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Editor's Note

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Concordia Publishing House. Since her founding, she has supported the church in a number of ways, most especially through the publication of materials used to proclaim God's word. The Editors now take this opportunity to thank Concordia Publishing House for her work, in general, and for supporting the publication of this issue in particular. May the Lord grant Concordia Publishing House increased blessing in service to him.

The Editors

Pastoral Formation in the 21st Century: The Pedagogical Implications of Globalization

Lawrence R. Rast Jr.

I. Introduction—Pedagogy and Globalization?

Pedagogy and globalization: these are two terms that have something to offer when considering the future of Lutheranism in the twenty-first century. I am convinced that there is a place for the confessional witness Lutherans have to offer in the new situations in which we find ourselves. The evidence of the continuing collapse of the Constantinian church, Christendom if you will, is all around us.

As a professionally trained historian, I would like to note a problem that we all, as human beings, share. We tend toward the parochial; we as finite beings tend to think of the beginning of history with our birth and of the ending of history with our death. And so we necessarily live, in a sense, simultaneously in the first days and in the last days. Our lives are framed by the shortness of our existence, which is chronologically determined by a locatable moment of birth and a locatable moment of death.

As such, it takes work for us to think beyond these temporal limitations. We have to extend our minds and abstract ourselves from our experience to begin to embrace the Church, which while it exists in time and place has its existence in the eternal and blessed Trinity. This challenges us to think beyond the limitations of our particular time and place.

As we consider globalization and pedagogy, I would like to stretch us *back* over the history of Lutheranism, even as we project ourselves *forward* into the twenty-first century. We will do this, as the title implies, primarily in the context of pastoral formation.

When we think of globalization, we tend to think of current trends where the dominance of Europe and the West are moving from the center of human culture and life, of a growing importance of China (at least economically), and of the emergence of the “global south” (particularly in terms of the growth of Christianity). Philip Jenkins’s enormously influential study, *The Next Christendom*, argues that it is in the global south that Christianity is growing most rapidly and that in the next fifty to one hundred years a number of the most “Christian” countries in the world

Lawrence R. Rast Jr. is President and Professor of Historical Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne. He can be contacted at lawrence.rast@ctsfw.edu.

will be found in the global south. At the same time, Jenkins warns Western Christians that the kind of Christianity emerging in the global south will challenge certain assumptions and deeply held doctrines of the Western Church. For him, church doctrine is a dynamically developing reality not in some Hegelian, dialectical sense, but simply in a human, sociological sense—namely, that every expression of Christian doctrine is located in and subject to cultural and social influences found in the particular context in which the doctrine is applied. This means, very simply, that doctrinal change is not only likely, but it is inevitable.

This creates a tension in the church. We believe that there is *the faith*—the *fides quae*, the faith once delivered to the saints. This faith is captured in the phrases *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, *sola scriptura*. The Scriptures teach this one, true, catholic, and apostolic faith—and as such, this faith is as true and unchanging as the God who revealed it in the Scriptures. The faith does not change. At the same time, we all know that church today exists in rapidly changing circumstances. The theological/religious questions of the post-Constantinian age in which we find ourselves are framed differently than those uttered by Luther in the sixteenth century, just as the questions Luther framed differed from those of Augustine. Yet at the same time we strive—as did Augustine, Luther, and all the faithful over the ages—to apply the unchanging message of the Gospel to these differently framed questions.

I want to draw attention particularly to the issue of pastoral formation. I want to stress how Lutheran identity is linked to the way the Lutheran tradition has formed its pastors. Lutheran commitment to biblical doctrine confessionally demanded—absolutely required—that its clergy be intellectually capable, academically trained, and articulately able. Historically, Lutherans have placed a high priority on the intellectual attainment of understanding the faith—yet it should be noted that this deep understanding of the faith was always seen ultimately in the service of teaching the faithful and reaching the lost through the clearest possible proclamation of the Gospel.

And so Lutheran pastors have been theologically formed from the beginning in universities and seminaries. At the same time, however, the settings and circumstances in which Lutherans have found themselves have indeed challenged assumptions about the duration and character of pastoral formation—a conversation that is going on even today. Thus, there are many historical instances of men lacking a full theological education who were admitted to the pastoral office. However, while employing a variety of forms and modalities (short-term study in the sixteenth century and private tutors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), the ideal Lutheran form of pastoral formation has been an extended residential experience that sought to integrate doctrine and practice. My thesis is this:

Lutheranism has allowed and employed a variety of modalities in order to bring men to the point that they are “apt to teach.” The key is what it means to be “apt to teach.” Until this is done, and done clearly, pedagogies will lack focus and will not achieve outcomes.

