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The single most effective way the Missouri Synod and her partners in the International Lutheran Council can have an impact on global Lutheranism is through theological education.

# THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND THE GLOBAL SEMINARY INITIATIVE — A REVIEW AND LOOK TO THE FUTURE

by Albert B. Collver III

## Introduction and Future Trends

EDUCATION AND TEACHING THE FAITH go hand in hand with mission. It also highlights the changing face of mission today. In the past, the word “mission” evoked the idea of bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people who had not heard what Christ has done for them. In the present age, one cannot assume every person is using mission in the same sense, especially among liberal Protestant churches, where mission could be in some cases simply the proclamation of a good news for a person’s life situation. In many Western churches, mission is “development aid, peace service or justice and reconciliation as their contribution towards human betterment.”<sup>1</sup> The study of missiology has become “converted into comparative theology, ecumenical studies, Third World theology or world Christianity.”<sup>2</sup> What is perceived to be the goal and purpose of the Church will shape the understanding of the Gospel, guide the mission of the Church and decide the purpose of theological education. For instance, if the Church is to promote justice and reconciliation to the world, the Gospel becomes the proclamation of justice for all people groups, the mission then executes programs to bring justice and theological education trains people to proclaim justice and to carry out programs that promote it. The Church is the place where people gather to hear this message. This is, in fact, what mission has become for many mainline, liberal Protestant churches. The goal of mission is closely

What is perceived to be the goal and purpose of the Church will shape the understanding of the Gospel, guide the mission of the Church and decide the purpose of theological education.

connected to the understanding of the Gospel.<sup>3</sup>

Martin Kretzmann, the author of the 1965 *Mission Affirmations for the Missouri Synod*, articulated and promoted the view that salvation is more than salvation from sin and death. He writes:

When we limit salvation to a personal religious experience we are denying the righteousness and mercy of God. There must be a concrete deliverance from whatever bondage dehumanizes mankind today. This is why the proclaimer of salvation must always be on the side of the deprived ... he must be sensitive to their plight and join in the struggle against bad conditions and forms of injustice everywhere.<sup>4</sup>

The noted missiologist David Bosch identified a withdrawal of traditional mission activities and the adoption of projects that could be undertaken by secular organizations by Western churches.<sup>5</sup> For example, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America defines mission

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Cracknell, “Theological Education in Missionary Perspective: A Response from Britain to David J Bosch,” *Missiology* 10:2 (April 1982): 229.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Martin L. Kretzmann, “That Word Mission,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 2:3 (1975):126. “How a person answers these basic questions, or more particularly, how a person applies the answers in a given time and place in history, has a critical bearing on the What and the How of his mission at that time and at that place.”

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>5</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 20th Anniversary Edition, American Society of Missiology, (Orbis Books, Kindle Edition, 2009.) Kindle location: 586. “In some circles this has led to an almost complete paralysis and total withdrawal from any activity traditionally associated with mission, in whatever form. Others are plunging themselves into projects which might just as well — and more efficiently — be undertaken by secular agencies.”

as “reconciliation”<sup>6</sup> through “accompaniment.”<sup>7</sup> This “reconciliation” does not mention the “forgiveness” of sins, rather “reconciliation” puts us in a relationship with one another so that we do not exploit or hurt, and it reconciles us with the earth, so that we do not waste or abuse.<sup>8</sup> The global mission work of churches like the ELCA focuses on social justice, rights and the environment. Other mainline church bodies such as the United Methodists and Presbyterian Church USA operate programs similar to the ELCS’s focus on social justice. This fits David Bosch’s observation that the “mission work” of many Western churches could be carried out by secular organizations. There is a close connection between the church, the Gospel, mission and theological education, as they all inform the other in a hermeneutical circle.

