

## Introduction

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Education prompts certain fundamental questions about itself: who is (or should be) educated? By whom? By what means? About what should people be educated, and to what end? In the history of Christianity, these questions have been given a particular colour due to the fact that Christians trace their faith back to a teacher (rabbi), Jesus, and his disciples (*mathētai*).<sup>1</sup> Questions about who should be educated and how have become inextricable from the question of how the original teachings of Jesus were transmitted to later generations. This immediately brings to the fore problems regarding authority, interpretation and inclusivity (or exclusivity). As the articles in this volume show, Christians have responded to these issues in a wide variety of ways.

Besides internal disagreements about the scope, form and purpose of Christian teaching and about the authority of Christian teachers, questions about education have also been provoked by the complex relationship between Christianity and its various contexts. Some of these concern specific cultural influences: how have Christian approaches to education changed according to the use of different languages, different literary traditions and different modes of teaching? How have the churches responded to technical changes surrounding writing, book-making and communication? And to what extent has Christianity been interested in education towards ends which are not directly religious? Some of these questions reflect the complex relationship between Christianity, culture and political power. Most of our evidence of early Christianity, for example, relates to Christians in the Roman empire, where specifically Christian modes of education (catechetical, pastoral and ascetic) coexisted for a surprisingly long time alongside the traditional educational systems of Greek and Latin culture. Long after Constantine's reign, Christian parents continued to send their sons to schools which taught literacy and rhetoric through prolonged engagement with texts whose

<sup>1</sup> Of many examples one could cite, Jesus is addressed as 'Rabbi' (ῥαββί) by Peter (Mk 9: 5), Judas (Mk 14: 45), John's disciples (Jn 1: 38), Nathaniel (Jn 1: 49), Nicodemus (Jn 3: 2) and Mary Magdalene (Jn 20: 16). The designation 'disciples' (οἱ μαθηταί) is ubiquitous in the Gospels.

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religious outlook was decidedly not Christian or even monotheist. Later, Christian foundations became the primary location for all kinds of formal education in most of Europe, although the situation remained much more complex in those regions where Christianity had taken root beyond the boundaries of the Roman empire. In some regions, Jews, Christians and Muslims continued to influence each other closely for centuries, not least in the content and modes of their education. Still later, under the dual drivers of mission and empire, Christians frequently found themselves in contexts where they were a numerical minority in terms of religion, language and culture, but where they were associated – explicitly or implicitly – with invasive European imperial power. As several articles in this volume demonstrate, questions regarding education become especially sharp when the Christian Church, or a Christian church, has been particularly closely associated with an empire or nation state. How does education function, for example, when Christianity is implicated with the efforts of those in power to shape those under their authority? Conversely, how has education been used by Christians to resist certain forms of power, whether that of formal political authority or that of social privilege? What motivates parents to educate their children in ways which are forbidden or discouraged by the state?

Bound up with such issues are questions about the form and location of education: were churches in a particular context concerned only with the education of people to be Christian disciples or also with their education in numeracy, literacy and more complex intellectual or practical skills? How formalized were these forms of education? These issues have, of course, particular pertinence for the education of women, which for many centuries took place almost exclusively in a domestic sphere or in ascetic communities; they also relate to the education of those for whom much formal education was inaccessible due, for example, to poverty or disability, or to speaking a different mother tongue. While Christianity has at times actively restricted the scope of education – especially to men – several articles in the volume examine how some Christians have argued that it is a prime role of the Church to extend education as far as possible.

These articles arise from two conferences organized by the Ecclesiastical History Society, in July 2017, at the University of Exeter, and January 2018, at the Institute for Historical Research in London. The society invited a broad range of responses to the kind of questions noted above, and received a wonderfully

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stimulating selection of papers which ranged broadly in chronological range (from Late Antiquity to the 1970s) and geographical spread (from studies of English, Scottish and Welsh communities to examinations of Christian education across the globe in, for example, China, India, New Zealand, Sierra Leone, South Africa and the West Indies). We are delighted that this has resulted in such a rich edited volume. The purpose of this introduction will not be to summarize the content of each contribution, but rather to point the reader towards some notable themes emerging from the articles.

