

# The LUTHERAN CLARION



Lutheran Concerns Association

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## Our Residential Seminary Education: Its Necessity for all Pastors

During this year some district conventions of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have considered overtures and resolutions that encourage the synod and/or districts to return to the practice of recruiting and commissioning district Licensed Lay Deacons (LLD) for Word and Sacrament ministry. Other overtures and resolutions encourage the use of distance, i.e., online, seminary education for LLDs, immigrants, and non-Anglos.<sup>1</sup> In all of these type of resolutions, there is an attempt to deny the necessity of residential seminary education for Word and Sacrament ministry. "Residential" means that the candidate for Word and Sacrament ministry spends significant time in-person with his professors, peers, and supervisors during the process of theological education and formation. If adopted by the synod, these resolutions would undo synod Resolution 13-03 in 2016 and synod Resolutions 6-02 and 6-03a in 2019.<sup>2</sup> That seems to be their intent.

In my district conventions in 2018 and 2022, I heard a number of men expressing their reasons, or excuses, for not attending seminary in-person. After considering all these reasons, it has occurred to me that all men who enter Word and Sacrament ministry have to shoulder some financial burden at some time. The majority of those who enter seminary straight from college never have the opportunity to have a financially-profitable career, because there are few parish calls of that sort. Those who enter the ministry as a second-career may give up profitable jobs, but they often have financial reserves and home equity that the college graduates don't have. Almost all pastors have to relocate sometime in their career.

So, let's be frank. Those who do not want to shoulder the financial burden of seminary education and the inconveniences of relocation are, in fact, unworthy of the office. Jesus said, "Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple" (Matthew 16:24-28; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 14:25-33). Jesus was met by a rich young man who wanted to join the cohort of Jesus' disciples, but could not give up his wealth. Peter told Jesus, "We have left all to follow you!" (Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30). The apostles had good reasons for putting these stories in all the synoptic Gospels, because the reluctance to bear the financial burden and relocate is a perennial issue. Lest someone accuse me of glorifying ministerial poverty, the

*Continued on page 2, left column.*

## PLI: Past and Present (Part 1)

### History to the Present Day

Almost 25 years ago, PLI (Pastoral Leadership Institute) burst on the LCMS scene. It was only a matter of time. Many of the district presidents in the Synod's COP (Council of Presidents) had already been desiring the growth seen in the Willow Creek Community Church. Their district staff were in lock-step with them. When the LCEF (Lutheran Church Extension Fund) asked several pastors what could be done in 1997 to make a long-range impact on the church, the answer came back: Train pastors in leadership skills.<sup>1</sup> The idea behind PLI was born.

Today's PLI has now distanced itself from its original ideas and plans. The FAQ's section on their website states:

"When PLI began, the initials stood for Pastoral Leadership Institute. However, as times changed, PLI adapted with the changing culture. PLI trains and invests in multiplying missional leaders – pastors for sure, but also spouses and leaders from congregations – so **Pastoral** [bold print not in the original] wasn't quite capturing the essence of PLI. And, PLI teachings focus not only on leadership, but also mission and discipleship – so **Leadership** [bold added] didn't fully explain PLI either. And, finally **Institute** [bold added] – PLI is more of a movement to equip today's pastors, spouses and key leaders to reach people for Jesus. PLI used to mean Pastoral Leadership Institute but now it stands for so much more that we are simply PLI."<sup>2</sup>

Yet the same impetus—basically the same complaints and accusations that led to PLI's formation—continue to be repeated: "The culture around the church has shifted. There are too few mission focused churches. Too few church leaders. Christians don't have the tools to lead where it matters most—in their neighborhoods, workplaces and cities."<sup>3</sup> The idea is that PLI will supply those tools.

