

LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY



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The Paideia of the LORD

Teaching the Person, Not Just the Mind

JOHN G. NORDLING



PAIDEIA PROVIDES A FOUNDATION for the catechesis, hymnody, education, and prayer deemed essential by many Lutherans.¹ But just what is *paideia*? A search for the word in two English dictionaries was unsuccessful; a definition that seems helpful for our purposes appears in volume five of the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*:

Παιδεία, παιδεύειν, denotes the upbringing and handling of the child which is growing up to maturity and which thus needs direction, teaching, instruction and a certain measure of compulsion in the form of discipline or even chastisement.²

The Greek word παῖς παιδός, m./f. (“child”) provides a sure indication of what *paideia* means, and that is the rearing of children;³ only secondarily does the word mean “training and teaching, education,”⁴ “mental culture, learning, education,”⁵ “chastisement,”⁶ or even “[the] culture of trees!”⁷ *Paideia*’s connection to children is evident also in such cognates as παιδεύω (“bring up or rear a child”),⁸ παιδευτής (“teacher, instructor”),⁹ and especially παιδαγωγός (“slave who went with a boy from home to school and back again”)¹⁰—terms which occur frequently in the New Testament also.¹¹

The preceding lexical survey indicates, therefore, that *paideia* represents a vast and fascinating topic, and one to which we cannot do full justice here. I intend, then, to make three related points about *paideia* in what remains of this article: first, the severe nature of *paideia* in the Greek sources; second, the ideal *paideia* should be distinguished from legalistic biblicism; and third, biblical *paideia* is intended for all Christians, not just children. In the conclusion I shall suggest that the *paideia* of the Lord consists in being “schooled in the gospel,” so to speak.

THE SEVERE NATURE OF PAIDEIA IN THE GREEK SOURCES

Those who write on ancient education typically point out various attributes of *paideia*—such as, for example, that *paideia* was characteristic of Greek culture;¹² that it was designed to address various natural presuppositions one finds in children;¹³ that it has as its aim the formation of the “good” man (καλός

καγαθός);¹⁴ that it was intended for free men in civil society;¹⁵ that it remained a privilege of the ruling classes;¹⁶ and so forth. We get more quickly to the point by focusing upon Bertram’s initial definition of *paideia*—namely, that it was instruction that bestowed “a certain measure of compulsion in the form of discipline or even chastisement.”¹⁷ The notion of “discipline or even chastisement” looms large wherever *paideia* was discussed in antiquity. In the household, fathers were most responsible for inscribing the correct morals, attitudes, and dispositions upon their sons, but they could not do this alone; rather, they

1. The following essay was presented originally on 25 April 2009, as the first plenary paper at “Reason for Hope: The Lutheran’s Defense in the Battle for Our Minds, Bodies, and Souls,” Lutheran Lecture Series—Midwest, hosted by Trinity Lutheran Church, Marcus, IA.
2. G. Bertram, “παιδεύω, κτλ,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 5:596.
3. This is the first and so foundational meaning of the word *paideia* (παιδεία–είας, f.) in Liddell, Scott, and Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon* [hereinafter LSJ], New ed. (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1940; repr. 1966), 1286 (I): “rearing of a child,” on the basis of Aeschylus *Sept. Theb.* 18.
4. LSJ 1286 (I.2), on the basis of Aristophanes *Nubes* 961; Thucydides 2.39; Plato *Phaedo* 107d; *Philebus* 55d.
5. LSJ 1286 (I.3), on the basis of Democritus 180; Plato *Protagoras* 327d; *Gorgias* 470e; *Republic* 376c; Aristotle *Politica* 1338a30, etc.
6. LSJ 1286 (I.7), on the basis of LXX Prov 22:15; Heb 12:5.
7. LSJ 1286 (I.4), on the basis of Theophrastus *De Causis Plantarum* 3.7.4.
8. LSJ 1287 (I.1).
9. LSJ 1287 (I.1), on the basis of Plato *Republic* 493c. Other definitions include “minister of education,” LSJ 1287 (I.2), on the basis of Plato *Leges* 811d; and “corrector, chastiser,” LSJ 1287 (II), on the basis of Heb 12:9.
10. LSJ 1286 (I), on the basis of Herodotus 8.75; Euripides *Ion* 725; *Electra* 287; Antiphon 3.3.7; Lysias 32.28; Plato *Lysis* 208c, and so forth.
11. Παιδεία–ας, f. (Eph 6:4; 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 12:5, 7, 8, 11); παιδεύω (Lk 23:16, 22; Acts 7:22; 22:3; 1 Cor 11:32; 2 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:20; 2 Tim 2:25; Ti 2:12; Heb 12:6, 7, 10; Rv 3:19); παιδευτής–οῦ, m. (Rom 2:20; Heb 12:9); παιδαγωγός (1 Cor 4:15; Gal 3:24, 25).
12. Bertram, “παιδεύω, κτλ,” 5:597.
13. Ibid., 5:598, on the basis of Aristotle *Politica* 1337a 2.
14. Bertram, “παιδεύω, κτλ,” 5:598; LSJ 869 (I). For the depiction of “a perfect gentleman,” see Herodotus 1.30; Aristophanes *Equites* 185, 735; Thucydides 4.40; 8.48; Xenophon *Historia Graeca* 5.3.9; Aristotle *Politica* 1293b 39.
15. Bertram, “παιδεύω, κτλ,” 5:599, on the basis of Ps-Plutarch *De Libris Educandis* 1a; 7c.
16. Bertram, “παιδεύω, κτλ,” 5:600.
17. See note 2 above.

