commandments: the Father gives us all creation, Christ all his works, the Holy Spirit all his gifts." (LC The Creed, in Kolb and Wengert, 440. 67–68).

in child-rearing. Though the idea strikes many contemporary thinkers negatively, proportionate physical punishment, without exaggeration, has always had its place in the upbringing of children. Bakke even calls attention to the fact that "Chrysostom is softer than other ancient Christian sources … on physical punishments."[51] In *An Address on Vainglory* he defends that it is a better pedagogical approach to instill respect for the possibility of a physical punishment than to apply it at any rate. "Have not recourse to blows constantly and accustom him not to be trained by the rod; for if he feel it constantly as he is being trained, he will learn to despise it. And when he has learnt to despise it, he has reduced thy system to nought. Let him rather at all times fear blows but not receive them."[52] In a homily on 1 Timothy 2, he suggests oral methods according to necessity and not physical ones. "Let us admonish them of these things. Let us employ sometimes advice, sometimes warnings, sometimes threatening."[53]

Plass recalls Luther's saying that "the apple ought to lie next to the rod," the apple meaning a reward for good behavior and the rod meaning a punishment for bad behavior. "Luther knew human nature too well to advocate the removal of the rod and the serving of apples only. That bit of pedagogical stupidity was to be reserved for subsequent 'enlightened' ages. But the Reformer was moderate in his application of corporeal punishment."[54] In the same sense, Painter also points out,

> The parent should understand his responsibility, and not ruin his child from a false tenderness. The soul of the child is more than the body, and its character should not be ruined through a neglect of the rod. Luther's nature was far too sound ever to sink into morbid sentimentality, and he quotes with approval the well known declaration of Solomon. "A false love," he says "blinds parents so that they regard the body of

[51] Bakke, "Upbringing of Children," 156. She mentions the *Didascalia Apostolorum* and the Apostolic Constitutions as harsher sources.

[52] Chrysostom, *Na Address on Vainglory*, 11–12.

[53] Homily IX on 1 Timothy, *LFC* 12, 73.

[54] Plass, *This Is Luther*, 263.

their child more than his soul. Hence the wise man says, 'He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes' [Prov. 13:24]."[55]

Also noteworthy is the approach to child labor. Luther clearly says that he has in mind one or two hours a day at school so that boys and girls can do their chores at home the rest of the day. "My idea is to have the boys attend such a school for one or two hours during the day, and spend the remainder of the time working at home, learning a trade, or doing whatever is expected of them. In this way, study and work will go hand-in-hand while the boys are young and able to do both. … In like manner, a girl can surely find time enough to attend school for an hour a day, and still take care of her duties at home."[56] This idea is striking in an era such as the contemporary western world when for many thinkers the mere suggestion of children performing anything that can be labelled as useful work seems almost tantamount to torture. Many may want to reinterpret Luther's suggestion to adapt it, that is blunt it, for our times, although some authors have called attention to the fact that the idleness created by the absolute absence of productive tasks can be more harmful to the children's education than performing some works suitable for their age.[57]

Neither Luther nor Chrysostom can be interpreted as giving consent to child violence or child labor exploitation. But neither can they be read as contradicting the proper use of the rod and of age-appropriate domestic and professional chores as pedagogical methods to train a complete human being.

Although some implications of Luther's and Chrysostom's ideas have been pointed out in this comparison, there are still some other insights worth noting and is to this last task that we

[55] Painter, *Luther on Education*, 124.

[56] *LW* 45:370.

[57] See, for example, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, "Work, labor, and chores: Christian ethical reflection on children and vocation," in *Children, adults, and shared responsibilities: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim perspectives*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 171–86.

now turn.

CHAPTER SIX

INPUTS FROM CHRYSOSTOM AND LUTHER FOR TODAY

The analysis of Chrysostom and Luther shows that both theologians underscore the importance of parents in the transmission of the faith to the next generation endorsing the intergenerationality of the process played out primarily, but not exclusively, in the parent-child relationship as inherent, that is hardwired by God in the very fabric of creation. They also provide insights that can shed light on similar issues facing the church today as it strives to extend the faith into the next generation of believers. These are applications worth considering.

The Monastic Family

Alasdair MacIntyre closes *After Virtue* with the somewhat abrupt suggestion that we are waiting "for another—doubtless very different—St. Benedict."[1] In the prologue of the third edition, MacIntyre comments what he meant with that concluding sentence.

> Benedict's greatness lay in making possible a quite new kind of institution, that of the monastery of prayer, learning, and labor, in which and around which communities could not only survive, but flourish in a period of social and cultural darkness. The effects of Benedict's founding insights and of their institutional embodiment by those who learned from them were from the standpoint of his own age quite unpredictable. And it was my intention to suggest, when I wrote that last sentence in 1980, that ours too is a time of waiting for new and unpredictable possibilities of renewal. It is also a time for resisting as prudently and courageously and justly and temperately as possible the dominant social, economic, and political order of advanced modernity. So it was twenty-six years ago, so it is still.[2]

What MacIntyre is saying is that we need something equivalent to the institution of monasticism to make it through a new dark age. From the standpoint of moral philosophy, MacIntyre sees the same situation identified by Hauerwas and Willimon from the standpoint of theology: that we

[1] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 263.

