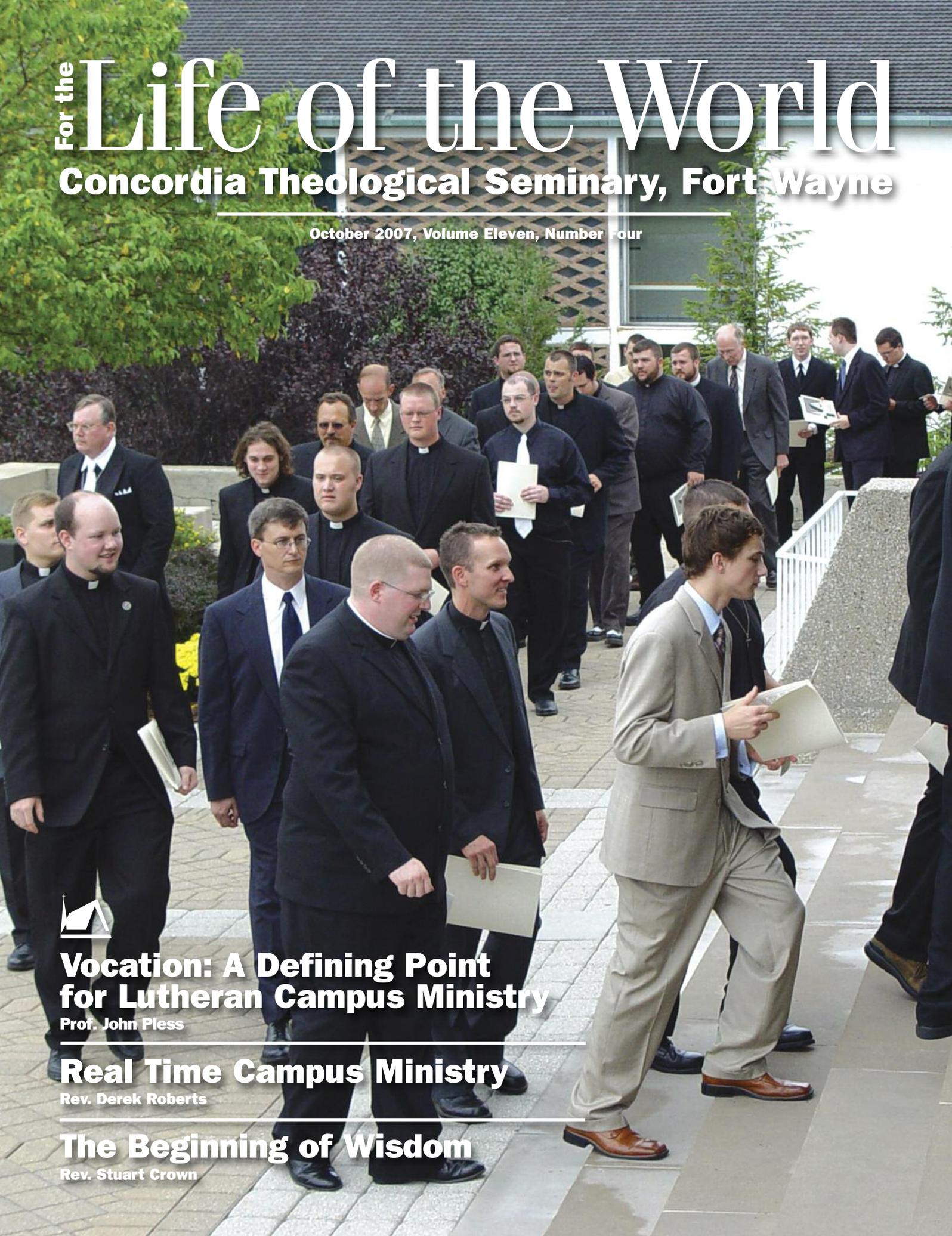


For the Life of the World

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

October 2007, Volume Eleven, Number Four



Vocation: A Defining Point for Lutheran Campus Ministry

Prof. John Pless

Real Time Campus Ministry

Rev. Derek Roberts

The Beginning of Wisdom

Rev. Stuart Crown

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by Prof. John Pless

Campus ministries exist to maintain young Christians “in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). Given the pressures of campus culture, this is no small task.

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by Rev. Derek Roberts

I expect basic questions about when we meet, why there’s more than one Lutheran group on campus, plus a surprise question or two like, “Why do Lutherans think that water baptism saves?” It’s times like these that it’s good to have the *Small Catechism* memorized.