Almost twenty-five years ago, that was the plan. But it

*Continued on page 4, right column.*

In this Issue of the **Lutheran Clarion**

<b>Residential Seminary Education: It's Necessity .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PLI: Past and Present (Part 1).....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>President Harrison on Concordia Wisconsin BOR.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Higher Education: Challenges &amp; Opportunities .....</b>	<b>5</b>

### Mark Your Calendar! LCA Annual Conference

**Monday, January 16, 2023, Fort Wayne, IN**

Planning is underway for the 2023 Lutheran Concerns Association conference on Monday, January 16, 2023, in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Possible speakers are Attorney James Runzheimer (the HotChalk issue), South Wisconsin District President John Wille, LCMS fifth vice-president Rev. Chris Esget, and others.



The conference will again feature the popular Sunday and Monday evening dinners where attendees can informally meet the speakers and discuss the issues facing church and society.

Watch this space for the exact location and more information. We hope to see you there!

### Residential Seminary Education...

*Continued from page 1*

Apology of the Augsburg Confessions states that the "poverty of the Gospel (Matt. 5:3) does not consist in the abandonment of property, but in the absence of greed and of trust in riches" (Ap XXVII, 46; Tappert, 277). Right now, both LCMS seminaries guarantee that tuition is fully paid, though students still have to pay other fees, room, board, and living expenses.<sup>3</sup> Right now, the reluctant have even fewer excuses than before.

What about the idea that distance learning is as good, and cheaper, than in-person learning? Have you asked any parent of grade school or high school children whether that was true during the CoViD educational lockdowns? Have you asked any college student whether distance learning, from their dorm or apartment, was as good as their in-person classes? Have you asked any teacher of any these students the same questions? There are many prominent politicians who are seeing their careers go down in flames because parents are angry, even marching the streets in protest, about the damage done to their children by online education during CoViD. Even before CoViD, there were plenty of legitimate concerns about online education in higher education.<sup>4</sup>

It may be argued that the sort of education that goes on at seminary may be better suited than others for online education. After all, it is graduate work and graduate students are generally motivated and self-disciplined. Certainly, the departments of systematic theology, exegetical theology, and historical theology are "knowledge subjects," like others in today's university. But seminary is not only graduate work to attain knowledge of a subject matter, it is also professional training for a practice and a defined set of skills, which we call "pastoral theology" or "practical theology." In

this way, seminary training is similar to medical school, which also trains students for a practice and a defined set of skills.

What skills am I talking about? Let's start with the most difficult, i.e., preaching. Not the sort of blather and inane rhetoric that you can find among Pentecostals, charismatics, and the worst sort of Baptist and Evangelical preachers. Anyone can do that! I am talking about Lutheran expository preaching, i.e., explaining the meaning of a Bible text and applying it to the life of the hearers, in which the Gospel predominates and Jesus is the focus. This does not come naturally to anyone and can only be learned through in-person classes, workshops, rehearsal, coaching, and practice, practice, practice!

Another difficult skill taught at seminary is pedagogy, i.e., how to construct lessons and deliver them for catechesis, Bible classes, and parochial school religion courses. Other skills and practices that require in-person training are: "active listening"; the visitation of the sick, shut-ins, and hospitalized; pastoral counseling; liturgics, i.e., leading worship; the reading of Scripture; church administration; the advisory role of pastors in voter's assemblies and boards; basic parliamentary procedure; management of personnel; training of staff and officers; social relations and manners; and today, the use of technology. All these are skills and practices that every pastor needs to have, and if he doesn't have them, complaints are sure to rise to heaven and the district office!

I am guessing, from thirty-eight years of experience in the ministry, that 90-95% of the complaints about pastors are their lack of skills in these practical areas. Very rarely do we hear complaints about a pastor's doctrine, unless the complainer is ignorant of Lutheran theology. The seminaries barely have enough time in three years, plus one-year of vicarage, to equip pastors for skills in all the above-noted areas, plus teaching the knowledge subjects of doctrine, Bible, and church history.