[2] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, xvi.

have reached a turning point in which it no longer makes sense to invest in shoring up the surrounding culture and society, rather, the time has come to cease seeking the continuation of civility and moral community in the dominant cultural order. The situation, today, they all contend is very similar to the epoch in which the Roman empire declined into the Dark Ages.[3] MacIntyre does not suggest a return to the ancient habit of fleeing to the desert and taking up the cowl but rather something similar that would have the same impact and safeguard a people with a background, a basis, and a *telos*, all things that modernity took from us. Could it be that the concept of an ecclesial family or monastic family gleaned from the readings in Chrysostom could serve as this institution for the declining western world, today?

In *Desiring the Kingdom*, James K. A. Smith, suggests as one option to counteract the "quantity-of-immersion" challenge, i.e. the challenge that the great amount of immersion in cultural liturgies on a daily basis poses before us, the possibility of "monasticism." "By that I don't (necessarily) mean retreating to the desert to live on top of pillars," he remarks. What James K. A. Smith proposes is the recovery of two features of "monasticism": wise abstention and right immersion.

> First, it may be the case, given the "quantity-of-immersion" challenge we've noted, that a Christian community that seeks to be a cultural force precisely by being a living example of a new humanity will have to consider *abstaining* from participation in some cultural practices that others consider normal. … [Second,] habits of *daily* worship. … Who says that the shape of worship we've described above only has to happen on Sunday? A rich legacy in the history of the church suggests that this could be otherwise—that not just monks but also families and students, laborers and lawyers, could find ways to gather daily for worship that is nourishing and formative.[4]

As we indicated in the third chapter, Chrysostom's vision of a Christian family in the

[3] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 262–63.

[4] Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 207–11.

world, called by some scholars “the ecclesial family” can be properly called “the monastic family.” Although the suggestion of a monastic order seems the opposite of anything Luther could suggest,[5] as mentioned in chapter five, what Chrysostom has in mind with what we are calling here “the monastic family” is very close to the household Luther has in mind whose head presents the Catechism to its members. Ozment and Witte point out that Luther believes that “A ‘blessed marriage and home,’ can be ‘a true church, a chosen cloister, yes, a paradise’ on earth.”[6] Arand highlights how Luther directed the monastic discipline out into the world and into the household.

> Luther had experienced the value of growing up with the discipline of daily prayer and, after becoming a monk, the extensive medieval monastic system of prayer, which shaped his days. Such formal discipline cultivated a habit of mind that is turned to God throughout the day and throughout a lifetime. Now he needed to help the laity cultivate a prayer life as well. … With his house prayers, “Luther transferred the prayer exercises (in an elementary form) that he had learned in his ‘monastic family’ into the sphere of the ‘worldly’ family and thus stimulated a lay piety.” This contained a certain amount of irony. The monastic movement of the early church originally had begun as a lay movement that retreated from the world in protest against the church conforming itself to the world. Now as Luther moves “the monastic prayer life into the sphere of the Christian (lay) family,” that lay movement received a new impulse in a different direction. Rather than withdrawing from the world, the family now becomes an outpost for the church in the world![7]

Therefore, the prayer life Luther designed in the Small Catechism follows the routine of a

[5] Even though Jaroslav Pelikan mentions two authors who pursued the influence of monastic discipline in Luther’s theology: “…taking up a suggestion from Karl Holl, another study, by René Esnault, has related Luther's doctrine of the church to the issues of monastic theology, suggesting that an important element of his ecclesiology was the application of the monastic ideal to the Christian community in the world.” Jaroslav Pelikan, “After the Monks–What? Luther’s Reformation and Institutions of Missions, Welfare, and Education,” *The Springfielder* 31, no. 3 (Autumn 1967), 4. The studies mentioned by Pelikan are Karl Holl, “Die Entstehung von Luthers Kirchenbegriff,” *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, I, *Luther* 7th ed. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1948), 300–301; René H. Esnault, “Kontinuität von Kirche und Mönchtum bei Luther,” *Kirche, Mystik, Heiligung und das Natürliche bei Luther. Vortäge des Dritten Internationalen Kongresses für Lutherforschung Järvenpläa, Finland* 11–16. August 1966, ed. Ivar Asheim (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1967), 122–42.

[6] Ozment and Witte, “Martin Luther,” 204.

[7] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 43.

family living within and as part of society. “In its full form Luther’s house prayers provide something of a liturgy for the home as a ‘house church.’”[8] In a sort of liturgy that resembles the public worship, in order to replace canonical prayer hours of the monastery, families prayed when they woke up, when they ate, and when they went to sleep.

> Luther recognized the urgency of cultivating an evangelical discipline of daily prayer among the people in which everyday life was once again valued highly. Consequently, the suggestions for prayer, along with the prayers themselves that are provided by Luther are keyed not to the rhythms of life within the monastery, but to the rhythms of everyday life within the household.[9]

It is not illogical to suggest that the ecclesial or monastic family Chrysostom has in mind corresponds to the household whose head teaches the catechism to its members which Luther has in mind. Such a household produces “the kind of people and persons who wanted to be Christians in earnest” envisioned by Luther in the *German Mass*, who do “meet alone in a house somewhere to pray, to read, to baptize, to receive the sacrament and to do other Christian works;”[10] and such a household bears a resemblance to the ideal of a monastic community.