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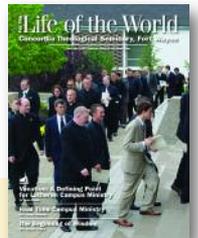
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Stanford’s physical scenery differs, its religious life holds up pluralism and post-modern thought, and its academic prestige and rigor can be intense, but the needs of the faithful at this private university differ little from any other school.

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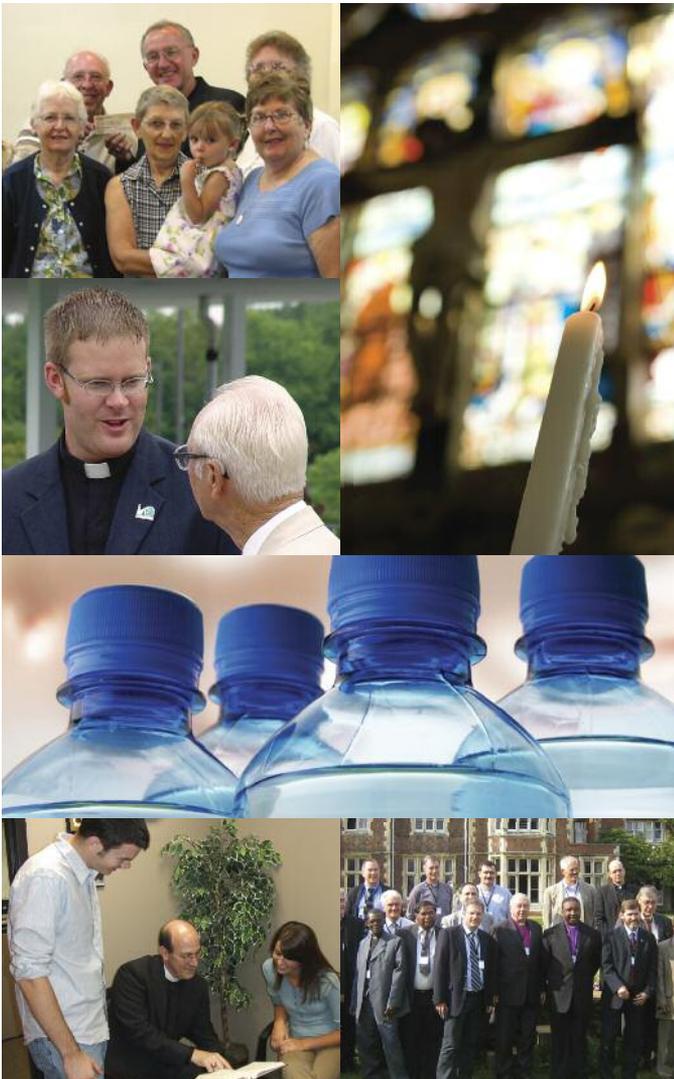
by Rev. Steven Smith

In Mequon, Wisconsin, and at our sister schools around the country, Concordias start to live up to their names. That Latin word concordia implies a connection of faith, meaning something like “with one heart” or “with the same heart.” We who are privileged to serve on campus once again get a chance to live and forgive and grow and show Christ’s love to each other - to be Concordia.



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Campus Ministry:

Scripture, Sisters and Sophomores

By The Rev. Steven Smith

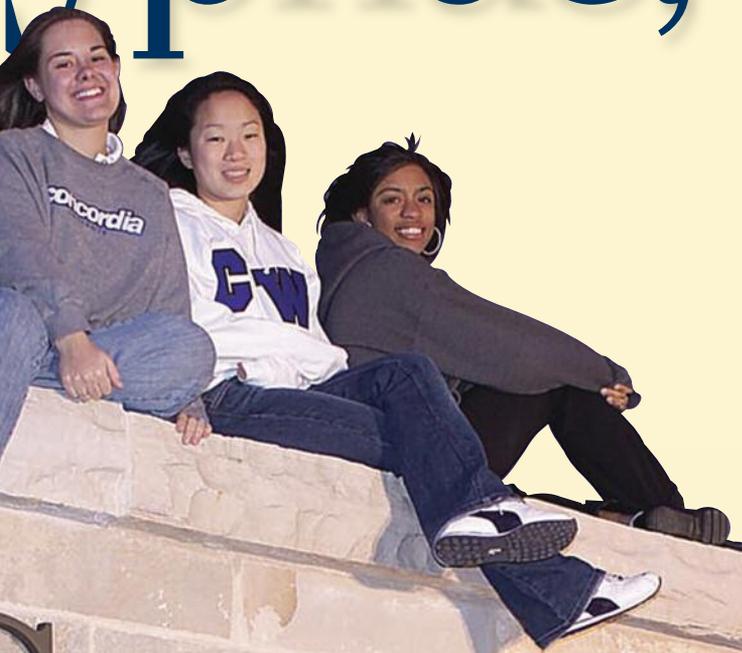
It's a square of stained glass that speaks volumes, conveying the essence of Concordia. Hanging outside the Chapel, the seal shows the sun shining down, its rays illuminating an open Bible and scattered books whose spines read Math, Homer, Shakespeare, Cicero, Goethe. These are the core of a classical liberal arts education with God's Word preeminent. The Latin inscription beckons new students to drink in what Concordia has to offer: *Timor Domini Principium Sapientiae* ("The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.").