For confessional Lutherans, the Church is confessed in Augustana VII, “The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, the Church is where the Holy Spirit gathers the saints around the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Article V of the Augsburg Confession describes the preaching of the Gospel, while Articles IX, X and XI of the Augustana describe the Sacraments of Baptism, the Lord’s Supper and Absolution, where forgiveness is bestowed to the saints gathered in church. This confession of what the Church, the Gospel and the Sacraments are will shape mission

Mission seeks to propagate the Gospel and the Sacraments to form a church, while theological education then prepares people to proclaim the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments.

and theological education. Mission seeks to propagate the Gospel and the Sacraments to form a church, while theological education then prepares people to proclaim the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments. Much of the discussion regarding various mission models or models of theological education flows not so much about techniques or science or how to improve them, but rather from a confession based upon different understandings of Church, Gospel and the Sacraments.

The purpose here is not to evaluate various methods of mission or theological education but to simply point out that the confession of the Church, Gospel and the Sacraments has a profound effect upon the shape of mission and of theological education, as mission is the execution or carrying out of the confession and theological education is the propagation of the confession and the preparation for mission. Notice that this approach

broadens “mission” to include the activities necessary to plant a church, as well as sustain a church. The dichotomy between preserving believers in regular Sunday worship and the conversion of unbelievers and the planting of churches through mission is not helpful, as both activities are two sides of the same coin — the delivery of the Gospel and forgiveness to people who need to receive these gifts. This is

not to deny differences in how these tasks are approached, nor of the differences in work (at least for a time) between a missionary/church planter and a pastor. Nevertheless, there is an interconnectedness between the vocations, a great similarity and a convergence rather than a divergence in tasks.

In one sense, the difference in tasks between a missionary/church planter and a pastor is related to the life cycle of a particular church body and/or congregation. This has been noted in discussions about striving toward a responsible Lutheran church.<sup>10</sup> Bishop Paul Fynn of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana (ELCG) describes the role of the missionary as “building scaffolding” around the building as it is constructed. As the building is constructed the scaffolding is removed,

<sup>6</sup> “Accompaniment,” in 2013 ELCA *Global Mission Gathering* (Chicago, Ill.: Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, 2013), 3. “From the gospel and the stories of our faith, we understand that God’s mission is reconciliation.”

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 6. “Accompaniment helps us see the asymmetries of power in relationships. Because these asymmetries, just like the creation of boundaries and categories, seem natural to us, often we do not see them or think about them. Through accompaniment relationships we learn to see and think about asymmetries in order to live out Christ’s reconciling mission, the reconciliation that has lifted up the lowly, and has broken down the walls between people.”

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 3. “Jesus came to reconcile us with God. God meets us in our brokenness, and restores our relationship with God and with one another. God desires our reconciliation with one another, so that we no longer exploit or hurt; and our reconciliation with the earth, so that we no longer abuse or waste.”

<sup>9</sup> The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Concordia Triglotta* — English: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, electronic ed. (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1996), 47.

<sup>10</sup> Albert B. Collver, “Ecclesiology, Mission and Partner Relations: What It Means That Lutheran Mission Plants Lutheran Churches,” *Journal of Lutheran Mission* 1:1 (March 2014):20–27.

but there may be parts of the building that take longer to construct. There are even times when the building needs to be reconstructed and scaffolding is put back up to assist in the reconstruction. In Bishop Fynn's analogy, the missionaries are there to assist in the building of the church. Thus, when a missionary comes to a place where Christianity is not established or where there is no Lutheran church, he proclaims the Gospel, establishes a congregation and administers the Sacraments. The missionary lays the foundation and the cornerstone, which is Christ. The Scriptures and the Confessions are given to the newly formed church. In this phase, the missionary is primarily responsible for all the activities of the church. However, after a period of time, men are raised up and trained to carry out the task of proclaiming the Gospel and administering the Sacraments. Eventually, a new church body is formed and it carries out most of the activities necessary to propagate the Lutheran confession and the church from generation to generation. However, one of the last areas that a church body takes upon itself as its own responsibility to carry out is in the area of theological education, or the church body develops a greater emphasis on theological education and the "scaffolding" returns to assist with that task.