The suggestion of something like a monastic family or monastic community needs not to lure back the kind of things Luther condemned in his attacks on monasticism (like monastic vows, especially celibacy), rather it builds its foundation upon another feature of the monastic ideal: a person or a group of persons (a community) swimming against the tide of culture, striving to live the Christian life out seriously, which, as we have seen, simply means to live out our humanity in accordance with God’s design. This idea has been explored and championed by Rod Dreher. Taking up MacIntyre’s final suggestion in *After Virtue*, Dreher wrote *The Benedict Option* in which he explores several applications of the Benedictine rule for a post-Constantinian

[8] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 174.

[9] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 173–74.

[10] *LW* 53:63–64.

world in which Christianity has been pushed to the periphery. Unlike cloistered monasticism, this monastic option is not lived isolated from society. "The monks live mostly cloistered lives—that is, they stay behind their monastery's walls and limit their contact with the outside world. The spiritual work they are called to do requires silence and separation. Our work does not require the same structures. As lay Christians living in the world, our calling is to seek holiness in more ordinary social conditions."[11] The choice of a monastic option considers the way to live in accord with God's design for what it means to be human here and now in the midst of society.[12]

Some of Dreher's conclusions resemble very much what we have learned from Chrysostom and Luther. In Dreher's account, to turn the home into a domestic monastery amounts to instilling in the family a way of life embedded in and with the distinctiveness of the Christian faith.

> Everyday asceticism may include keeping a regular prayer rule, committing to daily Scripture reading, gathering nightly with the family for dinner, and setting a time each night to turn off the television or the computer—and sticking to it. Over time, these exercises will become effortless. The goal is not only to acquire spiritual discipline but also to have it become second nature, so that one no longer thinks about acquiring it.[13]

Of course, distinctiveness equals different. Therefore, Dreher notes, "Raise your kids to

---

[11] Rod Dreher, *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Sentinel, 2017), 72.

[12] Dreher's further is worth mentioning: "It is heresy, of course, to believe that we can achieve this perfection on our own or on this side of heaven. It is a paradox of the Christian life that the holier one becomes, the more acutely aware one is of one's lack, and therefore one's total dependence on God's mercy. That said, the ideal person is one who is Christ-like in all things, as she fulfills the Lord's calling. Whether she is called to the monastery or to the world, to family or to the single life, to manual labor or to a desk job, to stay at home or to travel the world, she must strive to her utmost to be like Jesus. By methodically and practically ordering our bodies, souls, and minds to a harmonious life centered on the Christ who is everywhere present and filling all things, the Benedictine way offers a spirituality accessible to anyone." (*Benedict Option*, 75).

[13] Dreher, *Benedict Option*, 115. Dreher further develops the concepts of this paragraph in a section called "Turn Your Home into a Domestic Monastery" (124–26).

know that your family is different—and don't apologize for it. It's not a matter of snobbery. It's about imbuing kids with the conviction that there are some things that people in our family just do not do—and that's okay."[14] The goal is to pass on to our children what it means to be human in sync with God's design, not the world's account. This is precisely the monastic trait to be recovered if a Christian home is turned into a domestic church.

Dare to Marry

In *You Lost Me*, David Kinnaman points out that one of the challenges facing Christians moving from adolescence to adult life is the long limbo of single life. "For many reasons, some of their choosing and others not, many young adults are postponing the complete transition to adulthood."[15] Many have noticed that it is quite common for young adults to leave church during adolescence only to come back when they get married and have their own children. The pattern has even been suggested as an excuse for inaction on the part of church leadership, who simply wait for the wayward young people to come back in due time. "Some faith leaders simply say they will wait until young people get old enough to get married and have their own kids. Then they will be ready to return to church. But is that really a reasonable approach, especially when the ages of marriage and childbearing are getting pushed further back?"[16] The problem, of course, is that more and more these young people are not coming back.

Older authors like Chrysostom and Luther seem not to have much to add to this situation since they lived in a world in which this contemporary problem did not come up at all. Both Luther and Chrysostom assume that when children come to their teen years it is time for parents

[14] Dreher, *Benedict Option*, 126.

[15] Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 46.

[16] Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 32.

to think about arranging a fitting marriage. Before the twentieth birthday most children had started their own families and where married. That is why both theologians speak about children until puberty and then speak about marriage and having one's own children, beginning the whole cycle again.[17] They simply do not mention the decade plus which most young people in the contemporary West, especially in metropolitan areas, spend in single life prior to marriage.

But perhaps that is precisely the point. To live a long single life in young adulthood before engaging in marriage represents much of what Luther criticized in the chastity vows of monasticism. It goes against God's calling and nature's urging. Avoidance of marriage leaves only the struggle against the natural tendency to be with the opposite sex created by God or relationships that go against the divine commandment as options. As Ozment and Witte point out, Luther thought that "The calling of marriage should be declined only by those who have received God's special gift of continence." But, as Luther highlighted, "Such persons are rare, not one in a thousand [later he said one hundred thousand] for they are a special miracle of God."[18] Of course, no one is so naïve as to assume that all these single people who postpone marriage in our days remain chaste virgins until getting married when they are close to thirty years old. This is especially due to the development of contraceptive methods that have made it possible to lead a sexually active life without the complicating risk of conceiving children at an inopportune time. As Kinnaman observes, "Young adults are pushing marriage and childbearing to later in life (if ever). In 1970 more than four out of every five adults ages twenty-five to twenty-nine were married; in 2010 less than half this age group were married. The average age of marriage has steadily increased, moving from the early twenties to the mid-twenties over the

[17] See section "Leading Children to Marriage" in chapters three and four.