One of the interesting tensions to emerge is the relationship between the further education of those who were already educated and the elementary education of the majority. Our reliance on written evidence for our understanding of Christian education in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, together with low literary rates in those periods, perhaps explains the tendency of historians to focus on the (further) education of an educated elite, whether this is the education of the clergy in pastoral care (Leontidou, Hamilton, Springer) or the transmission of technical knowledge about astronomy (Falk) through monasteries. The study of form, as well as content, however, opens up questions about how people were educated, not least suggesting the possibility that some forms were appropriate for the less well trained, especially for those who could not read but who were experienced listeners. Pick and Evans show how specific literary forms – historiography, hagiography and dialogue – were used for Christian educational purposes in specific contexts. Ludlow and Lunn-Rockliffe's article, meanwhile, suggests that pleasure, including the pleasure of listening, was an important and under-appreciated educational mode in Late Antiquity, the legacy of which can be seen in Fidlerová's study of preaching and rhetoric in the Habsburg empire.

Given the strongly pedagogic bent of many of the Reformers and of their Catholic contemporaries, it is perhaps not surprising that articles examining the early modern period focus more intently on the education of the laity, especially through sermons and in catechisms, as shown in the articles by Atherton and Martin. Lied shows how works of fiction could have a catechetical function. Printed books and increasing literacy rates meant that Christian educational materials could be both officially sanctioned and available in the domestic sphere. In this period there is also much more evidence regarding Christian education for children and the specific aims of their educators. Walsham's article draws attention to the way in which families

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and institutions played complementary roles in forming children in a particular Christian tradition – in this case, Quakerism. By contrast, Bowden shows that the desire for a good Christian education sometimes cut across Protestant-Catholic dividing lines in surprising ways, as when Protestant parents sent their daughters to Catholic schools.

A popular theme for the two conferences was church-sponsored education of poor children: Jacob, Dixon and Mair examine English schools in the eighteenth, early nineteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, respectively; the article by Billinge, Ham, Moss and Neville compares schools in three Devon communities; Yates studies the efforts of the circulating schools movement to make education accessible in remote parts of Wales. Thor explores the education of women in Scottish Magdalene Asylums. Examinations of these various institutions reveal intense debates about the effectiveness and the aims of the education provided: should philanthropic Christians aim to provide literacy and numeracy, or practical skills, or to further more spiritual (or even political) aims? A further set of articles analyses the relationship between churches, the state and education: Mallon considers the interactions between established and dissenting Presbyterian churches in debates about the state provision of education in mid-nineteenth-century Scotland; moving forward to the early twentieth century, Smith and Masom analyse debates in the Church of England about church-aided schools, and Doney studies recommendations from the British Council of Churches during the 1960s and 1970s regarding religious education in state schools.

Rapid cultural and technological changes during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries not only presented challenges but also new opportunities for Christian lay education, as is shown, from very different perspectives, by Ottewill's study of adult lay education in English Congregationalism and Pruneri's examination of Catholic responses to secularism in early twentieth-century Italy. Other articles study specific developments in church involvement in education, for example, changing perceptions of the role of Sunday School education (McCartney) and Methodist engagement with higher education in Oxford following the removal of restrictions placed on Nonconformists (Wellings).

Empires were, of course, important contexts for Christian educational enterprises; in this respect there are some continuities of theme between this volume and its predecessors, *Translating Christianity* and *The Church and Empire*. Several articles in the former volume showed

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how the introduction of Christianity from one context into another was preceded by, or led to, educational projects, some specifically linguistic (like the translation of the Bible or other religious texts), others more broadly cultural (like efforts to form a liturgical tradition in a new context or to use indigenous cultural forms such as theatre in Christian education). The broad theme of Church and empire is taken up in this volume by articles such as those by Dornan and Moon, which examine complex questions around the aims and means of education by Christians in various nineteenth-century colonial contexts: New Zealand, the British West Indies, Africa and India. Chapman argues that, for some influential Anglican missionaries, a movement from evangelizing to educating was underpinned both by a theological conviction that truth could be found beyond Christianity and by the much more problematic idea that the cultures of the East were, in the language of the day, ‘higher civilizations’ in comparison to those encountered in other mission fields. Morrison focuses on education, not of the recipients of mission, but of those children in Britain and elsewhere who were being educated by Sunday Schools, youth mission societies and magazines to support missionary effort: this did not just raise money, but was also aimed at forming children in various ways as young Christian world citizens. Finally, two fine prize-winning articles by Bond and Wang engage with Christianity, education and colonialism in the Chinese context. Each gives an especially subtle analysis of the interaction between local and Western agency in Chinese educational establishments during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Bond studying the Chinese educationalist Zeng Baosun and the Yifang School for Girls which she founded in Changsha in 1918, and Wang examining how the tensions which were perceived to exist between being Christian and being Chinese played out in the history of the Tientsin Anglo-Chinese College during the early twentieth century.

I would like to thank all participants in the two conferences, and especially those whose articles appear here, for their stimulating and scholarly contributions, which have greatly enhanced my own understanding of this topic. I am most grateful to my co-editors, Charlotte Methuen and Andrew Spicer, and the assistant editor, Tim Grass, for the care and professionalism which they have dedicated to this volume.

