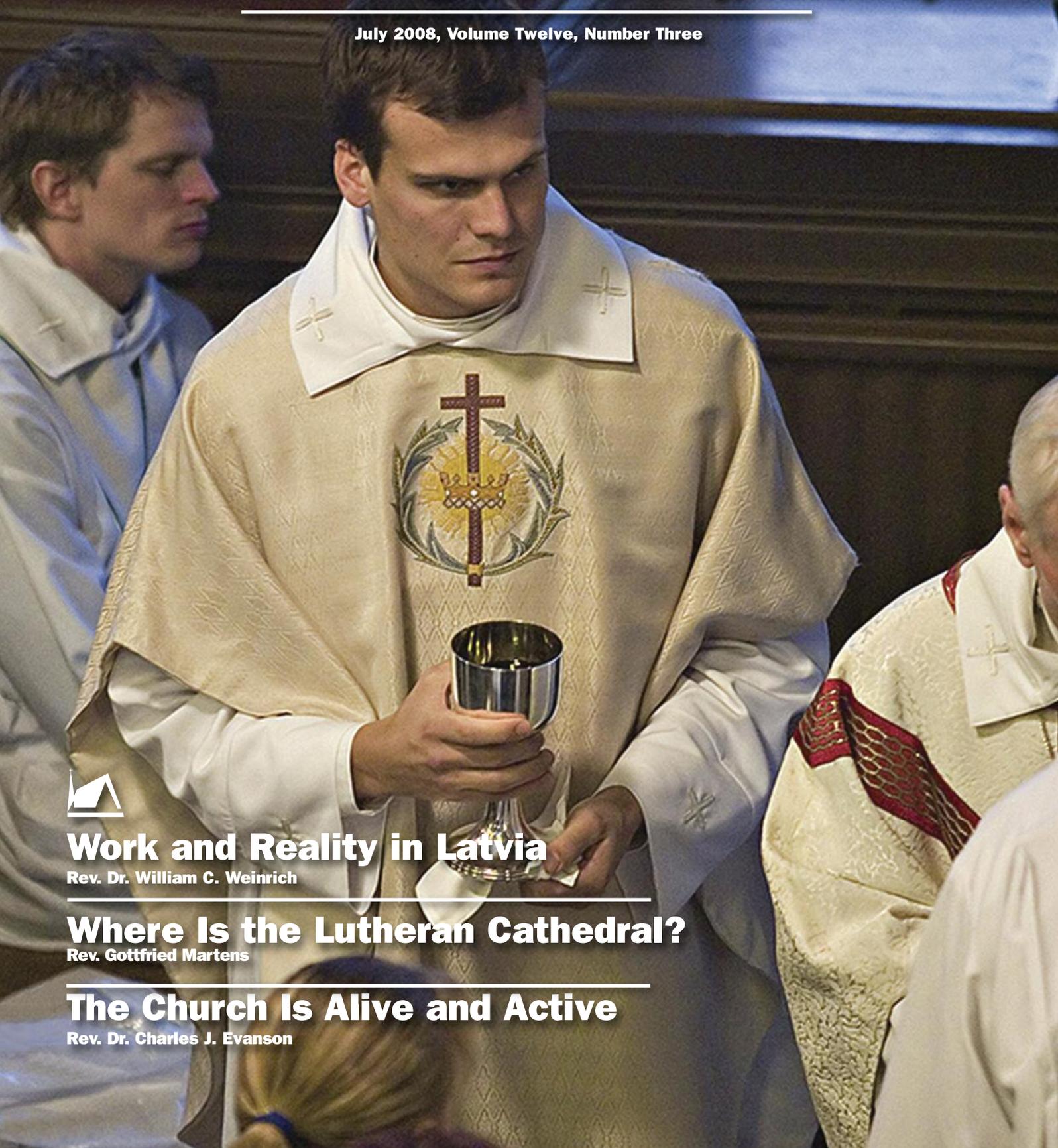


# For the Life of the World

## Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

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July 2008, Volume Twelve, Number Three



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Rev. Dr. William C. Weinrich

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### **Where Is the Lutheran Cathedral?**

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# CTS Faculty Approves Curriculum for the Specific Ministry Pastor Program

By Rev. Dr. Arthur A. Just

The faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary has approved the curriculum for the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program, which is designed to provide pastors to address the mission and ministry opportunities before The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The process of establishing the curriculum included conversations with parish pastors, mission executives, and District Presidents. “Getting input from the church at large was very important to us,” said Dr. Douglas Rutt, Dean of Distance Learning at Concordia Theological Seminary. After having opportunity to give input and feedback in a special focus session with the SMP Curriculum Committee, Rev. Russell Sommerfeld, President of the Nebraska District, commented, “The curriculum utilizes the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions to form Lutheran pastors within the context of mission and ministry so that they may be sound in doctrine and missional in approach.”

Other reactions to the new curriculum, which is based on the recent revision of CTS’s residential curriculum, have been positive. Rev. Dan Gilbert, President of the Northern Illinois District, observed, “I believe that this additional format of theological education will be a great blessing to the Synod and to the world, both in carrying out the Lord’s mission and in preserving the sound doctrine entrusted to us.”

Dr. Arthur Just, Professor of Exegetical Theology, sees SMP as a reflection of ongoing growth and study at CTS. “This new curriculum is really all about Jesus Christ and how the mission of God begins and ends with Him. The SMP curriculum captures the genius of this simple but profound way of teaching future pastors about first things—that Christ does it all through us—the preaching, the teaching, the baptizing, and the celebrating of the Lord’s Supper. We couldn’t be more delighted at the response of the District Presidents to our proposal. They see that both the

M.Div. and SMP curricula are about our relationship with Christ and our relationships with one another in Christ.”

Fundamental to the SMP curriculum is a focus on mission in the student’s particular context. SMP is open to men in a variety of ongoing ministry and mission situations who find themselves in a position of congregational leadership. “That’s probably the least understood portion of the SMP program,” says Rev. Bill Johnson, Educational Technologist at CTS. “Candidates for the SMP program are already in positions of leadership with a district or congregation that seeks to call them as a pastor, an assistant or associate pastor, or as a mission developer for planting a daughter congregation. The church raises up leaders from within. It ends up being a very natural process.”

“The development of SMP has been a partnership of Synod, seminary, districts, and congregations from the beginning,” stated Dr. Lawrence Rast, Academic Dean at Concordia, “and I am convinced that partnership will grow and thrive as the program is implemented.”

Concordia plans to offer the first course of the SMP program, *Confessing Christ in Today’s World*, in September of this year. Additional information about the SMP program and the application process can be found on the seminary Web site: [www.ctsfw.edu/academics/smp](http://www.ctsfw.edu/academics/smp). 

*Rev. Dr. Arthur A. Just is a Professor of Exegetical Theology and Director of Deaconess Studies at Concordia Theological Seminary.*