JOHN G. NORDLING teaches exegetical theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

were dependent upon the so-called boy-leader (παιδαγωγός), whose duty it was to conduct a boy or youth to and from school and to superintend the latter's conduct in general. What type of conduct? Here it would be best simply to cite from an ancient tract on the teaching of children, perhaps wrongly attributed to Plutarch (ca. A.D. 50–120), entitled, "Regarding the Raising of Children" (Gk: Περὶ Παιδων Αγωγῆς; Lat. *De Liberis Educandis*).¹⁸ "Now there is another point which should not be omitted," the pseudo-Plutarch says, and that is

in choosing the younger slaves [τὰ παῖδια] who are to be the servants and companions of young masters, those should be sought out who are, first and foremost, sound in character [σπουδαῖα τοὺς τρόπους], who are Greeks as well, and distinct of speech, so that the children may not be contaminated by barbarians and persons of low character, and so take on some of their commonness. The proverb-makers say, and quite to the point, "If you dwell with a lame man, you will learn to limp."¹⁹

While fathers do a good job of assigning trustworthy slaves to estate management, often they put good-for-nothings in charge of their sons.

We see from this description that the boy-leaders were slaves—indeed, "younger slaves" (τὰ παῖδια). They were supposed to be Greeks themselves (so as not to instill uncouth vulgarities in the speech of the children), and "sound in character" (σπουδαῖα τοὺς τρόπους). Elsewhere in the tract the pseudo-Plutarch counsels fathers not to entrust one's children inadvertently "to slaves taken in war or to barbarians or to those who are unstable" (ἀνδραπόδοις ἢ βαρβάροις ἢ παλμβόλοις).²⁰ He goes on to complain that while fathers do a good job of assigning trustworthy slaves to estate management, ship captaincy, trade, house stewardship, and even money-lending, it often happens that they put wine-bibbers, gluttons, and complete good-for-nothings in charge of their sons.²¹ Teachers—and here he must mean free teachers (διδασκάλους²²)—must be sought for the

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The preceding quotation ends with a crude joke attributed to one Diogenes, the precise person of whom I could not track down in the electronic data base *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*;²⁶ presumably the crack about learning at the brothel that there is no difference between what costs money (illicit sex with prostitutes) and what costs nothing (bad morals) would not offend the sensitivities of pseudo-Plutarch's readers who, as seems assumed, were themselves products of a good education (and so would not have patronized brothels!).

But getting back to *paideia* as a kind of "compulsion in the form of discipline or even chastisement": it seems safe to assume that Greek educators in general regarded students in the initial stages of their learning as nearly passive entities—like soil needing to be tilled, gems needing to be polished, marble slabs needing to be chiseled into statues, and other inanimate objects ancient educators used to describe what for them was an indispensable aspect of education in the initial stages.²⁷ This passivity on the part of the one trained has as its modern