Morwenna Ludlow

## Education and Pleasure in the Early Church: Perspectives from East and West

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*Early Christian teachers and preachers were often cautious about, if not suspicious of, pleasure, but they also had a lively awareness of the psychological aspects of pedagogy, and of the power of pleasure and delight to persuade, move, instruct and even convert. This article explores the treatment of pleasure as a pedagogical tool, tracing this subject through the lens of sermons, letters, treatises and poetry written in Latin and Greek and drawing out both classical and biblical themes. It notes that, while most of the authors considered acknowledge pleasure as a potential problem in pedagogy, it is a problem they attempt to navigate. The article sketches out various approaches to the problem, noting especially the pleasure involved in reading, performing and expounding Scripture; pleasure used as a conscious educational strategy; and discussions which weigh up the dangers and gains of pleasure in education.*

In the late fourth century, Maximus, bishop of Turin, returned to his congregation after a few days' absence, probably to attend a church council. He began his sermon by promising to preach 'something richer', to 'refresh' them 'with a sweet sermon', after returning from what he memorably calls 'such a swarm of bishops'. 'That's right', Maximus continued: 'I said "a swarm of bishops", since like the bee they produce delightful honey from the blossoms of divine scriptures, and whatever pertains to the medicine of souls they make by the skill of their mouth'.<sup>1</sup> The arresting image of bishops

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<sup>1</sup> Maximus of Turin, *Sermo* 89 (transl. Boniface Ramsey, ACW 50 [New York, 1989], 211). As Ramsey notes (348 n. 1), Maximus's apian imagery bears some resemblance to Ambrose's *In hexameron* 5.21, but the idea of bishops as busy bees is found in other Latin preachers of the period: see, for example, Augustine, *Epistula* 109 (*Letters*, 2: *Letters* 83–130, transl. Sr Wilfrid Parsons, FOTC 18 [Washington DC, 2008], 239), from Severus of Milevius, in which Severus addresses Augustine thus: 'O truly skilful bee of God, building

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working like busy bees to distil the Bible into delicious sweetness introduces the subject of this article: the role of pleasure in education in the late antique, post-Constantinian church. The so-called ‘Fathers of the Church’ sometimes appear rather austere. Ambrose, bishop of Milan in the late fourth century, counselled his fellow clergy to avoid all kinds of jokes; although at times honourable and pleasant, they were, he said, ‘quite at odds with the rule of the church’.<sup>2</sup> But Christian teachers and preachers also had a lively awareness of the psychological aspects of pedagogy, and of the power of pleasure and delight to persuade, move, instruct and even convert. This article will explore the treatment of pleasure as a pedagogical tool through the lens of sermons, letters, treatises and poetry written in Latin and Greek.

In doing so, we will bring to the fore a theme which runs in and out of discussions of Christian discourse in Late Antiquity like a golden thread. Scholars have followed the Christian authors’ own tendency to ponder the dangers of physical pleasures and the task of nurturing spiritual desire, attentive especially to the complex relationship between the two. The pleasure of words has been less of a scholarly focus, although there have been treatments of (for example) Gregory of Nazianzus’s use of pleasure as a poetic device, the pedagogy of ‘leading the soul through words’ in John Chrysostom and Augustine’s treatment of delightful speech in *De doctrina Christiana*.<sup>3</sup> Such discussions acknowledge the influence of classical arguments (beginning at least as early as Socrates) about the power of pleasure to persuade. They perhaps pay somewhat less attention

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a honeycomb filled with divine nectar’. On Maximus, see Pauline Allen, ‘Impact, Influence and Identity in Latin Preaching: The Cases of Maximus of Turin and Peter Chrysologus of Ravenna’, in A. Dupont et al., eds, *Preaching in the Patristic Era: Sermons, Preachers and Audiences in the Latin West* (Leiden, 2018), 135–58.

<sup>2</sup> Ambrose of Milan, *De officiis* 1.23.102–3 (transl. Ivor J. Davidson, 2 vols, OECIS [Oxford, 2002], 1: 177). In this, Christians shared much in common with other philosophers; for examples, see David Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy: The Coherence of his Theology and Preaching* (Oxford, 2014), 277–8.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Stratis Papaioannou, ‘Gregory and the Constraint of Sameness’, in Jostein Børtnes and Tomas Hägg, eds, *Gregory of Nazianzus: Images and Reflections* (Copenhagen, 2006), 59–81; Rylaarsdam, *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy*, 13–54, 228–82 (chs 1, 6); and (two very different examples in a large literature) Rowan Williams, ‘Language, Reality and Desire in Augustine’s *De doctrina*’, *Literature and Theology* 3 (1989), 138–50; Michael Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca, NY, 1989), 125–32.

