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CTSFW: Forming Servants in Jesus Christ

By Lawrence R. Rast Jr.

Financial Sustainability Today and For the Future

By Theresa R. Brown

Up the Mountain

By Matthew J. Wietfeldt and Andrea L. Schultz

CONTENTS

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture verses are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

FEATURES

4 CTSFW: Forming Servants in Jesus Christ By Lawrence R. Rast Jr.

The people, pastors, and congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have always taken pastoral formation seriously and have supported their seminaries generously. They want pastoral candidates who are “able to teach” in the fullest biblical and Lutheran sense of the phrase.

7 Financial Sustainability Today and For the Future By Theresa R. Brown

While financial health does not necessarily mean superior academic quality or programming, having a lack of financial resources would impact the ability to maintain existing programs or develop new programs, along with investment in faculty and staff as well as facilities. God has provided these positive financial results over the past several years. This provides protection against adverse financial events and allows CTSFW to have the financial capacity to fulfill its mission and provide 100% tuition scholarships to church worker students.

11 Up the Mountain By Matthew J. Wietfeldt and Andrea L. Schultz

As the Church, we must continue to lift the need for pastors and other church workers to our Lord. He will continue to provide for us according to His will. As He continues to provide for us, let us continue to identify and encourage those in our lives who should consider studying for the Office of the Holy Ministry.

Also in this Issue:

What Does This Mean?	13
Upcoming Events at CTSFW	16
Called to Serve	20
Faculty Focus	22
Admission	25
Alumni	26
Profiles in Giving	28
Bible Study	30

CTSFW: Forming Servants

Lawrence R. Rast, Jr.



This article is a revision of the historical section of the LCMS 13—03 Task Force Report, which Dr. Rast drafted. The original may be found in its entirety in *LCMS Convention Workbook: Reports and Overtures 2019*, 375-83.

Above: *Concordia Theological Seminary Springfield campus 1930*

Opposite page, bottom left: *Luther Hall at Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Illinois*

Opposite page, bottom right: *Fort Wayne Senior College campus in 1965*

From its beginning, *Die Deutsche Evangelisch-Lutherische Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten* (what we now know as The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod) has recognized the importance of its seminaries in the formation of its future pastors. Indeed, both Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis (founded 1839), and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, (founded 1846) predate the formation of the Synod (1847). The Synod’s first constitution delineated the seventh purpose of the newly formed body as “the preparation of future preachers and teachers for service in the Church.”¹

in Jesus Christ

In this the Synod was not being radically innovative, but simply maintaining a basic assumption of the Lutheran reforming efforts. Luther's Reformation exploded in 1517 in the context of an institution of higher education—in the case of the University of Wittenberg—and this emphasis on education for future pastors has remained a part of confessional Lutheranism to the present. The Wittenberg Reformers assumed that a pastor would be well educated and “able to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24). “Able to teach” for the Lutherans meant that one was more than a “good teacher,” that one was more than a simple liturgical practitioner, that one was more than a detached philosopher who was only interested in academics. “Able to teach” meant that a pastor must be formed first *in Christ* through the Holy Spirit working through Word and Sacrament in order to be formed *for Christ's service* to the Church and the world.

Luther's co-worker, Philip Melancthon, developed his *Examin Eorum*, which roughly followed the outline of the Augsburg Confession, as a means to determine whether candidates were prepared for pastoral service.² They were designed to show whether

the candidate for the ministry had “a clear and thorough summary of Christian doctrine, which they can themselves consider and remember, and which is necessary for their penance, their faith, their proper prayer, their consolation in sadness, and their own salvation.”³

Early Missouri was deeply influenced by the Wittenberg approach to pastoral formation. At the same time, it had to apply these lessons in a significantly different context. Generally speaking, Lutherans have employed three models in the training of indigenous clergy in the United States: 1) Apprenticeship; 2) the “Preachers' Seminary”; and 3) the “Classical” model.

When Lutheranism was first established in North America in the 17th century, and even stretching through the 18th, most pastors were trained in Europe and then came to the British Colonies in North America to serve as missionary pastors. Until the development of the seminaries in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, most North American Lutheran clergy trained by apprenticeship. They studied theology under the direction of an ordained pastor, often living with the supervising pastor. After a time of preparation, the candidate was examined and, if he successfully passed, he was

subsequently called and ordained.

Apprenticeship, however, was extremely demanding on the supervising pastor. Further, it resulted in uneven preparation. Some students were very well prepared; others not so much. Beyond that, it had an inherently individualistic character in that, while examination was administered by the Ministerium, the student's perspective of Lutheranism was largely shaped by the supervising pastor. This did not encourage formation in the context of the wider church, as later seminary education did.