23. Ibid., 4c.

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One [planter], cutting off the tender suckers from the body of their mother, sets them in the furrows; another buries the stocks in the ground, and stakes split in four, and poles with the wood sharpened to a point; and some trees expect the bent-down arches of a layer, and living nurseries in their native soil. Others have no need of any root; and the planter makes no scruple to commit to earth the topmost shoots, restoring them [to their parent soil]. Even (what is wondrous to relate) after the trunk is cut in pieces, the olive-tree shoots forth roots from the dry wood. Often we see the boughs of one tree transformed, with no disadvantage, into those of another, and a pear-tree, being changed, bear ingrafted apples, and stony cornels grow upon plum stocks.³⁰

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the young were subjected to constant rounds of work and contrived occupations, with harsh penalties for noncompliance.³⁴ Desiring to instill modesty (τὸ αἰδεῖσθαι) in the lads, Lycurgus reportedly required them to

keep their hands under their cloaks, to walk [about] in silence, not to look about them, but to fix their eyes on the ground. The effect of this rule has been to prove that even in the matter of decorum the male is stronger than the female sex. At any rate you would expect a stone image to utter a sound sooner than those lads; you would sooner attract the attention of a bronze figure; you might think them [to be] more modest even than a young bride in the bridal chamber. When they have taken their place at a public meal, you must be content if you can get an answer to a question. Such [opines Xenophon] was the care that he bestowed on the growing lads.³⁵

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The writer of Hebrews states, "My son, do not regard lightly *the discipline of the Lord* . . ." (Heb 12:5 RSV; emphasis added). These few words comprise the first part of this article's title—namely, "the *Paideia* of the Lord . . ." (Gk. παιδείας κυρίου). As we have seen in the Greek examples, so verbal cognates of παιδεία

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33. Xenophon *Respublica Laecedaemoniorum* III.2, in *Scripta Minora*, trans. Marchant, LCL, 148–49.

34. Ibid., III.2–3.

35. Ibid., III.4–5. Xenophon's Spartan Constitution was "written c[a.] 388 [BC] in a mood of gratitude to the Spartans who had settled him [Xenophon] at Scillus. It is a laudatory and uncritical account of the Spartan system, which attracted the attention of the philosophers for its apparent stability" (D. J. Mosley, "Xenophon [1]," OCD, 1142).

36. For the complete list of topics covered in Bertram's article see "παιδεύω, κτλ," 5:596.

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33. Xenophon *Respublica Laecedaemoniorum* III.2, in *Scripta Minora*, trans. Marchant, LCL, 148–49.

34. Ibid., III.2–3.

35. Ibid., III.4–5. Xenophon's Spartan Constitution was "written c[a.] 388 [BC] in a mood of gratitude to the Spartans who had settled him [Xenophon] at Scillus. It is a laudatory and uncritical account of the Spartan system, which attracted the attention of the philosophers for its apparent stability" (D. J. Mosley, "Xenophon [1]," OCD, 1142).

36. For the complete list of topics covered in Bertram's article see "παιδεύω, κτλ," 5:596.

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is just one species of orthodox Protestantism,⁶² and no great shake. I would maintain, however, that being a Lutheran educator (and not just a generic Christian one) is significant and does considerably influence one's understanding of the ideal *paideia*. And what is the "ideal *paideia*"? Answer: that which "schools" us sinners in Christ, even when teaching establishments and educational delivery systems differ markedly—or even leave much to be desired.

BIBLICAL PAIDEIA IS INTENDED FOR ALL CHRISTIANS, NOT JUST CHILDREN

We have already met the παιδαγωγός, that gruff "boy-leader" ancient fathers used to ensure that sons got to and from school without dalliance, paid due attention in class, completed assignments, comported themselves appropriately in polite society, and declaimed Homer and other classical authors without barbarisms.⁶³ In the New Testament παιδαγωγός occurs three times in two separate locations (1 Cor 4:15; Gal 3:24, 25); in the first Paul writes that although the Corinthians have ten thousand *paidagogoi* in Christ, they do not have many fathers, "for I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (1 Cor 4:15; *μυρίους* is the word Paul chooses, of spiritual "tutors" who, no doubt, seemed significant to the Corinthian Christians at the time)—there was only one "father" (that is, Paul himself) who, through the gospel, had actually brought the Corinthians to new life in Christ—that is, had "birthed" them "through the gospel" (διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου . . . ἐγέννησα).⁶⁴ So the passage maintains the tremendous divide in Greco-Roman society between the *pater familias* (free-born, citizen, fully enfranchised, and so forth) and the innumerable slave-tutors one imagines scurried about the master's house—poking one boy, prodding another, cuffing still another—each doing his respective part to mold son material into perfect Roman gentlemen!⁶⁵

A comparable picture appears in Galatians 3:24–26. Paul writes that

the ruins of Western culture should, at the very least, have a great, informed appreciation for one of the great foundation stones of that culture—and that is the reformational [*sic*] world and life view. At the very least, ACCS schools should expect to attract Reformed applicants for teaching positions and Reformed parents seeking to enroll their children. And it is my conviction that any school that is nervous about this or hostile to it cannot hope to maintain an education that presents any alternative to the foolishness of modernity" (Wilson, *The Paideia of God*, 56).