Finally, we can never underestimate the role that peers play in seminary education. I remember that our Greek professor in college, the Rev. Charles Froehlich at Concordia, River Forest, Illinois, told us in our very first class of each quarter that we needed to find a partner to practice with. He guaranteed that those who practiced with partners would get As and Bs. Those who tried to go it alone would get Cs or Ds, or maybe fail. He was absolutely right. At seminary, at BOTH of our seminaries, Greek, Hebrew, Bible, theology, and pastoral practice are talked about all the time at meals and social events. We learn from each other, i.e., from our classmates, as much as we do from the learned professors. That is actually a testimony to the ability of our great Missouri Synod Lutheran faculties to make the course work interesting and relevant. So why would anyone want to miss out from a few years of studying

*Continued on page 4, left column.*

## Synod President Harrison Addresses Concordia University Wisconsin Board of Regents

A May 12, 2022, posting on the Brothers of John the Steadfast website contained the entire May 9, 2022 letter of Synodical President Matthew Harrison to the Concordia University Wisconsin Board of Regents (<https://steadfastlutherans.org/2022/05/president-harrison-faithfully-addresses-cuw-regents/>). The letter to the Board of Regents (BOR) of Concordia University Wisconsin (CUWAA) relates to that Board's search for a new president. President Harrison detailed multiple bylaw violations of the BOR and in the section titled "A Path Forward":

- "1. Richard Laabs and Mark Polzin should resign from the Board of Regents. Their demonstrated unwillingness to abide by the Bylaws and their inability to oversee the presidential search process in a manner that inspires the trust of the Synod at large, have hampered the institution too long.
2. The BOR should restart the presidential search with the three candidates plus additional members of the CUWAA theological faculty from the list of 11 men approved by the Prior Approval Panel. CUWAA clearly needs a competent, compassionate theologian at the helm. My time interviewing faculty and staff made this painfully obvious to me. With no overall clarity and scriptural critique, secular ideas involving critical theory, inclusion, and equity have found harbor on campus. The new president can add to his staff those who are capable of assisting him with administering the \$100 million budget of the institution. However, to prioritize demonstrated competence in managing a budget of this size at the cost of eliminating from consideration for the CUWAA presidency very competent theologians is unwise and at odds with the mission of the university.
3. Demonstrate repentance for Bylaw violations and adoption of secular worldview and agendas. Acknowledge uncritical haste that occurred in adopting language of secular diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. Assemble a team from within to assess the pervasiveness of this secular influence. Invite the participation of theologians from CUWAA and the Synod at large. Make use of the considerable abilities of the Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations. Use this unique opportunity to craft diversity resources based upon the inerrant Scriptures, without the additional baggage of secular inclusivity initiatives. Produce something of value— for all our universities—that will help us all to be and remain solid, biblically conservative institutions serving the church and her mission, and training young people to have meaningful lives. I stand ready to assist. The Synod stands ready to help."

Earlier in his letter, President Harrison said, "A full report of the findings and conclusions of the visitation team are forthcoming..." [At press time that report had not been seen by the *Clarion* Editorial Board.] Synodical President Harrison noted that "Our visitation team included educational, legal, corporate, and ecclesiastical experts."

The CUWAA situation reminds the Chairman of the LCA of the extremely sorry situation at Concordia Seminary Saint Louis, when in 1971 he was elected to the Board of Control [now called Board of Regents] and was one of four Board members in the minority when the Board consisted of eleven members. By the mercies of Almighty God at the 1973 New Orleans Synodical Convention the elections resulted in a six to five majority that took action which led to the famed "walk-out" [planned in advance] and a Concordia Seminary today that is Biblical. The Convention Workbook of 1973 had 66 pages of reports and memorials assigned to Floor Committee 3 on Seminary Issues.

Synodical President Harrison is to be commended for his letter to the CUWAA Board of Regents and should receive the full support of all members of the Synod and Synod congregants. *Clarion* readers are strongly urged to go to the web site of Steadfast Lutherans, read the letter and then thank Synodical President Harrison.