[18] Ozment and Witte, "Martin Luther," 199, quoting Luther.

last three decades."[19]

Psychiatrist Erik Erikson warned that there is something wrong with this unnatural path of life. Similar to Luther's warning that monastic chastity went against the divine design of creation,[20] Erikson comments, that "an ever so 'safe' love life, if accompanied by a mere avoidance of offspring and a denial of generativity, could be, in some, as severe a source of inner tension as the denial of sexuality itself has been. There could well arise the specific guilt of playing with the 'fire of creation.'"[21] Erikson is not only speaking about free sexual life outside marriage but also of the avoidance of offspring even within marriage, something Luther noticed also among his contemporaries, although in Luther's time such a possibility was not as easily achieved as it is nowadays. "In the course of his exposition of Psalm 128 he wrote: 'You will find many to whom a large number of children is irksome, as though marriage had been instituted to satisfy their swinish sensuality and not for the sake of the extremely precious service which we render God and men by caring for and educating the children God has given us.'"[22]

But if we are talking about bringing children up to live out their humanity as God intended them originally to live it, this means that a chaste single life amounts to a virgin life, as countercultural as it may be. Therefore, it may not be a bad idea to teach the next generation that they need not spend an entire decade in single life between leaving childhood and getting

---

[19] Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 46.

[20] "In vowing chastity what does the monk vow but something which is not and cannot be in his hands, since chastity is a gift from God alone, which a man can accept, but never proffer. He is mocking God, therefore, when he takes such a vow. It is no different from vowing to become a bishop or an apostle, a prince or a king, since he knows perfectly well that none of these things lies within the power of the man making the vow, but rather within the will and authority of another who has the power to confer such appointment. Imagine, I beg you, a madman who vowed something like this to God, 'I vow to thee, O Lord, to make new stars or to move mountains.' What would you think of such a vow? Yet the vow of chastity is no different from a vow like that, for chastity is no less wonderful a work of God than creating stars and moving mountains." (*LW* 44:383–84)

[21] Erikson, "The Cycle of Generations," 131.

[22] Plass, *This Is Luther*, 262, quoting Luther.

married. Of course, the main reason typically cited for choosing a long period as a single person is that one might dedicate oneself during these years to an academic and/or professional career in order to ensure a stabilized life before starting a new family. But such a path is precisely what Chrysostom calls vainglory[23] and what Luther criticized as worshiping Mammon.[24] Luther, already in the sixteenth century, criticized this approach. "Let God worry about how they and their children are to be fed. God makes children; he will surely also feed them. Should he fail to exalt you and them here on earth, then take satisfaction in the fact that he has granted you a Christian marriage, and know that he will exalt you there; and be thankful to him for his gifts and favors."[25] It is a worldly account of what it means to be human that leads someone to delay marriage. As Kinnaman observes,

> I have also started to wonder if we have embraced the individualist narrative by agreeing that students should finish their education, pay off debt, get a job, and get settled before marrying—that is, expecting young people to get their lives nice and ordered as American consumers before committing to marriage. This late-marriage approach is unrealistic for many, especially if we advocate celibacy until marriage. I do not intend to suggest that everyone should beat a path to the altar before age twenty, but we need to think clearly about the reasons behind the demands we make of young adults.[26]

Mark Regnerus, in *You Lost Me*, gives the following counsel to young Christians: "Be a Rebel–Get Married." He continues, "In fact, emerging adults are marrying on average five years later than their parents did. (Those are five libido-packed years, let me remind you.) The impulse toward sexual oneness is a strong one, but young Christians are beginning to resist the centuries-

---

[23] See section "Vainglory" in chapter three.

[24] In his *Sermon on Keeping Children in School*, he calls an "idolater, a servant of Mammon" the parent whose goal for the child is to succeed in the things of this world, especially money. By doing so, the parent is also pushing the child "into the service of Mammon, in which nothing is plain and certain, which is necessarily full of danger to body, soul, and property, and which in addition is not and cannot be a service of God." (*LW* 46:215, 252).

[25] *LW* 45:48–49.

[26] Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 159.

old narrative that marriage is good, earthy, and feasible—that it's what Christians in love are supposed to do next. Too many emerging-adult Christians are settling for cohabitation," but "the countercultural move for emerging-adult Christians is marriage."[27] Regnerus's counsel shows that, for Christians, Chrysostom's advice remains very much actual, when he urges parents to train youth

> in chastity, for there is the very bane of youth. For this many struggles, much attention will be necessary. Let us take wives for them early, so that their brides may receive their bodies pure and unpolluted, so their loves will be more ardent. He that is chaste before marriage, much more will he be chaste after it; and he that practiced fornication before, will practice it after marriage.[28]

It is not necessarily being suggested here that parents should arrange marriages for their children as done in the past. But neither should it be forgotten that marriage is part of what it means to be human according to God's intent and design, a design which one generation is supposed to pass on to the next. There are obviously a lot of questionable mores, or lack of them, around marriage in our surrounding culture. Due to monasticism, Luther had to retrieve much of God's original design for marriage in his time and, due to our surrounding culture, we have a very similar challenge facing us today. Once again the way God designed the married estate has been distorted. If we are honest about the long single life a lot of young Christians lead, we have to face them with the truth. We have to pass on to them that to live as God intends them to live means that they will have to remain chaste by leading a celibate life during the most vigorous years of their life or to get married earlier.