As a result of this natural cycle in the development of churches, the most frequent request the Missouri Synod receives from partner and non-partner churches is for assistance in theological education.<sup>11</sup> Paul

<sup>11</sup> Established Lutheran churches outside of the United States typically do not request "foreign missionaries" to assist in preaching, teaching and administering the sacrament in the local congregation or parish. These church bodies typically request assistance in theological education, that is, primarily training indigenous, local pastors, in help administrating large scale projects and humanitarian aid. The requests are mostly for supportive personal who might assist that church body in strengthening their own mission efforts. This sort of work involves a significant amount of church relations and theological education, rather than mission work in the sense of proclaiming the Gospel to people who have never heard it before. The people who are proclaiming the Gospel to a people who have never heard it before typically are the indigenous pastors who received training from the West and not the Westerners themselves. This is a change from the 19th century and early 20th century. Because of the presence of Lutheran churches in more than 80 countries, the opportunities to do mission work in the sense of proclaiming the Gospel directly apart from an existing church are less than they were a century ago.

The model of theological education brought to the mission field frequently is not based, in part or in its entirety, upon the desires of the partner but is driven by the discussions and debates regarding theological education in the sending country.

Borthwick, senior consultant for Development Associates International and teacher in missions at Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts, notes, "One of the greatest areas in which Majority World leaders are asking for North American involvement is in the area of training and education. Our libraries, seminaries, training institutions, books and trained faculty are viewed as a tremendous resource to the Majority World Church ... Here's where I've observed where we can contribute most to the global church: Theological and biblical depth: the seminaries, theologians, biblical scholarship is unmatched."<sup>12</sup> As a result of these requests from the churches with whom the Missouri Synod is in altar and pulpit fellowship and the scores of non-partner Lutheran churches around

the world, the need for scholarships to allow foreign students to attend Western seminaries to receive advanced degrees, for the strengthening of indigenous seminaries towards accreditation or certification, for continuing education for existing pastors in the form of seminars and workshops and for the sending of both short-term and long-term theological educators is extremely high. It should be noted that here theological education means the propagation of the Christian faith as expressed in the

Lutheran confessions, so that men will be equipped to proclaim the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, and others will be trained to support the work of establishing and preserving the church in a given place (in other words to carry out the mission).

### **Part of the Answer to This Need**

The Global Seminary Initiative (GSI) is a part of the answer to the requests from partner and non-partner churches for theological education. Although the Global Seminary Initiative originated over the past five years, components and ideas of it were built upon previous programs and good missiological practice, which is to establish a seminary or a place of training for future pastors as soon as the mission work begins. Those who founded the Missouri Synod established a seminary (Perry County and Saint

<sup>12</sup> Paul Borthwick, *Western Christians in Global Mission: What's the Role of the North American Church?* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2012), 67–68.

Louis) and appropriated another (Löhe's seminary in Fort Wayne) even before founding a Synod. When the Missouri Synod began doing international mission work, the establishment of a seminary quickly followed so that indigenous pastors could be trained. Arguably, the strongest partners of the Missouri Synod are those who had seminaries grounded in the traditional, residential model, established early on in the work. The weakest partners of the Missouri Synod are those who had no seminary established or alternative models such as TEE, non-residential, part time, leadership formation, et al, in place of a more traditional seminary model. Unsurprisingly, both the partners and non-partners of the Missouri Synod desire the establishment of a more traditional, that is, residential seminary model that can be accredited in their region of the world.

The model of theological education brought to the mission field frequently is not based, in part or in its entirety, upon the desires of the partner but is driven by the discussions and debates regarding theological education in the sending country. A challenge with theological education is whether or not it produces the sorts of pastors the church wants or the sorts of pastors the church needs.<sup>13</sup> The way that the sending church (in this case the Missouri Synod) discusses this question at home affects what is exported to the mission field. This question is important because it relates to the model of theological education adopted. Church leaders and bureaucrats often approach this question pragmatically. Where pastors are needed quickly due to a shortage many argue to change the model from a traditional residential model to another model that is less intensive, less academic and arguably less expensive. Theological presuppositions frequently affect the shape of theological education. For example, a pietistic theology that has a lower view of the office of the ministry will design theological education differently than a theology that has a high view of the office of the ministry. Ultimately, the shape of theological education is determined by the views held about what is the Church and what is the Ministry (Articles VII and V of the

Augsburg Confession). This provides the overall shape, and the views about Church and Ministry shape how the practical disciplines are taught. This stands to reason since the goal of seminary education is to train pastors. Therefore, the answer to what is a pastor will shape the theological education.