62. For example, "The classical Christian school movement is, in fact, self-consciously in the stream of historic Protestant orthodoxy. Most of those involved are in fact Reformed, while some are Lutheran, and some are part of that vanishing breed, the vertebrate evangelical" (Ibid., 55).

63. See quotations from Ps-Plutarch *De Liberis Educandis* 3f, 4a, 4b, 4c, and 5a in Part I above.

64. "The phrasing shows that fatherhood is no mere metaphor; it is real, 'spiritual' fatherhood" (H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, Hermeneia [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1975], 91). For Paul's spiritual "fatherhood" elsewhere see Philemon 10.

65. For the role of παιδαγωγοί in general in Roman society see J. G. Nordling, Philemon, Concordia Commentary Series (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2004), 78–79.

the law [ὁ νόμος] was our slave master unto Christ [παιδαγωγός ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν] in order that we might be justified by faith. But since faith came [ἐλθούσης . . . τῆς πίστεως] we are no longer under the slave master [οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν ἐσμεν]. For you are all sons of God [υἱοὶ θεοῦ] through faith in Christ Jesus.

I have taken the liberty of translating the passage afresh since the standard versions detract from the tremendous idea that the original Greek conveys. Here Paul places Christians into the position of son and God's law (ὁ νόμος) into the position of the παιδαγωγός. But what does εἰς Χριστόν mean? Too many translations render "until Christ came" (RSV NRSV TEV NET TNIV), which is certainly possible on the basis of salvation history;⁶⁶ however, I believe a truer sense of the passage emerges from the understanding that here Paul speaks of the law delivering previously enslaved humanity "unto Christ" (KJV NKJV) or just "to Christ" (NIV).⁶⁷ Paul has just written that before faith came, we were "kept under the law [ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα], shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed [συγκλειόμενοι εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι]" (Gal 3:23 KJV). As Paul personifies sin as "lady sin" or "mistress sin" (my own imaginative translation of ἀμαρτίαν, Gal 3:22), so he personifies the law as "the universal prison warden" in Gal 3:23.⁶⁸ But under God's even stricter watch, the law—that harsh παιδαγωγός-unto-Christ (Gal 3:24a)—was constrained to deliver us directly to God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for ransom and deliverance. As so often happens, Luther manages to summarize nicely such profundities and capture the evangelical intent of otherwise obscure passages. Expanding upon the idea that the law is our custodian unto Christ (Gal 3:24a), Luther writes:

Just as boys are under a custodian until they acquire their inheritance—that is, to be trained by him for the purpose of attaining the inheritance—so the Law is our custodian to Christ, that is, in order that after being driven and trained by the Law we may be made ready to seek and sigh for Christ, for faith, and for the inheritance. For the Law, as I have said, prepares for grace in that it reveals and increases sin; it humbles the proud, so that they long for Christ's help. . . . Thus we read in Ps. 69:16: "For Thy steadfast love is good, O Lord." Why? Because Thy Law, O Lord, is bitter. Accordingly, a boy will not remain under a custodian but

66. See Rom 10:4; Gal 3:19. Also, "until the advent of Christ. As in [Gal 3:23, the basic force of the preposition εἰς] is temporal, 'until'" (J. L. Martyn, *Galatians*, Anchor Bible 33A [New York: Doubleday, 1997], 363).

67. "There is also . . . a minor note of purpose, in the strictly limited sense that Paul speaks not of the goal of the Law itself—as though it had been a friendly teacher—but rather of the goal God had in mind even during the period of the Law. . . . The Law was compelled to serve God's intention simply by holding all human beings in a bondage that precluded every route of deliverance except that of Christ" (Martyn, *Galatians*, 364).