II. The Problem of Lutheran identity

Keep watch! Study! *Attende lectioni!* [“Attend to reading!” 1 Tim. 4:13]. Truly, you cannot read in Scripture too much, and what you do read you cannot read too well, and what you read well you cannot understand too well, and what you understand well you cannot teach too well, and what you teach well you cannot live too well. . . . It is the devil, the world, and the flesh that are ranting and raging against us. Therefore, beloved lords and brothers, pastors and preachers, pray, read, study, and keep busy. Truly, at this evil, shameful time, it is no time for loafing, snoring, or sleeping. Use your gift, which has been entrusted to you [cf. 1 Tim. 4:14], and reveal the mystery of Christ [cf. Col. 1:26].¹

These are Luther’s words, and they are not surprising words for us as Lutherans to hear. Luther, after all, was a professor *and* a pastor. The Lutheran Reformation was born in the context of the academy/university, and its identity is inseparably bound up with that fact.

One thing I always point out to my students and to the faculty at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, is the challenge that defining Lutheran identity presents. Not that it should be—but it is. What I mean is simply this: Lutheranism’s identity is bound up with its confession of the biblical witness—the *fides quae*, the faith once delivered to the saints. That confession is found in the Augsburg Confession (1530) as the foundational confession of the Lutheran tradition, and in the Lutheran symbols that make up the Book of Concord 1580, because the Lutheran Confessions are a faithful exposition of the doctrine of the Scriptures.

III. Lutheran Identity and the University

Wittenberg was the obvious center of the Lutheran educational enterprise in the first century of German Lutheranism. Without Frederick the Wise (d. 1525),

¹ Martin Luther, “Preface to Johann Spangenberg, *German Postil, from Advent to Easter, Arranged in Questions for Young Christians, both Boys and Girls* [1543],” vol. 60, p. 285, in *Luther’s Works, American Edition*, vols. 1–30, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1976]; vols. 31–55, ed. Helmut Lehmann [Philadelphia/Minneapolis: Muhlenberg/Fortress, 1957–1986]; vols. 56–82, ed. Christopher Boyd Brown and Benjamin T. G. Mayes [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009–], hereafter AE.

John the Steadfast (d.1532), and perhaps especially John Frederick (d. 1554)—all electors of Saxony—it is unlikely that the Lutheran Reformation would have succeeded as it did. Indeed, as John the Steadfast lay dying, he charged his son John Frederick to maintain the educational work begun at Wittenberg.

It is important that we have clergymen and ministers who are mighty in the defense of the Word of God and in the maintenance of its purity, especially in these recent times when confusion and misfortune appear to increase daily.... Hence, we sound this solemn warning to our dear son and his loved ones. Their father kindly but most emphatically directs that they uphold the institution of higher learning at Wittenberg, *regardless of its cost or the energy required*. This is to be done, especially in praise to Almighty God, because in recent times there has arisen again in that place the rich, saving Grace of the Word of God.²

This is a remarkable statement in that it underscores the centrality of education for the success of the Lutheran endeavor—delivered as the Elector lay dying, it shows how near this was to his mind and heart.

But what would be taught? The foundational text was, of course, the Bible. Here Melanchthon's biblical humanism had global pedagogical impact. Indeed, as incoming students to Concordia Theological Seminary wonder out loud why it is they have to take Greek, my answer is, “Blame Melanchthon!” Thomas Coates puts it like this:

The Missouri Synod has, to be sure, received its religious character from the genius and spirit of Luther himself. The Missouri Synod's educational system, however, bears the stamp of Philip Melanchthon. While Luther was deeply concerned about the Christian education of the youth, and while he wrote with his customary vigor and clarity upon the importance of this subject, it is evident that his concern was not with educational methodology, but with the goals to be achieved. And these goals were always religious—deeper knowledge of God and greater service to mankind. He was content to leave the content to leave the question of method to the schoolmen, provided that the aims of the Gospel were realized.³

The drafting of an educational method and a set of pedagogical assumptions fell, in the end, to Philip Melanchthon. In 1533, he drafted the *Statutes*, which outlined how the university would operate and what formation of students involved.

² Ernest G. Schieber, “The Reformation and Theological Education at Wittenberg,” *Springfielder* 38 (Autumn 1964): 27 [emphasis added].

³ Thomas Coates, *The Making of a Minister: A Historical Study and Critical Evaluation* (Portland: Concordia College, n.d.), 16.