Lutheran theological education should begin with the scriptural and confessional view of the Office of the Ministry and of the Church. Supplementary classes should be designed to help the pastors carry out their office for a given context and location without a fundamental redefinition of the way the Scriptures and Confessions describe the Ministry and the Church. Alterations in the model of theological education happen due to different theological perspectives, traditions and cultural shifts. For instance, in

North America during the 1960s, theological education shifted towards a "professional model."<sup>14</sup> The move towards a professional model of theological education in large part had to do with making theological education "relevant"<sup>15</sup> for the day. The professional model of theological education led to accreditation of seminaries.

This is important to keep in mind, considering the fact that many of the seminaries in Africa desire accreditation today. With the decline of mainline Protestantism in North America, there are pressures to shift or adjust the model for theological education to fit the new cultural trends. Another factor that influences the model for Lutheran theological education is the imitation of trends started by other traditions that have a different theological view of the Church and Ministry. The primary presuppositions that shape theological education revolve around the confession and definition of the Church and Ministry; everything else follows from the answer to the question, "What kind of a pastor do you want?"

The desire for an increased Lutheran identity has only become more desired as the Western Lutheran churches depart from traditional views on sexuality and ethics.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew Wingate, *Does Theological Education Make a Difference?* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1999), 76. "The crucial question remains perhaps whether seminaries give the church the pastors they want or the pastors they need."

<sup>14</sup> Glenn T. Miller, *Piety and Plurality: Theological Education since 1960* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2014), 40. "The common understanding of theological education in the 1960s was that the seminaries were graduate professional schools."

<sup>15</sup> Miller, 77. "Like other overused catchphrases, relevance had more a suggestive than a precise or analytic meaning. On the one hand, it referred to the need for a theological approach to the questions of the day, particularly the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the urban crisis. Despite church and National Council resolutions on those issues, the churches, especially on the congregational level, seemed isolated from what was happening around them."

Charles van Engen, in “Shifting Paradigms in Ministry Formation,”<sup>16</sup> outlines five paradigms for theological education that he identifies as being used prior to 1960. He then identifies a sixth paradigm to carry theological education into the 21st century. The first paradigm he mentions is the “Apprenticeship” model. Van Engen calls this the “oldest paradigm of ministry involving a personal relationship between a teacher and one or more apprentices.”<sup>17</sup> He finds several examples of this in both the Old and New Testaments, such as Moses with Joshua and Gamaleil with Saul. He claims this was the model of theological education for several hundred years after Christ’s ascension into heaven.

Charles van Engen also identifies the apprenticeship model as the foundation of discipleship evangelism, certain megachurch models as well as a “common characteristic of the megachurches.”<sup>18</sup> Next, van Engen identifies the “Monastic Discipline”<sup>19</sup> model as the primary theological education paradigm after Constantine. The Constantine point is where Alan Hirsch believes the Church went astray from what he calls, “the Apostolic genius,” which recognized that the ministry of the Church consisted of apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and shepherds (APEST).<sup>20</sup> The only reason to mention this point here is to provide an example of how the concept of the “ministry” affects the shape of theological education. For Hirsch, residential seminary education leads to a “pastor-teacher” form of ministry, which represents, in Hirsch’s opinion, a deficiency in the full APEST ministry as expressed in Ephesians 4.<sup>21</sup> Van Engen, in

“Shifting Paradigms,” states that the “Monastic Discipline” paradigm of theological education has a “general tendency toward isolation, this paradigm has sometimes tended to be institutionally encapsulated by the powers of the church, and restrictive in the scope of the leaders it has formed, since conformity to the community has been so strong.”<sup>22</sup> In this way, van Engen’s view is similar to Hirsch’s in that “seminary” education leads to institutionalism.