Although Synodical President Harrison addressed his letter to the Board of Regents, the *Clarion* Editorial Board understands that the Board has yet to issue a response to President Harrison but that the CUWAA Teaching Administration has responded even though President Harrison's letter was not addressed to the Teaching Administration.

It also seems there have been no resignations by Messrs. Richard Laabs or Mark Polzin. To top all of this off, a May 10, 2022, CUW news release announced, among other things, that the faculty at commencement was conferring the *Christo et Ecclesiae* award to Mark Polzin.

In the opinion of the Lutheran Concerns Association, CUWAA needs a housecleaning.

### The LCA Board of Directors:

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### Residential Seminary Education...

Continued from page 2

with these great professors and wonderful classmates? Those who don't want to do seminary in-person don't know what they are missing!

**The Rev. Martin R. Noland, Ph.D.**

Pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, San Mateo, CA

1. In my own district, the California-Nevada-Hawaii (CNH) district, resolution 3-03 asked the synod to increase the number of students preparing for ordination through distance, i.e., online learning and the CMC cross-cultural studies program (see CNH Convention Minutes, 1<sup>st</sup> session, page 9). In the same district, resolution 3-05 asked the synod to reconsider the use of LLDs in Word and Sacrament ministry (CNH Convention Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> session, page 6). Both resolutions were adopted (see: <https://www.cnh-lcms.org/2022-district-convention>). In the Northwest (NOW) district, overtures 2-09 and 2-10 ask the synod to reconsider the use of LLDs in Word and Sacrament ministry, while overture 2-13 encourages the use of distance, i.e., online, learning for ordination (NOW 2022 Convention Workbook, Section 6, pages 23-25 & 28; see: <https://nowlcms.org/resources#679>). NOW Overture 2-10 makes reference to a NOW district study document, "Workers for His Harvest" (see <https://workersforhisharvest.com>), which seems to be an influential essay in the matter of restoring to district authority the training of LLDs. In the Minnesota South (MNS) district, overture 2-04 encourage the use of distance, i.e., online, learning and other non-residential programs for immigrants and non-Anglo pastoral candidates (MNS 2022 Convention Workbook, 75; see: <https://www.mnsdistrict.org/convention#convention-workbook>). The Michigan (MI) district has similar overtures in numbers 1-13, 1-14, 1-15, 1-16, 1-17, and 1-18 (see <https://www.michigandistrict.org/convention/business>, go to Part I, pages 143-154). See my response to all these ideas in my article, "Our Immigrant Communities and Seminary Training," *The Lutheran Clarion* 14 no. 5 (May 2022):1-2 (see <http://www.lutheranclarion.org/images/NewsletterMay2022.pdf>). All websites were accessed on 28 May 2022.
2. The synod resolutions in 2016 and 2019 closed the district training programs for LLDs in Word and Sacrament ministry and urged qualified students to enter the synodical Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) programs at both seminaries. This included "grandfathering" situations where LLDs serve congregations that are not able to sustain even multi-congregation parish ministries. All the SMP programs include in-person, residential seminary training during Fall Quarter intensive sessions, typically five days, along with quarter-long online course work. All SMP pastors thus have a total of eight weeks of in-person, residential study at the seminary before ordination and another eight weeks of in-person, residential study at the seminary after ordination. The SMP program thus has a significant in-person, residential component, though nowhere the amount of time as M.Div. and Alternate Route students. Unlike pastors who have completed the M.Div. or Alternate Route programs, SMP pastors are limited in their location/place of service and the specific type of ministry before they are accepted into the program. They also cannot serve in other circuit, district, or synod positions. Both seminaries encourage all men seeking to be pastors to seriously consider the M.Div. or, if qualified, the Alternate Routes instead of the SMP program. Men who ignore this encouragement only short-change themselves.
3. See Paula Schlueter Ross, "Seminaries to cover tuition for church-worker students" at <https://www.reporter.lcms.org/2018/February/26>

<https://www.reporter.lcms.org/2018/seminaries-cover-tuition-church-work-students>; accessed 28 May 2022.