Every year new students make this place home. A tranquil and beautiful place with brick buildings, green lawns, and flowers (and in our case an inspiring lakeshore and a vast and blue lake), with a few people quietly walking or reading gives way to a massive influx of ipods®, computers, futons, and televisions. College campuses are transformed from sets of buildings that might inspire learning to places where it actually takes place. In Mequon, Wisconsin, and at our sister schools around the country, Concordias start to live up to their names. That Latin word *concordia* implies a connection of faith, meaning something like "with one heart" or "with the same heart." We who are privileged to serve on campus once again get a chance to live and forgive and grow and show Christ's love to each other - to be Concordia.

In fact, *concordia* is one of the words that helps tell the tale of campus ministry. Campus ministry at a LCMS university looks similar to



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Concordia  University
Wisconsin



congregational ministry in some ways. Worship and Bible study are the backbone. Ministry activities, outreach, and service take place. People are convicted by the Law and comforted by the sweet absolution of the Gospel. Chapel services, Sunday worship, evening student-led services involve hundreds of students every week.

But there are some marked differences between a LCMS university and a LCMS congregation. Each year the “congregation” changes by about one-fourth; seniors graduate and new freshmen start. Most of the students are a steady 18-22 years old. The sense of vitality and energy is constantly replenished but it is a continual restarting.

In some ways, it’s like the myth of Sisyphus. The old Greek myth tells of a man who angered the gods and as punishment was forced to roll a big stone up a hill. When he reached the top of the hill, the stone rolled down to the bottom and he had to begin again. He was “doomed” to a life of starting over. Campus ministry is the labor of Sisyphus in some ways; but if so, it’s a labor of love and far from a “punishment.”

Each year our seasoned student ministry leaders go off to serve in many of our congregations and schools, fulfilling our mission of “preparing students for service to Christ in the church and in the world.” They become seminarians, teachers, business men and women, nurses, and other professionals, taking a little piece of Concordia with them into the world. This shows well one of the goals of our Campus Ministry Leadership Team - the nurturing and fostering of Christian leaders.

The diversity of our campus makes two other goals a focus of ministry. Seeking the lost and strengthening the saved are also stated as goals of campus ministry. Within our own campus are some who don’t have a saving

Within our own campus are some who don’t have a saving faith. The irony of being lost while so close to the Way, the Truth, and the Life sometimes blessedly gives way to students coming to faith in Jesus Christ while being at Concordia. The occasion to celebrate the Baptism of a student or the awakening of a dormant faith is something I count high on the list of campus pastor blessings.

faith. The irony of being lost while so close to the Way, the Truth, and the Life sometimes blessedly gives way to students coming to faith in Jesus Christ while being at Concordia. The occasion to celebrate the Baptism of a student or the awakening of a dormant faith is something I count high on the list of campus pastor blessings.

Strengthening the saved is perhaps one of our greatest areas to shine. Student-led Bible studies, devotional groups, mission trips (like our annual trip to Juarez, Mexico, which becomes a life-changing trip for a number of the 75 who go each year), children’s ministry, youth ministry, Students for Life, Fellowship of Christian Athletes are simply a sample of groups that work toward this goal of strengthening the saved. Over 50 student leaders guide hundreds of their peers in activities literally every day.

To work with students is a blessing. They are in so many ways sophomores. Sophomores are in one sense simply second year students: the ones between freshmen and juniors. But the roots of the word “sophomore” are an interesting statement, in the end, of what all college students are. From *sophos* (from which we get the word “sophisticated”) and *moros* (from which comes “moron”) is the juxtaposition of wise and foolish - wise fools, if you will.

In the end, campus ministry is recognition of spending days and nights with students who show bits of both. I am sometimes humbled and amazed by the great maturity of faith shown by students in what they say and do. It can bring tears to your eyes. Other times I shake my head (and usually smile) at how some of the same students can do something so dumb. Oh, to be a college student. . . . Even more so to be among them every day. 🏡



The Rev. Steve Smith is Campus Pastor at Concordia University Wisconsin, Mequon, Wisconsin.