Not Church-Centered Only, Nor Church-Disconnected Either

It is worth noting that, no matter how much Chrysostom and Luther emphasized the role of

[27] Mark Regnerus in Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 220–21.

[28] Homily IX on 1 Timothy, *LFC* 12, 73.

parents in the Christian education of their children, it seemed never to have crossed their minds that this education could happen at home only, without connection to the whole communion of saints beyond the household.

Chrysostom presupposes that the ecclesial or monastic family he has in mind attends Church. As Repp points out, Chrysostom would have the devotional life of the family intertwined with public worship. He "urged that before attending the public service, the family should read that section of the Bible which was to be treated in the sermon in order to prepare their understanding and facilitate the task of the preacher."[29] After coming back from the public service,

> the father should take out his Bible and read the section which the pastor had treated in the sermon. With the mother, children, and the slaves gathered about the table, the father should "rehearse" the sermon. The other members of the group should ask questions on points not understood, and all should apply what had been said to their immediate situations. The slaves, too, should be allowed to point out how members of the family had been guilty of the sins against which the preacher had warned.[30]

As mentioned in chapter four, the Small Catechism itself, with all its headings addressed to the head of the household, was also directed to pastors, who have an important role in the passing on of the faith to the next generation. "By calling upon them, Luther placed a renewed emphasis on the importance of pastors for teaching the young."[31] Luther conceived neither a Christian education centered on the church disconnected from the home nor a Christian education restricted to the home disconnected from the church. On the one hand, parents in the home "should constantly teach and require recitation [of the Catechism] word for word. For you should not assume that the young people will learn and retain this teaching from sermons

[29] Repp, "John Chrysostom on the Christian Home," 943–44.

[30] Repp, "John Chrysostom on the Christian Home," 943.

[31] Arand, *That I May Be His Own*, 93.

alone."[32] On the other hand, "it is not enough for them simply to learn and repeat these parts verbatim" either. "The young people should also attend sermons, especially during the times when preaching on the catechism is prescribed, so that they may hear it explained and may learn the meaning of every part. Then they will also be able to repeat what they have heard and give a good, correct answer when they are questioned, so that the preaching will not be without benefit and fruit."[33] What Luther asks for is a partnership between church and home, between pastors and the heads of households. "For if you parents and masters do not help, we shall accomplish little with our preaching… Every father of a family is a bishop in his house and the wife a bishopess. Therefore remember that you in your homes are to help us carry on the ministry as we do in the church."[34]

The Ministry of the Word has been appointed by God to restore us to the righteousness that makes us again fully human. As Kolb and Arand remark, "God delivers his promise to us through 'another human person—in a very creaturely fashion.' God engages his people again through the relational dimension of life. God established the ministry of the Word. … Thus another person, speaking in the name and on the commission of God, speaks this promise to me."[35] The Ministry of the Word is established by God to include, even to assume, the parental role in the passing on the faith to the next generation. Just as no authority should overpass the God-given, creationally grounded parental authority, so also the Ministry of the Word must be maintained. But in an individualistic culture where the pattern is for each person to choose his or her own personal faith independently of other members of the family, the interdependence of

[32] LC Preface, in Kolb and Wengert, 386.24.

[33] LC Preface, in Kolb and Wengert, 386.26.

[34] *LW* 51:137.

[35] Kolb and Arand, *Genius of Luther's Theology*, 44.

faith training at home and the receiving of the gospel through Word and Sacraments in the Church must be emphasized.

Freudenburg champions the change from a Church-centered, home-supported Christian education to a home-centered, Church-supported Christian education. In no way at all, though does he suggest a Church-disconnected Christian education.[36] Strommen and Hardel also address their concern over the error often committed with churches "allowing the focus of faith development to shift from the home to the congregation or parish,"[37] advocating instead a paradigm that is "a partnership between congregation and family in which primary responsibility for faith development is assumed by parents."[38] Their vision "identifies the family as God's domestic church and the congregation as God's communal church. The community and culture are viewed as providing the context within which faith-lives are shaped."[39] But, again, they certainly do not disconnect the life of the communal church from the life of the domestic church. What they propose is a partnership in which each side carries out the role which God assigned.

> The congregation assumes the role of helping parents carry out their God-given role of passing on the faith. Parents, in turn, look to the congregations for assistance in giving doctrinal and intellectual structure to the faith they are seeking to nurture in their children.
>
> In this partnership, home as domestic church and the congregation as communal church form a community of faith.[40]

Luther is not unaware that most parents are ill-prepared to train their children in the faith in the way the Small Catechism headings suggest. Therefore, it is essential for the families to attend

[36] Freudenburg and Lawrence, *Family-Friendly Church*.

[37] Strommen and Hardel, *Passing on the Faith*, 304.

[38] Strommen and Hardel, *Passing on the Faith*, 9.

[39] Strommen and Hardel, *Passing on the Faith*, 20.

[40] Strommen and Hardel, *Passing on the Faith*, 304.

Church. In preparation for the series of sermons on the Catechism that Luther preached in November 1528, one of the series of sermons that served as the basis for the text of the Large Catechism, Luther urges the heads of households to provide their children and servants with time to attend the sermons and learn what they themselves are not able to transmit.