4. E.g., see Baum & McPherson, "The Human Factor: The Promise and Limits of Online Education," *Daedalus* 148 no. 4 (Fall 2019):235-254 (see <https://www.amacad.org/publication/human-factor-promise-limits-online-education>). See also Paul Fain, "Takedown of Higher Education," *Inside Higher Ed* (January 16, 2019), at: <https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2019/01/16/online-learning-fails-deliver-finds-report-aimed-discouraging>. Both websites were accessed on 28 May 2022.

### The Lutheran Clarion—We Need Your Help!

The **Lutheran Clarion** is in year 14. We have NO paid staff or writers. We unabashedly strive to present and uphold God's inerrant word. Inflation has now taken hold. We want our readers to be informed about issues that will face the 2023 Synod Convention!



**Your continued and enhanced help is needed.** We urge you to help with the costs of preserving Confessional Lutheranism. Use the enclosed envelope. Mail your tax-deductible gift to Lutheran Concerns Association, 149 Glenview Drive, New Kensington, PA 15068-4921. Do it now. **Thank you!!**

### PLI: Past and Present...

Continued from page 1

started on a bad foot. Shadowy compensation practice and a questionable pastoral call of their Executive Director marked its beginning. Then, the arrogant attitude held by the group of eight who created PLI became immediately apparent. They considered themselves the "top pastors" of the Synod and they were appealing to other pastors to be trained by them so they could also become a part of their elite circle. That didn't sit too well with many of the Synod's pastors. Furthermore, they promised potential recruits an advanced degree from Concordia Seminary Saint Louis, but could not convince the seminary to grant it. Finally, they couldn't even get the status of being an RSO (Recognized Service Organization) of the Synod. They attempted several times, and after the third attempt in January 2001, they were basically told to stop trying.<sup>4</sup>

This should say something right there.

According to bylaw 6.2.1 to be an RSO, an organization must show it "fosters the mission and ministry of the church, engages in program activity that is in harmony with the programs of the boards of the Synod, and respects and does not act contrary to the doctrine and practice of the Synod."<sup>5</sup>

This language of the bylaw may have developed further since PLI attempted to be recognized, but the general idea was already there. PLI did not meet the criteria to be a recognized organization. It was apparently out of

step with the Synod's mission.

Then in 2001, the Synod in convention met. No fewer than 13 overtures about PLI were submitted for consideration by the Synod. Seven of the overtures were in favor of it. The Synod voted and passed a resolution that had this resolve: "That all organizations that address issues of pastoral leadership work cooperatively and collaboratively within the structures of our Synod and especially with the theological faculties of our church to ensure that the theology and practice taught in the area of pastoral leadership are in agreement with the doctrine and practice of our Synod."

Did this give PLI the recognition they sought?

Apparently not. It had already shown that it could not work "cooperatively and collaboratively within" the Synod's structures.

Did it go away?

It might have seemed that way. For the first couple years after the convention, except for talk among the confessional circles of the Synod, hardly anyone seemed to give any public notice of it. And then after a couple years that went away.

PLI had gone underground and most people probably thought they were gone.

An occasion for this writer brought him into contact with Georgann McKee, one of the ladies that sounded the alarm about PLI over 20 years ago. He decided to look into the present day PLI. He is convinced: being underground has given them the opportunity to escape watchful eyes, allowing them to do some potentially serious damage.

We've already seen a little about the current PLI. Their focus is no longer just with pastors, so they do not need to conform to the 2001 resolution. Instead, they've set their sights extensively on the laity, and armed with apparently endless financial resources, they appear to be seeking to transform our Synod. Look at their website for yourself, <https://plileadership.org/>, in anticipation of the second half of this report.