Closely connected or emerging from the “Monastic Discipline” paradigm of theological education is the “Knowledge-Based Formation (the University)” paradigm. Although van Engen separates this from the “Monastic Discipline” paradigm, in the history of the church the two were closely connected and entwined up until the time of the Reformation. Van Engen sees the “Knowledge-Based Formation” paradigm as emphasizing knowledge, that is, the study of Greek, Latin and philosophy as a qualification for the ministry. He also sees this paradigm as causing a breach between theological education and the church because learning occurred in the classroom instead of the sanctuary.<sup>23</sup> Once again van Engen’s view of the problem of seminary education is similar to Hirsch’s. For Van Engen, the “Knowledge-Based (University)” paradigm becomes the “Seminaries” paradigm (his fourth paradigm). The final paradigm van Engen identifies is the “Professional Preparation” paradigm, where seminaries provided the professional certification for people to enter into denominational ministry.<sup>24</sup> This view was mentioned above in Glen T. Miller’s

<sup>16</sup> Charles van Engen, “Shifting Paradigms in Ministry Formation,” in *Mission on the Way: Issues in Mission Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 240–252.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., Kindle location: 2632.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Kindle location: 2635.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Kindle location: 2640.

<sup>20</sup> Alan Hirsch, Tim Catchim and Mike Bren. *The Permanent Revolution: Apostolic Imagination and Practice for the 21st Century Church*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012). Hirsch writes, “Christendom church has been run largely shepherd-teacher model, and because it has had a privileged position in society, it has been inclined to dispense with the more missional or evangelistic ministry types (apostle, prophet, and evangelist). These inherited forms of the church are not equipped for the missional challenge because they refuse to recalibrate their ministry along the lines suggested in Ephesians 4.” (Kindle location: 1024)

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Kindle location: 6505. “The denominational seminary is a classic case in point. If one organization is set apart to handle all the ideas and leadership training, then the local church no longer believes it has to do the hard work of these itself. As a result, it becomes lazy and dependent on the external organization. If we were not careful, creating an external training and licensing bodies can be a death knell to a movement and cultivate a propensity toward institutionalism.”

<sup>22</sup> Charles E. Van Engen, *Mission on the Way*, Kindle Locations 2648–2650.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., Kindle Locations: 2653–2657. “As this paradigm developed over the centuries, it shaped theological education in a number of ways. First, ministry formation became predominantly knowledge-based. Learning to read, recite, and interact with the Greek and Latin thinkers became an early test of formation in ministry. Second, the structure of theological education became subdivided into all the smaller parts that are maintained to this day: history of thought, languages, biblical studies, theology, ethics, homiletics. Third, this paradigm began the breach between so-called theological education and the church; learning was to occur in the classroom, not in the sanctuary. Fourth, this paradigm gave rise to the search for academic excellence by individuals in theological education; in some ways this development was in opposition to the indoctrination, obedience, and corporate participation of the monastic movement.”

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., Kindle Locations: 2671–2674. “After the beginning of the twentieth century, denominations became less and less networks of congregations and more like corporations, with the congregations functioning as branch offices, so to speak. By midcentury, the seminaries had become predominantly centers for denominational induction, training stations in skills for particular programs in the church (e.g., liturgical renewal and counseling), and professional finishing schools that were gateways to jobs in the churches.”