> Because these matters are highly necessary, I faithfully admonish you to assemble at the designated time with your families. Do not allow yourself to be kept away by your work or trade and do not complain that you will suffer loss if for once you interrupt your work for an hour. … Woe to you who scorn this treasure on account of your greed and will not give your servants a free hour to hear God's Word. Give them an hour off that they may come to know themselves and Christ more fully.
>
> But you fathers who have given your children, servants, and maidservants time off and then found that they did not want to come to church, I give you the liberty to compel them to come. Don't think, you fathers, that you have fulfilled your responsibility for your households when you say, 'Oh, if they don't want to go, how can I compel them? I dare not do it.' Oh, no, this isn't so. You have been appointed their bishop and pastor; take heed that you do not neglect your office over them. … If you have neglected their education inwardly or outwardly, see to it that this is corrected! See to it, then, that they come to hear this preaching. I hold the office of pastor and I will preach these sermons; I will do my part and even more than we are obliged to do.[41]

Similarly, in this same series of sermons, while preaching on the Lord's Supper, he urges the heads of households to let those who God placed under their care to come to the Sacrament.

> Therefore, take a better attitude now toward the sacrament and also keep your children to it when they come to understanding. For this is how we know which are Christians and which are not. If you will not go, then let the young people come; for us so much depends upon them. If you do not do it, we shall take action against you. For even if you adults want to go to the devil, we shall nevertheless seek after your children.[42]

We ought not fail, of course, to make the caveat of distinguishing between the "inherent way" of faith formation in the home and the "exceptions" that happen when youngsters do not have the "inherent" sources of faith transmission, i.e. are not raised in a Christian home. Hence,

[41] *LW* 51:135–36.

[42] *LW* 51:192.

Strommen and Hardel remark: “Though most of the high school youth who frequently attend church are probably from families that nurture faith and have a well-established lifestyle, the youth’s church attendance reinforces what some parents seek to inculcate. And for the many youth who do not come from Christian homes, the congregation becomes a second family, where the adults they come to know shape their lives in significant ways.”[43] It is likely that Chrysostom may even had regarded our youth groups in the church as a good idea, a place to be acquainted with other youth with the same beliefs and way of life. “If he [the boy] yearn after the pleasure to be found there [the theater], let us point out any of his companions who are holding back from this, so that he may be held fast in the grip of emulation.”[44] Believers reinforce the Christian way of life in each other and especially in those who are being habituated into it as the faith (*fides qua* and *fides quae*) is being handed down from one generation to the next in the context of the communion of saints. As we mentioned, one of Luther’s contributions to fostering the God-created intergenerational character of the faith comes from his discussion of the third article of the Creed, where he describes the transmission of the faith as a communal task that happens in the context of the congregation of saints.[45]

Freudenburg, in presenting a home-centered, Church-supported model of ministry, anticipates that some of his youth-minister readers could begin to worry about their jobs, and so argues that working for a type of ministry that actually involves parents in carrying out the function bequeathed them by God does not leave youth ministers or pastors without work, but

[43] Strommen and Hardel, *Passing on the Faith*, 220.

[44] Chrysostom, *An Address on Vainglory*, 24.

[45] See section “The Intergenerational Character of the Faith” in chapter four. Although this has not been the main focus of the present thesis, a further development of the intergenerational character of the faith based on Martin Luther considering non-family members has in his treatment of the Church in the context of the third article a proper launching point.

only changes the substance of the work to be done.

> Now, if you're a youth minister, this is starting to sound like I'm out to undermine your job security. Let me ease your fears—families will always need trained, dedicated youth leaders working to help their kids grow in their faith.
>
> I would suggest that you avoid seeing parents as threats to your ministry; rather, see them as your well-trained assistants who have great power to influence young people. As you release them into ministry at home, you will double—even triple—your impact on kids.[46]

Luther's description of parents as pastors and bishops of the home does not replace the office of preaching instituted by God through which, "as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when he wills, in those who hear the gospel."[47] Each has his own specific calling from God, and one does not annul the other. The interdependence between the vocation of parents and ministers of the Word and Sacraments is especially evident if we consider the intergenerational character in the transmission of the *fides qua*. Parents expose their children to the means of grace. Even though they may teach the gospel to their children at home and practice the *mutuum colloquium et consolationem fratrum*[48] at home, God designed the means of grace to be received as community, through the public preaching of the gospel, office of the keys, baptizing and receiving of Holy Communion. Part of the parental duties in passing on the faith to their children includes leading them to full participation in the Body of Christ which gathers regularly around Word and Sacraments.

Insights from Chrysostom and Luther lead us to understand that the family was designed by God as the primary place for the intergenerational transmission of what it means to be human the way God intended us to be. The recovery of this God-given vocation may even be the way God

---

[46] Freudenburg and Lawrence, *Family-Friendly Church*, 76.

[47] AC V, 1, 2, in Kolb and Wengert, 40–41.

[48] SA, The Third Part of the Articles, 4, in Kolb and Wengert, 319.

intends to sustain his community of believers through these times of social instability. Hence, the family ought not to fear passing on a countercultural way of life. The worldly version of what it means to be human is, according to God's Word, unnatural and non-human. But the family is not alone either. The intergenerational transmission of the faith is designed to happen primarily through the parent-child relationship, but not exclusively. God appointed the whole community of believers as the extended family which helps to shape the new generation of believers and also appointed the Ministry of Word and Sacraments as the way He chose to be nearer us to bestow upon us the richness of His mercy while we undertake the vocations He gave us. It was so in the turbulent times in which Chrysostom lived as well as in the stormy times in which Luther lived. Through all these centuries until us God led His people and remained faithful to His promise that not even "the gates of hell" would "prevail against" His church (Matt. 16:18).