#### Rev Rob Jarvis

Hosanna Lutheran, Buffalo MN, and Bethlehem Lutheran, Middleville, MN  
Executive Director, CLCC

The CLCC (Confessional Lutherans for Christ's Commission) is an RSO of the LCMS. In creative ways, the CLCC helps Lutheran laymen better understand and appreciate the Lutheran Confessions, using our wonderful heritage to answer our Lord's call to the mission today. (<https://www.theclcc.org/>)

1. Rev. Norbert Oesch's letter to his congregation dated Feb 9, 1998.
2. Plileadership.org FAQ's accessed March 25, 2022.
3. multipli.org (an affiliate of PLI) accessed March 18, 2022.
4. Georgann McKee's unpublished presentation.
5. Resolution 5-11A.

#### Student Aid Endowment Fund Concordia Theological Foundation, Inc.

In early 2018, in honor of Mrs. Ginny Valteau's contributions to the publication of the *Lutheran Clarion*, a Concordia Theological Seminary Student Aid Endowment Fund was established at Concordia Theological Foundation, Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions are tax deductible. As of May 31, 2022, the fund assets were \$23,600.



The Board of Directors of the Lutheran Concerns Association invites *Lutheran Clarion* readers to contribute to the Fund which can be done by sending your check marked Valteau Endowment Fund to:

**Concordia Theological Foundation, Inc.**, Box 15810, Fort Wayne, IN 46885

or to: **Lutheran Concerns Association**, 149 Glenview Drive, New Kensington, PA 15068-4921. Donors will receive receipts for their gifts.

## Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities for the Confessing Church

*The presentation below was given by Gerhard H. Munding, MD, at the LCA Conference on January 17, 2022.*

What is Christian higher education? What should it be? What are its goals? How is it accomplished? Can or should it integrate as an institution into the current broader human experience? Can it compete with career specific values of secular education? Must values be modified to exist? What are the tensions real or presumed between fiscal viability and fidelity? To discuss these questions within the community of saints and to expect a semblance of usable answers we must start at the beginning! Using Occam's razor the answer is straight forward.

**Repent!** This has been the amalgam for LCMS Lutherans since the formation of a synod. Each year as the world turns to celebrate All Hallows Evening, LCMS Lutherans are reminded of the Reformation, and as we daily should be, are reminded to repent. The first of the 95 theses written by Luther "*out of Love and zeal for the Truth and to bring it (Truth) to light*" states in his first thesis: "*when our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, "repent" (Matt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.*" This is hard for anyone, but it is particularly hard for those involved in Christian higher education, for pastors, teachers and the leaders who would be servants in our Church. Our egos can make it hard at times to put up with the perceived human betrayals and inadequacies of our constituents. Who among us, when visiting a school, university or congregation has not come away with some questions, concerns, recommendations for improving the exposition of Christian dogma or practice? What circuit visitor has not consulted with a young

pastor, regarding a congregation's deficiencies and need for improved catechesis. Do we do so through the law, merely pointing out the bumps and blemishes, or is it done in a manner to help build up the strengths present? A penitent approach is not only proper for the individual but is proper for the Church's leaders, and the proper approach toward government and leadership administering the Church's institutions of higher learning.

Following Reformation Day we celebrate All Saints Day and the next All Souls Day. We see the eschatological consequences that first began in baptism by the mercy of Christ, a penitent life, extended toward the hope of eternal life in the community with our victorious Lord. The beauty of Luther's approach to daily life is that at the end of each day we consider our station in life with respect to the 10 Commandments, the Creed and Lord's prayer and in His evening prayer, we ask for forgiveness of all our sins, both known and unknown and commend ourselves to His will. This is the refiner's fire and the fuller's soap, a sort of a daily microcosm of Saul's Damascus road experience event, (I was a zealous Pharisee for the Lord he later recants).