68. So Martyn, *Galatians*.

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What God ordains is always good;
His will abideth holy.
As He directs my life for me,
I follow meek and lowly.
My God indeed
In every need
Doth well know how to shield me;
To Him, then, I will yield me. (TLH 521:1)

This is the hymn I used to sing each home visit to Albert and Minnie Leveranz, long-time members of Grace English Lutheran Church (Chicago, Illinois), whose only son had died horribly in a fire many years before, provoking the long-standing question, Why, Lord? Since that time there had been many reverses in the Leveranz family: old age with its ailments, a bitter and resentful spirit on the part of Minnie (which clashed often with Al's steadier disposition), and a rich faith life at Grace English reduced to monthly visits with the pastor, and the blessed sacrament. Also they had to put up with my singing that hymn for them many times—nearly every time I visited them, in fact, for several years—while both became weaker, grumpier, and more depressed. Faith accepts that as God "directs my life for me, I follow meek and lowly." Which is to say that as Jesus bore his cross in disgrace and humiliation to Golgotha with all our sins attached, so the Christian of whatever station—both great and small, both child and adult—likewise is given a cross to bear along with Jesus. Such, I submit, is the true "*paideia* of the Lord" that has been the subject of this article. We cannot allow Douglas Wilson and other well-meaning conservatives to restrict the "*paideia* of God" to children! No, in our respective baptisms into Christ Jesus and in our respective callings in this world, we are all being trained in the faith—"schooled in the gospel," so to speak.

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is just one species of orthodox Protestantism,⁶² and no great shake. I would maintain, however, that being a Lutheran educator (and not just a generic Christian one) is significant and does considerably influence one's understanding of the ideal *paideia*. And what is the "ideal *paideia*"? Answer: that which "schools" us sinners in Christ, even when teaching establishments and educational delivery systems differ markedly—or even leave much to be desired.

BIBLICAL PAIDEIA IS INTENDED FOR ALL CHRISTIANS, NOT JUST CHILDREN

We have already met the παιδαγωγός, that gruff "boy-leader" ancient fathers used to ensure that sons got to and from school without dalliance, paid due attention in class, completed assignments, comported themselves appropriately in polite society, and declaimed Homer and other classical authors without barbarisms.⁶³ In the New Testament παιδαγωγός occurs three times in two separate locations (1 Cor 4:15; Gal 3:24, 25); in the first Paul writes that although the Corinthians have ten thousand *paidagogoi* in Christ, they do not have many fathers, "for I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (1 Cor 4:15; *μυρίους* is the word Paul chooses, of spiritual "tutors" who, no doubt, seemed significant to the Corinthian Christians at the time)—there was only one "father" (that is, Paul himself) who, through the gospel, had actually brought the Corinthians to new life in Christ—that is, had "birthed" them "through the gospel" (διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου . . . ἐγέννησα).⁶⁴ So the passage maintains the tremendous divide in Greco-Roman society between the *pater familias* (free-born, citizen, fully enfranchised, and so forth) and the innumerable slave-tutors one imagines scurried about the master's house—poking one boy, prodding another, cuffing still another—each doing his respective part to mold son material into perfect Roman gentlemen!⁶⁵

A comparable picture appears in Galatians 3:24–26. Paul writes that

the ruins of Western culture should, at the very least, have a great, informed appreciation for one of the great foundation stones of that culture—and that is the reformational [*sic*] world and life view. At the very least, ACCS schools should expect to attract Reformed applicants for teaching positions and Reformed parents seeking to enroll their children. And it is my conviction that any school that is nervous about this or hostile to it cannot hope to maintain an education that presents any alternative to the foolishness of modernity" (Wilson, *The Paideia of God*, 56).

62. For example, "The classical Christian school movement is, in fact, self-consciously in the stream of historic Protestant orthodoxy. Most of those involved are in fact Reformed, while some are Lutheran, and some are part of that vanishing breed, the vertebrate evangelical" (Ibid., 55).

63. See quotations from Ps-Plutarch *De Liberis Educandis* 3f, 4a, 4b, 4c, and 5a in Part I above.

64. "The phrasing shows that fatherhood is no mere metaphor; it is real, 'spiritual' fatherhood" (H. Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, Hermeneia [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1975], 91). For Paul's spiritual "fatherhood" elsewhere see Philemon 10.