But where would the Lutherans turn? Where earlier other traditions had attached a course in divinity to their regular curricula in the university (Harvard and Yale, for example, among the Puritans and their ancestors), Lutherans began to institutionalize theological education at the time of the rise of the dedicated seminary. Later Lutheran seminaries included Gettysburg (1826), Canton, Ohio (later Columbus, 1830), Southern (Lexington, Columbia, et al., 1831), Altenburg (later St. Louis, 1839), Springfield, Ohio (1845), Fort Wayne (1846), Wartburg (1854), Augustana (1860), Philadelphia (1864), Augsburg in Minneapolis (1869), Luther in St. Paul (1890), Chicago (1891), and many others into the 20th century.



Among American Lutherans, two forms of seminary education that existed were primary. First, there was the “classical model.” Based primarily on the German model and the fourfold pattern, the “classical seminary” demanded the highest level of academic preparation for candidates for the ministry. The “preachers’ seminary” or “practical seminary” featured a minimal theological education prior to ordination. The idea was to prepare men for the mission field as quickly as possible. Most of the seminaries in the Muhlenberg tradition mixed the two kinds of education here mentioned, and then over the course of the 19th century became increasingly committed to the “classical” model. In the case of the Missouri Synod, however, there were two distinct seminaries. The St. Louis seminary was more classically oriented, while the Fort Wayne seminary leaned more to the practical model.

Over the course of the 20th century both of the seminaries of the LCMS reflected the changing climate in theological education in the United States and in the world. Curricula showed the influence of changing times. Over the course of the century, both seminaries began very intentionally to raise their reputation in the broader academic community. Also, classes began to be added to the various curricula that reflected emerging concerns among the church. Courses in pastoral psychology and counseling, administration, and leadership, for example, all appeared in the last several years.⁴ There has been an increasing emphasis on the centrality of missions and discussion focusing on

“contextualization.” Finally and most recently, the remarkable strides made in information technology have begun to raise questions about the possibility and the desirability of distance education. Others have even questioned the necessity of residential theological education.

On the other hand, a sustained and compelling argument for the importance of residential theological education appeared in the late 1990s in the book titled *Being There*, published by Oxford University Press. Authors Jackson Carroll and Barbara Wheeler, among others, produced a case study of two seminaries, one “liberal” and the other more “conservative.”⁵ One conclusion they drew was that for the student to be formed by the culture of an institution (specifically, if they are to internalize and synthesize the theological commitments) it is necessary for that student to “be there”—to spend time on campus learning and living in the midst of the community. The implications of these findings for distance education need to be addressed in our current context.

People at times wonder about the cost of maintaining two campuses and faculties for pastoral formation in the LCMS. Some question whether the time has come to employ a completely different model of pastoral formation in our rapidly changing context. However, the current model continues to serve our Synod well and can—and will—continue to do so into the future. The people, pastors, and congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod have always taken pastoral formation seriously and have supported their

seminaries generously. They want pastoral candidates who are “able to teach” in the fullest biblical and Lutheran sense of the phrase. And so, even as we face a challenging future, I am convinced that God will continue to bless CTSFW as we continue to form servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all. 🏡

1. “Our First Synodical Constitution,” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 16 (April 1943): 5. Further, Synod defined three actual routes to service as a pastor in the church: “It shall be the duty of Synod to erect, support, and supervise institutions for the preparation of future pastors and teachers for service in the Church: These institutions may be of two kinds. In one kind the goal is to be a thorough theological training. In the other kind the goal is to be a predominantly practical training. However, until her ability shall be sufficient for this, Synod shall see to it that capable pastors out of her midst shall take it upon themselves to train suitable young people for service in the Church” (7-8).
2. Philipp Melancthon, *Examen eorum, qui audiuntur ante ritum publicae ordinationis, qua commendatur eis ministerium Evangelii. Traditum* (Wittenbergae: Excudebat Iohnnes Crato, 1554), cited in Siedlecki, “Protestant Theological Education,” 255-57.
3. Armin Siedlecki, “Protestant Theological Education at German Universities in the Sixteenth Century,” *ATLA Proceedings* 62 ((2008): 257.
4. See David P. Scaer, “Critique of the Fourfold Pattern,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (October 1999). <http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/scaercritique.pdf>
5. H. Jackson Carroll, et al., *Being There: Culture and Formation in Two Theological Schools* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

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