Our zeal in service may not always be righteous, and there may be those who flummox our endeavors, who are as zealous as we are. It is good to acknowledge our weakness in prayer so that the new man clothed in righteousness arises the next day to struggle again against the sinful world, the devil and our sinful flesh. We ask for forgiveness where our zeal has caused harm, for errors of omission, where our timidity allows errors to remain, and where our self has inhibited the good of others and the fulfillment of God's will. This is our Christian character and the character of a militant Christian institution. Continually in prayer, asking for God's will to be done among us also. In this we walk (parapateo) in the newness of life. (Rm 6:4) and the walk ("Halak" Is 35:8), "*And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the WAY of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, it should belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.*" In our baptisms we are resurrected from the first death and no longer enslaved by sin.

This is the Christian Ontology! It is the disciplined life that is running the race as to not lose the prize. As we serve in the Church's institutions of higher learning, we serve mankind in the world. **This ontology sets us apart from other non-Christian institutions of higher learning.** In this Ontology we are Semper Reformatur! Considering higher education in the Church we remember this Ontology as a critical and specific distinctive. This Ontology, that is, understanding "who am I", "how did I get here?" and the Teleology of the Christian life, "how then shall I live," leads into the Eschatology of eternity in the mercy of Christ." Herein is founded the fundamental and foundational precepts of what every discipline taught and a descriptive norm of campus life experienced at a Concordia University should be. This is imperative, not indicative. Life for all facul-

ty, students and staff must be grounded in this; to paraphrase Rev Dr. John Nordling, it is our "*reality begun on earth reaching to eternity*" (personal communication). It is the proper way for the Una Sancta to function in higher education, in campus life, daily chapel, liturgical worship, preaching, teaching, campus milieu, classroom pedagogy, and governance.

All we do or are about must emanate from this Ontology (see Wallace, Sacred Syllabus, Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity Sept./Oct. 2021, pp. 44-48). It is suggested that this distinctive can not only separate us from the secular, but in fact may be the significant resource in solving the financial issues that often plague small religious colleges and universities. But for some it may be seen as an obstruction to surviving in the secular realm. The mercy of Christ for fallen mankind unto salvation is the queen of the sciences from which, in the history of higher education, all other academic disciplines blossomed. Christian higher education is assaulted not only externally by an ever increasing hostile and adversarial world view, but also can be harmed internally from its own constituents. At times it may seem easier to consider placating, acquiescing, assimilating, or affirming a more worldly view, believing this can help survival and foolishly thinking it can be done without losing some focus or faith. Outside threats may engender a 'circle the wagons' approach for preservation against an ever tiring and exhausting siege by the devil. Such an approach risks limiting who we serve, in what disciplines we educate. It risks the long term benefit the Church receives by having in the community children educated in the broadest of subjects.

Mr. Mark Stern gave an excellent higher education update for the conference a few years ago (*The Lutheran Clarion* vol.12, issue 6, July 2020). Much has not changed in demographics: some threats mentioned have increased. Our most recent data collected in fall 2021 for academic year 2020-2021 demonstrated a

### LCA Membership Fee

While planning the 2022 LCA conference, the Board of Directors found that the LCA membership fee does not begin to cover the expenses; therefore, we have increased the fee to \$60 per year.



We recently had new return envelopes printed with the updated price; however, we still had about 2,000 old envelopes and we did not want to waste them, so if you are receiving an old envelope and you want to renew your membership, please note the annual fee is now \$60.

This is still a bargain! The annual conferences feature top-notch speakers from many areas of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The membership fees also help fund bi-monthly issues of the *Clarion*, which features faithful confessional articles that support the issues and causes of the LCMS.



total CUS enrollment of 37,089 students; 18,291 undergraduate and 18,798 graduate and professional students. There were a total of 1,022 undergraduate and graduate rostered Church work students, of which 406 were Lutheran teacher and 135 were LCMS pre-seminary and 131 DCE. In the undergraduate category there were 2,575 LCMS Lutheran students, 1,057 other Lutheran and 8,746 other Christian students (1,525 non-Christian and 3,851 unknown or undeclared religious affiliation). In the graduate schools there were 857 LCMS Lutherans, 831 other Lutheran, with 9,270 other Christians and 1,636 non-Christians and 5,684 undeclared religious affiliated students.

