

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

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Book Review

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Editorial ✠

A theological seminary must ultimately be judged by its product. The men who graduate and enter into the various ministries of the church are themselves the final proof of a seminary's worth. There must always be some concern about its plant — there is little danger of that being overemphasized in this antibuilding age. There is more concern today about where it is planted — whole seminaries are being uprooted from quiet, secluded settings and being transplanted into urban soil surrounded by the atmosphere of major universities. The digging about and the dunging by which faculty curriculum commissions and denominational examination committees of almost all church bodies are presently endeavoring to influence the fruit-bearing quality of their seminaries are of continuing significance for the school's development. But the real test by which a seminary's quality is known is its fruit, the men whom it graduates.

The seminaries themselves, obviously, are aware of this. The objectives which Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, for instance, has set for itself are listed in its catalog under the words "Concordia Seminary proposes:

- I. To equip men with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills requisite for entrance upon the parish ministry in The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod; to qualify for this ministry it is necessary that the candidate
 - A. displays the gifts with which the Holy Spirit has endowed him, by reverence for God, faithful personal discipline in the use of Word and Sacrament and the opportunities for study, and for growth in the grace to edify his fellow Christians, to serve men in their need, and to witness to all as a person of good reputation. . . ."

After continuing through another 10 specifics the goal is completed with the paragraph:

"To this end it is the function of Concordia Seminary to provide a cultural, social, educational, and spiritual environment where the church can seek out and nurture the gifts of the Spirit which are requisites in servants of the Word who will edify the body of Christ."

This issue of CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY exhibits one aspect of a continuing effort on the part of the seminary to deepen the spiritual environment in which its students grow. It contains the presentations made to the students and faculty during the Easter Quarter of 1970 on various aspects of spirituality by a group of distinguished theologians and pastors. These addresses were part of a program that included the involvement of the faculty and students in small groups for discussion and mutual encouragement in cultivating the gifts which the Spirit gives. The program was underwritten by the Sealantic Fund through the administration of the Fund for Theological Education. Since 1966 this fund has made possible a variety of studies about and experi-

ments in the process of spiritual formation among seminarians. The effort reached out to the total seminary community in the Easter Quarter Experiment of 1970.

As an expression of Concordia Seminary's appreciation for the generous assistance of the Sealantic Fund and the Fund for Theological Education in this continuing effort, and in the conviction that the addresses themselves would be of help to readers who continually seek to grow in their own use of the gifts of the Spirit, this journal prints here the entire series. They do not in themselves make any case for the spiritual insight and strength of the men graduating from Concordia Seminary, no more than the buzzing of bees around the blossoming fruit tree proves that a great harvest can be expected. But both at least indicate that an essential part of the business of bearing good fruit is in process.

G. W. H.