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to assumptions, common across the ancient world, about the power of poetry and music to soothe and penetrate the soul. A notable exception is Carol Harrison's absorbing treatment of the *Art of Listening*: although pleasure is not the dominant theme of her analysis, her work is an important perspective on pleasure as both a problematic and a positive response to Christian speech.<sup>4</sup>

In what follows, then, we hope to begin to draw some of these threads together, highlighting pleasure's specifically educational role and drawing out both classical and biblical themes. We will note that, while most of the authors discussed here acknowledge pleasure as a potential problem in pedagogy, it is a problem they attempt to navigate. We will sketch out various approaches to the problem and will seek to identify in them any shared understanding of the function of pleasure in education. We begin first by outlining the parameters of what we mean by 'education' in a specifically Christian late antique context.

The subjects taught by late antique bishops and others varied widely depending on their audience and context. For adult converts in the catechumenate, the programme of teaching was carefully and deliberately staged.<sup>5</sup> As Ambrose explains in his treatise on *The Mysteries*, delivered to an audience of catechumens, he had up to that point addressed moral topics connected to lessons from the Old Testament; but at this point in Lent, he turned to the 'mysteries', that is, the meaning of the sacraments, a topic which was not profaned by being shared with all and any listeners but only revealed to catechumens close to the point at which they were to be baptized at Easter.<sup>6</sup> Another climactic point of teaching in Lent was the exposition of the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, whether just to catechumens or to mixed audiences, with the Creed itself cast as an

<sup>4</sup> Carol Harrison, *The Art of Listening in the Early Church* (Oxford, 2013); Patricia Cox Miller, *The Corporeal Imagination: Signifying the Holy in Late Ancient Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA, 2009), 42–81 (chs 2–3); Roberts, *Jeweled Style*. See also, on a broader range of authors, Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Farnham, 2009), 21, 76, 99–100.

<sup>5</sup> See Everett Ferguson, 'Catechesis and Initiation', in Alan Kreider, ed., *The Origins of Christendom in the West* (New York, 2001), 229–68; William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville, MN, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Ambrose, *De mysteriis* 1.1–2; see also Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus* and Peter Chrysologus's catechetical *Sermones* 56–72. In the East, catechetical works by Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catechetical Lectures* and *Mystagogical Lectures*) and John Chrysostom (*Baptismal Instructions*) survive.



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epitome of Scripture for beginners.<sup>7</sup> For those attending church services, the main ‘teaching’ moment in church was the sermon, which usually revolved around exegesis of the lessons read during the service, but which also often had distinctive moral and even polemical dimensions. Other forms of text – particularly hymnody, composed for performance within the liturgy by writers such as Ephrem, Ambrose and Paulinus – also had clearly educational functions, whether expanding on the content of Scripture or expounding the mysteries of faith.<sup>8</sup> Outside the ecclesiastical context, elite and intellectually ambitious Christians could pursue private scriptural and linguistic study, either in house groups, such as the women’s groups patronized by Jerome in Rome, or virtual groups made possible through the exchange of letters. They could listen to or read devotional and instructive poetry by writers such as Proba, Prudentius, Sedulius and Gregory of Nazianzus.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See the characterizations of Nicetas of Remesiana, book 5 of whose *Instructio ad competentes* comprised an explanation of the Creed; Augustine, *De fide et symbolo* 1, idem *De symbolo ad catechumenos* 1. Christian teachers also offered explanations of the Creed for more advanced audiences, particularly in polemical contexts, such as Rufinus of Aquileia, *Commentarius in symbolum apostolorum*, written for bishop Laurentius. For a sermon on the Creed addressed to a mixed audience of baptized Christians and catechumens, see Peter Chrysologus, *Sermo* 62. Gregory of Nyssa wrote series of sermons on the Lord’s Prayer and on the Beatitudes for a general audience.

<sup>8</sup> On Ambrose’s hymnody, see Brian Dunkle, *Enchantment and Creed in the Hymns of Ambrose of Milan* (Oxford, 2016), 13–51 (ch. 1), with useful comparative discussion of other authors from Ephrem to Hilary and Augustine.