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**Our schools must remain competitive with educational products but must do so with integrity commensurate with our confession and Christian vocation...**

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It remains true that it is harder to find Lutheran professors and especially those trained in the hard sciences. There is a dearth of availability but also increased competitiveness for their skill set among secular universities, and public institutions which often pay more. Our Lutheran faculty are coveted and they are very committed. We, like so many small faith-based colleges, are tuition dependent. Viability relies on tuition, tuition relies on student numbers, that is dependent upon available student financing, available loans and scholarships. A school's perceived career-specific value in any given discipline plays an important role in student recruitment. Dept. of Education bulletins discuss trends suggesting that there will be fewer first time, as well as second career adults, considering the pursuit of a higher academic degrees in the near future. More are questioning the value of the benefit for the cost incurred. Parental influence, desiring career training as opposed to education, for which there is some promised benefit of a well-paying job or demonstrated advantage towards graduate matriculation, remains a significant consideration in recruitment.

As we hear Joel Grey resounding in "Cabaret" and from so many corners of society "*money makes the world go around, that clinking clanging sound,*" our schools continue to competitively adjust tuition and student discount, especially for Church work students. The change in the number of "full tuition" students with green cards is a little in flux related to Covid restrictions, and what effect convictions of a Harvard professor receiving monies from China will have on our China connections remain an open question. The projected "demographic cliff" is well appreciated by all Concordia administrations. This 5-10% drop off in available high school graduates will particularly have an impact on smaller schools. Judiciousness in course offerings, both to make available what patrons request and to enhance career specific values will be important.

Our schools must remain competitive with educational products but must do so with integrity commensurate

with our confession and Christian vocation—in short, remain competitive in the secular offerings without loss of Ontology or Teleology. Some have posited that this dilemma would direct us to return to teaching only the classical education model (as outlined some 50-100 years ago), limit schools, limit faculty, limit who attends, and reduce numbers in order to preserve ethos. This would limit the missional aspect of our schools, and could diminish the number of students from Christian families having opportunity for their children to acquire knowledge under the umbrella of Wisdom, increase the number seeking higher education elsewhere and thereby risk an increased number of the confirmed children losing their faith in the milieu of a secular education, buffeted in a sea of a woke society. Some urge increasing academic offerings just to enhance financial stability irrespective of the loss of Lutheran ethos. But why? If in order to do that, to survive economically, we give up the very distinct character of who we are and what we profess. Under that scenario one might legitimately ask why is the Church in the educational business at all?

In some instance the accommodations to aid student numbers or placate donors seems harmless enough but, nonetheless, decisions are innocently made that can have potentially significant consequences.

A few hypothetical examples might be having an outside diversity person give lectures on diversity who had published papers arguing that Church authority is relational and changeable from generation to generation (no *sola scriptura* here). Another might be to neutralize all gender pronouns in the school's documents, not realizing that this ultimately threatens the male/female nature of our confession, the creation, the incarnation and the "enfleshment" of Christ in the Eucharist. Ergo the necessity of well-schooled penitent leaders.

Our history demonstrates that higher education in the LCMS can teach any discipline it chooses to pursue, given the very types of committed leaders, staff and faculty which we have, without loss of Lutheran Identity. We have respected Luther's sense that all knowledge can be obtained under the egis of Wisdom. Luther in discussing the fourth commandment says, "*if children are talented, have them learn and study something that they may be hired for whatever need there is.... If that were done, God would richly bless us and give us grace to train men by whom land and people would be improved*" (Large Catechism, Commandments para 174,175).

*Dr. Munding's presentation will continue in future issues of the Clarion.*

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