First and foremost, Melanchthon pointed to the Augsburg Confession because it confessed “the true and perpetual teaching of the Catholic Church”; Wittenberg’s theology was not new, but Apostolic.”⁴

What was important was the Church’s confession of the gospel, which Lutherans were convinced Luther had recovered through his reading of the Scripture and had been rightly confessed in the Augustana. Pastoral formation was a process of shaping a man in the Church’s confession so that he might preach the Scripture in its truth and purity. Not surprisingly, then, Melanchthon was deeply committed to students learning the biblical languages.⁵ As Schwiebert summarized, “This training produced theologians who knew Biblical teaching on the basis of their own private investigations.”⁶

The Lutheran Reformation, then, was inseparably bound up with educational method and pedagogy, and as Lutherans moved into the world over the next centuries, these had global impact—even to this day.

IV. The Cost of Pastoral Formation and Supply

This kind of intense pastoral formation took time and money, as John the Steadfast proved. Assumptions regarding the time that this took were embedded within the process of higher education itself. Yet circumstances indicated that there was a gap between the ideally formed pastor and the immediate need of the churches. This was clear to Luther and Melanchthon by the end of the 1520s. It likely informed the revisions of the curriculum that were introduced in 1533 at Wittenberg.

Driving the revisions were the deplorable conditions in the church in Saxony—especially among the clergy, and especially in respect to the clergy’s lack of education.

In the remainder of the Saxon lands, especially those of the Elector’s cousin, Duke George, the bitter Luther enemy, conditions were even worse until his

⁴ Schwiebert, “Theological Education at Wittenberg,” 29.

⁵ Ernest G. Schwiebert, *Reformation Lectures Delivered at Valparaiso University* (Valparaiso, Indiana: The Letter Shop, 1937), 274: “But it was not until the new Theological Statutes of 1533 (Foersteann, *Liber Decanorum*, p. 153) that this new philological method could be fully realized in the University of Wittenberg. There were now three regular professors in Theology, and in addition the town pastor, Bugenhagen, teaching part time. Henceforth, all theological candidates were to be carefully examined on the basis of the new norm, the *Augsburg Confession*, and after 1537 the ordination of ministers was begun, the prelude to the later Lutheran custom. Naturally, due to the shortage of available candidates, some of those so ordained were rather poorly prepared men including many tradesmen and guild members.”

⁶ Schwiebert, “Theological Education at Wittenberg,” 32.

death in 1539. A large percentage of the clergy had families though they professed celibacy; others lived in “wild wedlock.” The clergy were very incompetent, few of them even knowing the Lord’s Prayer or the Ten Commandments. Bibles were rare and seldom used. A committee under Professor Justas Jonas reported that in one region 190 out of 200 lived in open fornication and classified the district as belonging to the very “dregs of society.” Congregations reported that the clergy neglected their flocks, spent their time making buttermilk and malt, and on Sundays told their congregations about it, if they attended. Such regions were hardly Lutheran even 22 years after the nailing of the *Ninety-five Theses*.⁷

Not surprisingly, then, as the revised Wittenberg curriculum began to produce capable pastors, they were in great demand.

Admission to Wittenberg assumed familiarity with the Latin language and the classics. The *gymnasium* process of education was assumed. The responsibility of the university was to help the students become fruitful users of these tools for the sake of the proclamation of the gospel. As the university itself stated,

The brilliant student, who has been properly trained in the mastery of languages, is indeed well prepared to interpret the Holy Scriptures and is qualified to administer public justice. For how can anyone, who wants to be versed in sacred literature, evaluate the conclusions based on information drawn from the Holy Scriptures if he does not know the languages in which they were written and does not grasp the figures of speech found therein? How can he expect to be able to interpret sacred dogma without the mastery of the correct use of Biblical exegesis, or in case he fails to grasp the context of passages from which conclusions are drawn?⁸

Implicit in the latter part of the previous quotation is the question of sufficient preparation. To put it differently, when is a man adequately formed to fulfill the biblical injunction that he must be “able to teach” in order to be a faithful preacher and teacher of God’s Word?

The desired outcome was clear preaching of the Gospel. Overt piety was necessary in a candidate for the preaching office, but it was not enough; it could not make up for the lack of intellectual capacity, for this would put the preacher’s hearers’ salvation at stake.

Poorly trained clergymen would fail to organize their sermons properly, would spread “darkness rather than light,” and leave their congregations neither uplifted nor better informed. Just as a medical doctor would not attempt the

⁷ Schwiebert, *Reformation Lectures*, 277.

