

10 REASONS TO APPLY TO LCC

- 1 LCC is a Confessional Lutheran college that does not take any government money. *Ever.*
- 2 Students will live and learn around a common confession that upholds the inspiration, and efficacy of the Old and New Testaments.
- 3 Classes will be taught by experienced, world-class professors.
- 4 LCC sits at the foot of Casper Mountain in the fabulous Rocky Mountain region.
- 5 LCC offers a Trade Partnership Track to equip future plumbers, welders, and mechanics to work and live as unto the Lord.
- 6 For aspiring church musicians, LCC offers a Parish Music Track to study the finest works of the Lutheran tradition.
- 7 LCC's Teacher Certification Track is aligned to the "Marks for Excellence" of the Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education.
- 8 Pre-seminary students at LCC will have the opportunity to study Latin, Greek, Hebrew,
- 9 Annual tuition at LCC is more affordable than in-state tuition at most public universities.
- 10 Besides, where else will you find a Lutheran spouse?

Accepting applications for Fall 2025.

Thinking about enrolling?

41 applicants have been accepted. LCC's Admissions Department aims for 60-70 students for August 2025. To learn more about enrollment visit:

lutherclassical.org/admissions/apply/



Help support LCC's efforts. Scan here to make a donation or visit:

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AD FONTES

March 2025

THE SELF-OBSESSION PANDEMIC

BY REV. CHRIS BRADEMEYER

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PEOPLE JUST SEEM STUCK ON THEMSELVES THESE DAYS.

I bet your pastor has complained about this a time or two from the pulpit. After all, displays of self-focus and plain old-fashioned narcissism are so common as to make this observation cliché. Media glorifies self-interest; television promotes it. How many Disney movies have counseled us and our children to "follow our hearts" above all else? We even have a whole prideful month that is designed to celebrate selfish self-focus, among other sinful things. However, this is not a new phenomenon. As tempting as it is to make our time out to be somehow unique in its selfishness and self-focus, this is not the case. Our human tendency to be preoccupied with me and me alone has been noticed and denounced as a wicked thing for millennia. St. Augustine, who served as bishop of Hippo in North Africa until his death in 430 A.D., described sin as an inward curve that turns one's focus entirely towards oneself. As he put it, sin is *incurvatus in se*.

The real tragedy of self-preoccupation is not found in the glamorous, gaudy, and glaringly obvious. Its best work is done through the subtle blinders that come to limit the ability of each human being to see beyond his own experience. This reality sneaks up on each of us, convincing us that our limited understanding of the world is the be-all and end-all of human knowing. The famous attitude of some Lutheran parishes is

notable here: “We can’t do it that way! It’s been like this as long as I can remember!” In other words, the true tragedy of the human condition in this fallen world is not in those obvious places where we are encouraged to “follow our hearts” and focus on ourselves, but in those subtle places where we assume our own rightness based on what we want and how we understand the world around us.

Alexander Schmemmann, a renowned theologian and observer of the 20th century, once called this phenomenon “egocentrism.” This term requires a bit of unpacking. Typically, we use the phrase as a synonym for narcissism. However, Schmemmann’s use of the term was meant to remind us that each of us is stuck in our own impressions and experiences of the world. In his estimation, the real tragedy is not that original sin predisposes us to this self-focus; it is that we refuse to do anything about it. We, sinners that we are, revel in ignorance and embrace its familiar hold as if it were true comfort. This phenomenon is not unknown to other thinkers and writers either. Ancient and modern authors alike have complained about how self-absorbed people seem to be. And while we cannot fully be free of such burdens in this life due to the nature of sin, we certainly can do something to lessen its impact.

This realization was once one of the foundational ideas behind reading the Great Books—those works recognized for their thoughtful and important discussions of universal truths. These books not only imparted lessons in civics, philosophy, theology, virtue, history, and the like, but, more fundamentally, they stretched the blinders of individual experience by giving us the wisdom and insights of other, more thoughtful men. In other words, the antidote to egocentrism was to read good books, learn the lessons of great thinkers, and thereby be outwardly oriented. Rather than looking inward, we need to be focused on outward truth. The great tragedy of our modern age is not that we, like all before us, are naturally self-absorbed ego-centrists but that our modern educational emphasis is designed to reinforce this tendency! Think of the advice of modern society. We are told to look inward for truth, to trust our intuition and feelings above all else. We are told to stand firm against all others, history, culture, and even reality itself if we feel so inclined. It is seen as reasonable to expect society to cater to individual preferences and tastes. This is why, for example, the solution to this problem given by contemporary advisors is to embrace identity politics,

critical theory, post-modernism, and the like. The modern view is to admit that we are limited in wisdom, knowledge, and experience, and therefore, we should simply give up our pursuit of truth and embrace our ignorant status.

Standing against this is the great Western tradition of learning and shaping minds. Great thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Boethius, Aquinas, Bonaventure, and Luther may not have agreed on all things, but they strove to understand the very mind of God in their academic pursuits. For them beauty, truth, and goodness were not culturally or personally relative but facets of an objective, external reality that tied back to God Himself. The horizon for their pursuit of truth was limitless because it was found in the very divine Author of reality. Even pagans like Plato and Aristotle still conceded that their efforts and arguments were ultimately judged not by men but by reality itself and, by implication, its Author and Master.

And their efforts paid dividends! Because the horizon of their work and thought was as vast as reality and human knowledge, they strove to understand universal things that all men could know, share, and discuss. Truth was considered because it could unite all men in their reason. The same could be said for goodness and beauty, though each in their own distinctive sphere. The ancient world did not clamor for representation and diversity as we do today. They understood that things like sex, sexual attraction, ethnicity, and skin color were not essential qualities of the human experience and could be transcended in meaningful ways by pursuing external truths that we all share. In other words, one of the main purposes of learning was to push the boundaries of our egocentric scope as far as possible. Receiving a well-crafted education helped to get men out of their own way, to train them to think beyond their own immediate lives and experiences, and to focus their attention on truths that endure far beyond themselves. Sure, this work was never done perfectly, nor was it ever complete. But the struggle to reach beyond the limit of a single human lifetime was, and still is, a noble goal that should remain a cornerstone of a full and proper education. Being stuck in ourselves comes naturally. Thinking beyond ourselves requires training and work. And, by God’s grace and a good book list, we may just get a little better at fixing our eyes on external truth.