<sup>9</sup> On early Christian poetry, see especially Jaś Elsner and Jesús Hernández Lobato, eds, *The Poetics of Late Latin Literature* (Oxford, 2017); Karla Pollmann, *The Baptized Muse: Early Christian Poetry as Cultural Authority* (Oxford, 2017), especially 37–75, 161–75 (chs 2, 7) for Prudentius, 101–19 (ch. 4) for Proba. On Proba, see also Elizabeth A. Clark, ‘The Virgilian Cento of Faltonia Betitia Proba’, *Studia Patristica* 17/1 (1982), 412–16; Martin Bazil, ‘“Rem nulli obscuram repetens”’. Les Stratégies intertextuelles dans l’exorde du *Cento Probae*’, *Graecolatina Pragensia* 20 (2004), 15–25; Sigrid Schottenius Cullhed, *Proba the Prophet: The Christian Virgilian Cento of Faltonia Betitia Proba* (Leiden, 2015). On Prudentius, see, for example, Anne-Marie Palmer, *Prudentius on the Martyrs*, Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford, 2006); Brian Dunkle, ‘Ambrosian Imitation in Sedulius and Prudentius’, in idem, *Enchantment and Creed*, 186–213. On Sedulius, see, for example, Carl P. E. Springer, *The Gospel as Epic in Late Antiquity: The Paschale Carmen of Sedulius*, Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* 2 (Leiden, 1988); Sedulius, *The Paschal Song and Hymns*, transl. Carl P. E. Springer, Writings from the Greco-Roman World 35 (Atlanta, GA, 2013); Dunkle, ‘Ambrosian Imitation’. On Gregory of Nazianzus, see, for example, Neil B. McLynn, ‘Among the Hellenists: Gregory and the Sophists’, in Børtnes and Hägg, eds, *Gregory of Nazianzus*, 213–38; Suzanne Abrams Rebillard, ‘The Autobiographical *Prosopopoeia* of Gregory of Nazianzus’, *Studia Patristica* 47 (2010), 123–8; eadem, ‘Historiography as Devotion: *Poemata de seipso*’, in Christopher

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As well as educating their congregations, bishops were involved in the formation of other clerics in and beyond their dioceses, both their peers in the episcopate and lower orders of clergy. Thus Gregory of Nyssa's so-called *Catechetical Oration* is a text teaching other clerics how to teach, with particular attention paid to how to present what is taught: 'the same method of instruction' is not 'suitable in the case of all who approach the word', therefore 'the method of recovery must be adapted to the form of the disease'.<sup>10</sup>

As these comments suggest, this discussion concerns in part texts composed by and for a fairly well-educated elite. The letters to fellow clerics found in the letter collections of Ambrose, Augustine or the 'Cappadocians', for example, assume a confidently literate audience, who could respond in kind.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, much poetry, even if heard rather than read, assumed an audience sophisticated enough to appreciate its skill and beauty. However, as Harrison has reminded us, literacy in the ancient world did not necessarily entail the ability to read confidently by oneself.<sup>12</sup> Someone with a middling education would have had a degree of familiarity with classics by Homer or Vergil or (in a Christian context) with the most cited books of the Bible, simply by repeated hearing. Theatre was a very popular and reasonably accessible medium in Late Antiquity and spread knowledge of certain traditional myths as well as certain stock characters.<sup>13</sup> Finally, many of the Christian texts discussed in this article were first communicated

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A Beeley, ed., *Re-Reading Gregory of Nazianzus: Essays on History, Theology, and Culture* (Washington DC, 2012), 125–42; Brian Dunkle, 'Introduction' to *Poems on Scripture: St Gregory of Nazianzus*, Popular Patristics Series 46 (Crestwood, NY, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> 'The presiding ministers of the "mystery of godliness" have need of a system in their instructions, in order that the Church may be replenished by the accession of such as should be saved, through the teaching of the word of Faith being brought home to the hearing of unbelievers': Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio catechetica*: Preface (NPNF II 5; references to this series use the online versions at: <<http://www.ccel.org/fathers.html>>).

<sup>11</sup> The term 'Cappadocians' conventionally designates the literary circle of Basil, his brother Gregory of Nyssa and Basil's friend Gregory of Nazianzus (and sometimes some of their associates).

<sup>12</sup> Harrison, *Art of Listening*, especially 4.

<sup>13</sup> According to Agnieszka Kotlińska-Toma, theatre was 'the most accessible and egalitarian form of mass entertainment' in the Hellenistic period: *Hellenistic Tragedy: Texts, Translations and a Critical Survey* (London, 2015), 2–3, 7, 25, 28. Blake Leyerle has argued, from the style and content of John Chrysostom's preaching, that a broad section of his congregation had a familiarity with various forms of theatre: *Theatrical Shows and Ascetic Lives: John Chrysostom's Attack on Spiritual Marriage* (Berkeley, CA, 2001), especially 13–16, 20–1, 160.