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I aimed to address the tendency of the church to center the teaching of the faith around the temple and the pastor. Based upon Scriptural foundation and relevant authors from theology as well as from the human sciences, I pointed out that the overlooking of the parental role in faith transmission is not only counterproductive but also goes against God's design and command. In order to step into the discussion on retrieving the parental role in the passing on of the faith to the next generation, I undertook the task of harvesting relevant texts from John Chrysostom and Martin Luther on this issue.

The analysis of both theologians showed that they support the main points of this thesis, namely, that God designed the human being in such a way that he naturally gets his understanding of all things from the previous generation and passes it on to the next generation primarily, but not exclusively, through the parent-child relationship, that God commanded the human being to pass on the faith to the next generation through these God-appointed relationships, and that the faith that is supposed to be passed on to the next generation encompasses exposing the next generation to the means of grace through which God creates and sustains salvific faith as well as teaching the content of this faith which includes both what God made and makes for us and how God intends us to live out our humanity.

The analysis of Luther and Chrysostom on the intergenerational character of the faith also underscored the importance of maintaining the distinctiveness of the Christian life while passing on what it means to be human in accordance with God's design. The world's account of what it means to be human is incompatible with the Christian version (which is God's plan for the human being). Therefore, to shape the child to become the human being God intends him to be is

fated to be a countercultural task. In this post-Christendom era, Christians must admit that their way of life will not fit the world's expectations and parents need to be intentional in countering the world's shaping and fostering the formation God intended for His children on the next generation. If the present generation fails in doing it, the world will instill in the next generation its own account of what it means to be human.

There remains much to be done to further the discussion and the reflection on the inherent intergenerational character in the passing on of the faith to the next generation. For example, the whole myriad of other intergenerational relationships with non-family members that have not been explored in this thesis deserves further attention. The growing number of homes facing specific situations that do not fit the ideal concept of a Christian couple raising their children in the faith (e.g., single-parent homes, one-Christian-parent homes, grandparent only homes, etc.) open another vast field of further reflection. Nevertheless, the testimony of these two highly esteemed theologians, John Chrysostom and Martin Luther, underscoring the importance of the pivotal role of parents in the intergenerational transmission of the faith in all its nuances (or what it means to be completely human) lends weight to the voices calling the church to retrieve the partnership between the church and the home and acknowledge parents as the primarily called by God to pass on the faith to their children. That is the way God intended things to happen, in C. S. Lewis's words, within the *Tao* (within God's scheme of all things).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arand, Charles P. *That I May Be His Own: An Overview of Luther's Catechism*. St. Louis: Concordia, 2000.

Bakke, Odd Magne "Upbringing of Children in the Early Church: The Responsibility of Parents, Goals and Methods." *Studia Patristica: Nordic Journal of Theology* 60 (2006): 145–63.

Bayer, Oswald. "I Believe That God Has Created Me with All That Exists. An Example of Catechetical-Systematics." *Lutheran Quarterly* 8, (1996): 129–61.

Biermann, Joel. *A Case for Character: Towards a Lutheran Virtue Ethics*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014. EBSCOhost.

———. "No Longer Married, But Still Engaged: The Role of the Church in the Face of Declining Christian Influence." *Revista Igreja Luterana* 81, no.1 (2020): 194–207, http://www.revistaigrejaluterana.com.br/index.php/revista/issue/view/1.

Bunge, Marcia J. "Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Children, Parents, and 'Best Practices' for Faith Formation: Resources for Child, Youth, and Family Ministry Today." *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 47, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 348–60.

———. "Christian Understandings of Children: Central biblical themes and resources." In *Children, Adults, and Shared Responsibilities: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives*, edited by Marcia Bunge, 59–78. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Chesterton, Gilbert K. *What's Wrong with the World*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1910.

Chrysostom, Saint John. *A Comparison Between a King and a Monk and Against the Opponents of Monastic Life: Two Treatises by John Chrysostom*. Trans. David G. Hunter. Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1988.

———. *Address on Vainglory and the Right Way for Parents to Bring Up Their Children*. Translated by Max L. W. Laistner. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1951. https://archive.org/details/StJohnChrysostomVaingloryAndChildren.

———. *Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist: Homilies 48–88*, translated by Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin. Vol. 41 of *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1959, 2000.

———. *Homilies on Genesis 1–17*, translated by Robert C. Hill. Vol. 74 of *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1986, 1999.

———. *On Marriage & Family Life*. Translated by Catherine P. Roth and David Anderson. Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003.

Dreher, Rod. *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation*. New York: Sentinel, 2017

Edwards, James C. *The Plain Sense of Things: The Fate of Religion in an Age of Normal Nihilism*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.

Erikson, Erik H. *Childhood and Society*. London: Vintage, 1995.

———. "Human Strength and the Cycle of Generations." In *Insight and Responsibility: Lectures on the Ethical Implications of Psychoanalytic Insight*. New York: Norton, 1964. 109–57. https://archive.org/details/insightresponsib00erikrich.

Forrel, George W., ed. *Christian Social Teachings: A Reader in Christian Social Ethics from the Bible to the Present*. 2nd ed. Revised and updated by James M. Childs. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.