65. For the role of παιδαγωγοί in general in Roman society see J. G. Nordling, Philemon, Concordia Commentary Series (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2004), 78–79.

the law [ὁ νόμος] was our slave master unto Christ [παιδαγωγός ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν] in order that we might be justified by faith. But since faith came [ἐλθούσης . . . τῆς πίστεως] we are no longer under the slave master [οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν ἐσμεν]. For you are all sons of God [υἱοὶ θεοῦ] through faith in Christ Jesus.

I have taken the liberty of translating the passage afresh since the standard versions detract from the tremendous idea that the original Greek conveys. Here Paul places Christians into the position of son and God's law (ὁ νόμος) into the position of the παιδαγωγός. But what does εἰς Χριστόν mean? Too many translations render "until Christ came" (RSV NRSV TEV NET TNIV), which is certainly possible on the basis of salvation history;⁶⁶ however, I believe a truer sense of the passage emerges from the understanding that here Paul speaks of the law delivering previously enslaved humanity "unto Christ" (KJV NKJV) or just "to Christ" (NIV).⁶⁷ Paul has just written that before faith came, we were "kept under the law [ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα], shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed [συγκλειόμενοι εἰς τὴν μέλλουσαν πίστιν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι]" (Gal 3:23 KJV). As Paul personifies sin as "lady sin" or "mistress sin" (my own imaginative translation of ἀμαρτίαν, Gal 3:22), so he personifies the law as "the universal prison warden" in Gal 3:23.⁶⁸ But under God's even stricter watch, the law—that harsh παιδαγωγός-unto-Christ (Gal 3:24a)—was constrained to deliver us directly to God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for ransom and deliverance. As so often happens, Luther manages to summarize nicely such profundities and capture the evangelical intent of otherwise obscure passages. Expanding upon the idea that the law is our custodian unto Christ (Gal 3:24a), Luther writes:

Just as boys are under a custodian until they acquire their inheritance—that is, to be trained by him for the purpose of attaining the inheritance—so the Law is our custodian to Christ, that is, in order that after being driven and trained by the Law we may be made ready to seek and sigh for Christ, for faith, and for the inheritance. For the Law, as I have said, prepares for grace in that it reveals and increases sin; it humbles the proud, so that they long for Christ's help. . . . Thus we read in Ps. 69:16: "For Thy steadfast love is good, O Lord." Why? Because Thy Law, O Lord, is bitter. Accordingly, a boy will not remain under a custodian but

66. See Rom 10:4; Gal 3:19. Also, "until the advent of Christ. As in [Gal 3:23, the basic force of the preposition εἰς] is temporal, 'until'" (J. L. Martyn, *Galatians*, Anchor Bible 33A [New York: Doubleday, 1997], 363).

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CONCLUSION

Thus “the *paideia* of the Lord” is not so much a banding-together to protect our children from the pernicious influences of American education (as some believe) as it is rather the way that God uses in his fatherly goodness to school his saints through the crosses he sends, the frustrations we experience, the daily dying-to-self and rising-to-new-life-again in Christ Jesus that happens as we repent of our sins and so are forgiven

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for Jesus’ sake through the pastor’s absolution and preaching of the gospel. I would have to say that, theologically, παιδεία and (especially) the παιδαγωγός are both constructs of God’s law which, in themselves, cannot save—and, indeed—increase our distress. For the Christian, however, even the severe law with all its accusations and demands is transformed so that under

God’s fatherly guidance there is a unique *paideia* that God has prepared just for me to kick out all those false props that do not want me to “hallow God’s name nor let his kingdom come” (Lord’s Prayer, Third Petition). But the cross that God assigns and the troubles that befall help me—kicking against the pricks the while—to call out for God’s mercies in spite of myself, to trust God’s promises in his word instead of what my eyes can see, and to hunger and thirst for Christ’s kingdom and his righteousness instead of wallow in my own subjective feelings and experiences of things in this world, which is passing away. *Paideia* of this type is painful and life-long. We could never endure it were it not for Christ and the gospel we are privileged to hear. But with Christ, the sinner, forgiven and restored, can cope—yea, can more than cope. With Christ at his side the Christian can in fact bear his cross well and faithfully, and help others to do the same. I leave you now with another great hymn ringing in your ears:

The Word they still shall let remain
Nor any thanks have for it;
He’s by our side upon the plain
With his good gifts and Spirit.
And take they our life,
Goods, fame, child, and wife,
Let these all be gone,
They yet have nothing won;
The kingdom ours remaineth. (TLH 262:4)

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