

churches, and when they participate in their government, they are able to do so confidently standing on God's Word and the confession of the Lutheran church.

If "doctrine is life," as Robert Preus famously preached, how could we not support a college that teaches a coherence of faith and practice, whose doctrine corresponds to the Scriptures and our Lutheran Confessions, and that teaches our children to live out that confession in a distinctly Lutheran manner? To "stand on the shoulders of giants," – as Bernard of Chartres stated – to carry forward the deposit of faith that we have been entrusted with, it is first necessary to climb onto the backs of the giants by reading them, marking them, learning them, and inwardly digesting them. We ought to do this in an intentionally Lutheran manner, whether those giants are the ancient pagans who have given us glimpses of Biblical truth or our Lutheran fathers themselves, who sought all truth through our Lord Jesus, the very Truth and Life. ✨

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AD FONTES  
February, 2024



## AN ALL-LUTHERAN COLLEGE?

BY REV. BRANDON W. KOBLE

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A STUDENT'S FOUR YEARS AT COLLEGE ARE SOME OF the most formative years of a young adult's life. As important as our upbringing is in the home, the culture surrounding young adults after they leave the home will shape how they use the tools their parents have given them. We see in most colleges and universities a shift away from the faith given in the home to a humanistic and relativistic, secular faith. Instead of cultivating character and virtue, most of our academic institutions today consciously rebel against the tenets of the Christian faith and cause our children to abandon that which has been passed down to them through the many years of family devotions and participation in the Divine Service.

How you answer the question, "What is the purpose of education?" drives how you view the manner in which students should be educated. If the purpose is utilitarian, then the delivery of useful skills so that students can get a good job and live comfortably is good enough. A university does not need to be Christian, let alone Lutheran, to accomplish this task. But if we believe that the purpose of education is to deliver the fullness of God's natural and revealed knowledge, acknowledging that all

knowledge comes from Him and reveals something about Him, then how we teach and the people we surround ourselves with during this endeavor is essential.

The culture of a university or college matters. It shapes the worldview of the students who attend these institutions. John Donne, in his famous poem *No Man is an Island* wrote, "No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main." While Donne is speaking in this poem about how the death of one affects us all, his point that we are connected and have an effect on one another applies more broadly. Who we surround ourselves with during our time of formation matters. A college that has chosen to be decidedly Lutheran may be derided as being too insular: ignorant or uninterested in other cultures, peoples, and ideas. Yet, a focus on and adherence to Lutheran doctrine does not imply disinterest in other things. A genuine Lutheran culture means we encounter those other cultures, peoples, and ideas through a decidedly Lutheran worldview. And we approach this great task together, surrounded by brothers and sisters who share the same worldview and beliefs as we do.

The delivery of this worldview and Lutheran culture is precisely what Luther Classical College seeks to do. Through the reading of great books that have withstood the test of time, a student is introduced to many cultures, peoples, and ideas through a Lutheran lens. The students learn to interact with the complexities of human life by encountering and comparing those ideas to the Word of God, which always acts as our foundation. And they do so in an environment that seeks to order their opinions and views according to this same Word of God.

We are Lutheran, not simply because we were baptized into this faith. We are Lutheran because we have examined Lutheran doctrine and believe it to be the truest exposition of Scripture. We have pledged to suffer all, including death, rather than fall away from this faith as taught by God's Word and the Lutheran

Confessions. We believe in the Lutheran doctrine *because* it is a faithful exposition of the Scriptures.

Because we believe this, our teaching and confession must match our belief, or we will suffer from an incoherence in our worldview that will leave it susceptible to crumbling under the pressures of the devil, the world, and our own sinful nature. We must look at everything in this life through our Lutheran worldview. We view marriage and family in a Lutheran way. The faith of our spouse matters in how we raise our families and manage our households. We view the church and her doctrine and practice in a Lutheran way. The way in which we worship and gather in the Lord's name matters. We view our political life as citizens, with all the

responsibilities that entails, in a Lutheran way. The way we vote, the issues that are important to us, how we live in our communities - all of it matters. These three estates, of which Luther said every person in the world was part, form the touchstones through which our faith is lived in relation to the world God has created.



Parable of the Sower, 1483-1546

While they are young, children see us as adults exercising our vocations within the three estates. When they become adults, they will have to do this for themselves. If their time at a university or college is the most formative of their adult life, it is important that they are formed well. Being surrounded by those who believe, teach, and confess the same Lutheran doctrine that they believe, teach, and confess will help equip them so that when they manage their own households, when they are leaders in their