Freudenburg, Ben F. with Rick Lawrence. *The Family-Friendly Church*. Loveland, CO: Vital Ministry, 1998. https://archive.org/details/familyfriendlych00freu.

Fullerton, M. Jason. "Intergenerational Transmission of Faith: The Biblical Role of The Godly Parent in The Spiritual Formation of The Child." DMin diss, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Muskogee, 2019. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

Guroian, Vigen. *Ethics after Christendom: Toward an Ecclesial Christian Ethic*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1994.

———. *Tending to the Heart of Virtue: How Classic Stories Awaken a Child's Moral Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. https://archive.org/details/tendingheartofvi00guro.

———. "The Ecclesial Family: John Chrysostom on Parenthood and Children." In *The Child in Christian Thought*, edited by Marcia J. Bunge, 61–77. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

———. "St. John Chrysostom." In *Christianity and Family Law: An Introduction*, edited by John Witte, Jr and Gary S. Hauk, 85–99. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Hauerwas, Stanley and William H. Willimon. *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1989.

Hunter, James Davison. *The Death of Character: Moral Education in an Age Without Good or Evil*. New York: Basic Books, 2000.

Kinnaman, David with Aly Hawkins. *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church… and Rethinking Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011.

Kolb, Robert and Charles P. Arand. *The Genius of Luther's Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic: 2008.

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

Ladner, Gerhart B. *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004.

Lasch, Christopher. *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*. New York: Norton, 1991.

Lewis, C. S. *The Abolition of Man or Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools*. New York: Macmillan, 1947. https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.88346/.

Liebeschuetz, J. H. W. G. *Ambrose & John Chrysostom: Clerics Between Desert and Empire*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works*, American Edition. 55 vols. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehman. Philadelphia: Muehlenberg and Fortress, and St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–1986.

MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. 3rd ed. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007.

Mallardi, Rocco. "'Using Luther's Small Catechism as a Family Devotional' A Study of Family Prayer at Messiah Lutheran Church Hays, Kansas 2018." DMin Major Applied Project, Concordia Seminary, 2019. https://scholar.csl.edu/dmin/122.

Members of the English Church, trans. *A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, Anterior to the Division of the East and the West*. 48 vols (?). Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1838–1881.

Miller, Patricia Cox, ed. *Women in Early Christianity: translations from Greek texts*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005.

Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J. "Work, labor, and chores: Christian ethical reflection on children and vocation." in *Children, adults, and shared responsibilities: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim perspectives*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge, 171–86. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Ozment, Steven and John Witte, Jr. "Martin Luther." In *Christianity and Family Law: An Introduction*, edited by John Witte, Jr and Gary S. Hauk, 195–210. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Painter, F. V. N. *Luther on Education: Including A Historical Introduction and a Translation of the Reformer's Two Most Important Educational Treatises*. Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1889.

Plass, Ewald M. *This Is Luther: A Character Study*. St. Louis: Concordia, 1948, 1984.

Pelikan, Jaroslav. “After the Monks–What? Luther’s Reformation and Institutions of Missions, Welfare, and Education.” *The Springfielder* 31, no. 3 (Autumn 1967): 3–21.

Repp, Arthur C. “John Chrysostom on the Christian Home as a Teacher.” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 22, no. 12 (December 1951): 937–48.

Rosin, Robert. “Luther on Education.” *Lutheran Quarterly* 21 (2007): 197–210.

Rieff, Philip. *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: The Uses of Faith after Freud*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966, 1987.

Sax, Leonard. *Why Gender Matters*. New York: Broadway, 2005.

Sengele, Mark S., ed. *Confirmation Basics: Updated and Expanded*. St. Louis: Concordia, 2016.

Smith, Cristian with Melinda Lundquist Denton. *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Smith, James K. A. *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009.

———. *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013.

Steele, Walter. “A Theological Dialogue with and Evaluation of Erik H. Erikson’s Theory of Identity Development in Light of Pauline Baptismal Theology in Romans and Some Implications for Pastoral Care.” PhD diss, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 2017. http://scholar.csl.edu/phd/40.

Strohl, Jane E. “The Child in Luther’s Theology: ‘For What Purpose Do We Older Folks Exist, Other Than to Care for… the Young?’” In *The Child in Christian Thought*, edited by Marcia J. Bunge, 134–59. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

Strommen, Merton P. and Richard A. Hardel. *Passing on the Faith: A Radical New Model for Youth and Family Ministry*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary’s Press, 2000. https://archive.org/details/passingonfaithra0000stro.

Wentzel, Wayne. “Using Parents in Preparing Their Children for Confirmation and First Communion.” DMin Major Applied Project, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis 1995. http://scholar.csl.edu/dmin/100.

Widok, Norbert. “Christian Family as Domestic Church in the Writings of St. John Chrysostom.” *Studia Ceranea* vol. 3 (2013): 167–75.

VITA

Charles Samuel Voigt Ledebuhr

June 18, 1989

Canguçu, RS – Brazil

Collegiate Institutions Attended

Universidade Luterana do Brasil, Canoas, RS – Brazil, B.A., 2016

Graduate Institutions Attended

Seminário Concórdia, São Leopoldo, RS – Brazil, M.Div., 2019
Universidade Luterana do Brasil, Canoas, RS – Brazil, graduate course, 2019