

JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN  
**Mission**

April 2016 | Vol. 3 | No. 1

 THE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Missouri Synod  
**Witness Always**



# TEACHING THE FAITH AND MISSION

**T**HE THIRD ANNUAL LCMS Mission Summit: Education, Teaching the Faith and Mission was held this past November in Atlanta, Ga. Christian education and teaching the faith have gone hand in hand with mission and the proclamation of the Gospel since the earliest days of the Church. Higher education, as we have come to know it today, had its origin in the Church's efforts to train pastors and others to serve the Church some 1,000 years ago. The Church's role in education is connected to the teaching of the saving Gospel of Jesus and the belief that the good gifts of creation are to be used for the benefit of the Church.

Theological education has been important to the Missouri Synod since her founding as a church body. Concordia Seminary in St. Louis was founded in 1839, while Concordia Theological Seminary was founded in 1846. Both seminaries were founded before the Synod's founding in 1847. The Missouri Synod's work internationally paralleled her own development in some ways. At the beginning of mission work, before a church body was founded, often a seminary was established (India, Nigeria, et al.) The training of pastors goes hand in hand with mission work. Trained pastors and other church workers teach the faith in congregations and train people to share the faith with their family, friends and communities. This is why the theme of teaching the faith and mission is so vitally important for our day, both internationally and domestically.

Internationally, the single largest request from partner and non-partner churches alike is for assistance in the area of theological education. The requests range from church bodies struggling to train their first pastors to a church body like the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY), which has the goal of training 10,000 pastors over the next several years. The Missouri Synod is known around the world for her quality, biblically based theological education. The training of pastors and evangelists is vital internationally, especially where the Church is growing so rapidly that there is a shortage

of pastors to proclaim the Gospel each week. This issue provides a case study for the development of a seminary in Siberia and describes how the Global Seminary Initiative is having an impact worldwide.

Domestically, education and teaching the faith is vital as our society and culture continue to drift away from traditional Christian values and become more biblically illiterate each passing day. Well-trained pastors, church workers and laity are essential for Gospel outreach to our communities. This issue speaks to the teaching of the faith to our children and to the community in our churches, schools and homes.

Finally, teaching the faith involves being able to provide an apologetic or defense of the Christian faith. Two papers provide an apologetic to two recent documents produced by the Lutheran World Federation.

Teaching the faith and mission go hand in hand. The Lord has prepared us for this moment to bring the faith to the world, both at home and abroad. As Dr. Martin Luther said, "Now that God has so richly blessed us, however, and provided us with so many men able to instruct and train our youth aright, it is surely imperative that we not throw his blessing to the winds and let him knock in vain. He is standing at the door; happy are we who open to him! He is calling us; blessed is he who answers him!"<sup>1</sup> Let us answer the Lord's call to teach the faith and bring the Gospel to our homes, our communities, our nation and to the world.

*In Christ,*

President Matthew C. Harrison

PRESIDENT OF THE LCMS

<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that they Establish and Maintain Christian Schools," 1524 in *Luther's Works, Vol. 45: The Christian in Society II*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 45 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 352.