*Piety and Plurality: Theological Education Since 1960.*

Having outlined the five paradigms of theological education (“Apprentice,” “Monastic Discipline,” “Knowledge-Based (University),” “Seminaries” and “Professional Preparation”), van Engen unveils the new paradigm for the 21st century, “In-Ministry Formation.” Van Engen patterns “In-Ministry Formation” after Theological Education by Extension (TEE) which was developed by the Presbyterians in Guatemala during the 1960s. Van Engen states the goal or purpose of “In-Ministry Formation”: “The purpose of the in-ministry paradigm is to form leaders who can lead the church. The focus is on leadership, not ordination, function, profession, legitimation or any other of a host of issues that sometimes cloud our perspectives of theological education.”<sup>25</sup> Notice the focus becomes “leadership” and does not stress ordination. For van Engen, the goal of theological education is to develop leadership. He states that education or position or function should not determine who is a minister. He writes, “In fact, we are in a deep leadership crisis in North America, and position or function can no longer be equated with leadership.”<sup>26</sup> Notice that what is desired determines the shape of theological education. Also, the quote above states that there is a “leadership crisis” in North America. No doubt “leadership” skills are helpful to the pastoral ministry, yet it should be noted that 1 Timothy 3 does not list “leadership” as a qualification for the pastoral ministry. The challenges, needs and desires of North America (or Europe) often shape worldwide theological education because it is what the churches of the Global North export, whether or not such a form or shape for theological education is desired by churches in Africa, Asia or Latin America.

The Missouri Synod over the past several decades has been affected by the various discussions about theological education both on the mission field and at the seminary level. However, these discussions often fail to note that the discussions within other denominations often reflect a different confession, definition and concept of both the ministry and the church (Augustana V and VII). Additionally, some (but not every) change in the model can affect or alter the confession of the church and ministry. When conducting theological education overseas, it is important to listen to the needs and desires of the overseas partner, and not simply to impose or export the latest

discussions about theological education paradigms upon the partner.

The Global Seminary Initiative builds upon two previous programs used by the Missouri Synod: CRISP and the Russia Project. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Missouri Synod operated a program called CRISP (Committee Responsible for International Scholarship Programs). This program had the goal of providing scholarships for international students to attend the two Missouri Synod seminaries. The mission of CRISP was to assist “international church bodies that have a working relationship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by giving their teaching and ministry staff the opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills.”<sup>27</sup> CRISP sought to provide advanced theological education at a Missouri Synod institution or at an approved institution overseas, specialized academic study to promote Christian education and to enhance education skills, exposure and experience in the life of the church, to conduct programs “by LCMS theological professors and other qualified educators that offer continuing education classes, special teaching assignments, etc., in churches with whom we have a working relationship.”<sup>28</sup> CRISP was funded by an endowment, which since the global financial crisis of 2007-2008,<sup>29</sup> has not generated enough funds to be able to fulfill its stated goal.

The other model for the Global Seminary Initiative was the Russia Project based out of Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS) in Fort Wayne. With a grant from the Marvin Schwann Foundation, CTS was requested to establish a three pronged project that would train Russian speaking pastors and eventually indigenous professors on the CTS campus to replace those eliminated by the Communists in that nations of the former Soviet Union. Second, the Project would assist with the establishment of an ethnic Russian seminary in Siberia to train pastors and laity in Russia itself and to assist and support evangelism, catechetical seminars and theological conferences. After 20 years of the Russia Project, the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Novosibirsk, Russia, has become a hub for Russian speakers reaching from Ingria, Russia, to Kazakhstan.

<sup>27</sup> *CRISP Policies* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2001), 1.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> “Financial Crisis of 2007–08.” *Wikipedia*, 2015. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Financial\\_crisis\\_of\\_2007-08](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Financial_crisis_of_2007-08).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, Kindle locations: 2715–2717.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, Kindle Location: 2719.

The final piece that led to the creation of the Global Seminary Initiative was an idea proposed by President Matthew C. Harrison in an essay called “Rock the Lutheran World.”<sup>30</sup> In this piece, Harrison proposed a scholarship fund to:

enable 100 international students per year on each of the two LCMS campuses (at about \$20,000 a student). One of our seminary presidents was speaking with an ELCA seminary president recently, who complained, “The ELCA provides only 15% of our funding.” Imagine the shame in our man having to admit that the LCMS provides next to nothing for our seminaries! This is an immediate way to increase the number of students at our schools, increase the numbers of faithful Lutheran missionaries and theologians around the world, and to introduce the deaconess ministry as the option for the service of women in confessional Lutheran Churches around the world.<sup>31</sup>

The vision to impact world Lutheranism by providing theological education was another major component of the Global Seminary Initiative.

The Global Seminary Initiative has sought to combine the best qualities of CRISP and the Russia Project, connected with the vision from President Harrison to impact the world through global theological education. The Global Seminary Initiative provides scholarships for future church leaders and educators to attend the seminaries of the Missouri Synod. This enriches the student who comes to the Missouri Synod’s seminary, the seminary community and the student’s church body. A mutual learning takes place. The advanced training provided at Missouri Synod seminaries becomes an investment for the partner church, which in the future will reduce need and dependency on the Missouri Synod. The result is an increased local capacity to address theological matters on their own. The Global Seminary Initiative also provides scholarships to regional seminaries or other institutions that can provide the first primary degree. Not only is this less expensive than sending a person to the United States for study, but it increases the capacity of the regional educational institution. The Global Seminary Initiative also provides funding to send professors from Missouri Synod

and partner institutions, as well as other qualified pastors, to teach overseas as needed and as requested by the partner. Finally, the Global Seminary Initiative provides funding for, and in some cases organizes, conferences and seminars to provide continuing theological education for pastors and church leaders. A less primary activity of the Global Seminary Initiative is to provide materials needed for theological education such as books, journals or translations of theological works through the Chemnitz Library Initiative. Using the tactics described above, the Global Seminary Initiative combines the best features of CRISP and the Russia Project to have an impact on global Lutheranism.

The Global Seminary Initiative also has helped bring to the fore the concerns of the Missouri Synod’s partners. The partner churches and non-partner churches with whom the Missouri Synod have agreements request theological education more than anything else. The desire for an increased Lutheran identity has only become more desired as the Western Lutheran churches depart from traditional views on sexuality and ethics. Church bodies frequently ask both the Missouri Synod and, increasingly, International Lutheran Council churches what it means to accept the Lutheran Confessions or what it means to be Lutheran. These church bodies are seeking others who believe that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God. Church leaders who have been trained in Missouri Synod schools through CRISP, the Russia Project or the Global Seminary Initiative frequently are the people having an impact in their own church body and in some cases in church bodies near them. Another positive effect of the Global Seminary Initiative is how it involves the Missouri Synod’s seminaries in global theological education in a coordinated and strategic way that impacts global Lutheranism.

## Conclusion

The single most effective way the Missouri Synod and her partners in the International Lutheran Council can have an impact on global Lutheranism is through theological education. The Lutheran confession, particularly regarding the nature of the Church and role of the ministry, is propagated through teaching (theological education). This in turn increases Lutheran identity. Theological education increases the capacity of the partner. As theological acumen is increased, the capacity of the partner to respond to local theological challenges is increased. Additionally, those partners who have capacity in the area

<sup>30</sup> Matthew C. Harrison. “It’s Time to Rock the Lutheran World — Harrison.” *Mercy Journeys*, 2010. <http://mercyjourney.blogspot.com/2010/03/its-time-to-rock-lutheran-world.html>.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

of theological education are able to assist other church bodies in the region. The benefit of theological education is mutual. Those providing theological education are enriched as is the recipient. The perspectives students from other church bodies bring to Missouri Synod seminaries help both the students and professors gain insights that would not be possible without that interaction. Of course, more intentional activities could be taken to enhance this effect. The Global Seminary Initiative's support for regional seminaries again increases local capacity and impacts the entire region in a powerful way. Finally, the sending of short term professors and sponsoring of continuing education conferences and seminars provides an important short term impact on global Lutheranism. Such activities for maximum effectiveness need to be followed up by longer term and other intentional activities. In summary, the Global Seminary Initiative provides an important and powerful way to impact global Lutheranism, while increasing local capacity and strengthening partnerships.

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