⁸ Schwiebert, “Theological Education at Wittenberg,” 26.

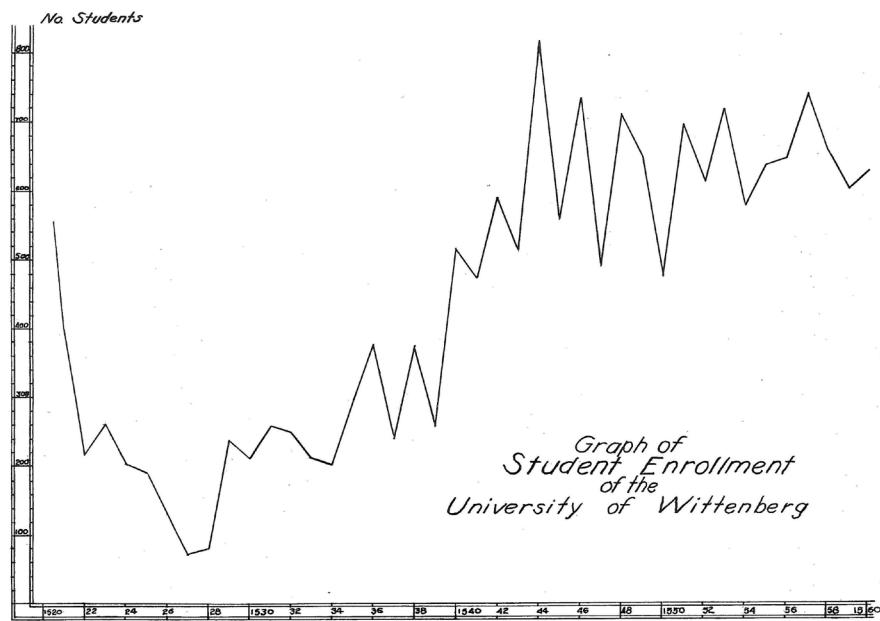
study of medicine without a mastery of physiology and mathematics, Melanchthon maintained, so the theologian could not study theology without a mastery of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.⁹

Undoubtedly, the Wittenberg *ideal* was a man fully educated and formed for the sake of the clear preaching of the gospel. Such an ideal, however, is not attained without its difficulties. We will now consider some of the challenges and pressures of putting that ideal into practice—some of which are historical and some of which are contemporary.

Problem 1—When Is a Man “Apt to Teach”?

The biblical requirements for the candidate for the Office of the Ministry are well known to us all (1 Tim 3:1–7; 2 Tim 2:1–3; 2:22–26).

One of the early challenges facing the Lutheran tradition—and one that Wittenberg struggled to meet—was one of numbers. In 1521, when Luther was excommunicated, the student population of Wittenberg plunged precipitously. It took years to rebuild the student body. And recall that it was in the midst of the rebuilding of the student population that Luther and Melanchthon revised the curriculum.



⁹ Schwiebert, “Theological Education at Wittenberg,” 26.

Taken together, these two points—the need to attract and to train a sufficient number of students—meant that there simply were not enough pastors to push the work of Reformation forward. Quite simply, this put the future of the Reformation at risk. And this, then, drove the question (which we touched on earlier): when is a man sufficiently formed to be “able to teach”?

As a result, there were a number of *Notprediger*—emergency preachers—in early Lutheranism. A study of the *Wittenberger Ordinierotenbuch* reveals that when ordinations began in earnest in Wittenberg in 1537, initially a large percentage of the ordinands were *Notprediger*. From a modest eight ordinations in 1537 and twenty-two in 1538, by 1539 the number had climbed to 110. Of those 110 ordinations in 1539, fully a third were men who lacked full classical training.

Ordination of Pastors in Town Church, Wittenberg, 1539

Merchants	1
Town Secretaries	2
Burghers	10
Stone Masons	1
Sextons	6
Council Men	1
Clothiers	1
Village Schoolmen	3
Printers	11 ¹⁰
36 of 110 total (33%)	

Luther and his advisors wisely chose to send men rich in the Spirit if not in training to serve until enough candidates could be properly trained. In the ensuing years, the number of *Notprediger* decreased quickly: in 1542 it was twenty-seven out of 103; in 1546 it was fifteen out of 102. Increased enrollment at Wittenberg, coupled with the organization of new Lutheran universities at Marburg, Leipzig, and Griefwald, helped to alleviate the immediate pressure.

But it is noteworthy nonetheless that the ideal and its realization was something that took intentionality and time. How was this done? Schwiebert argues, “it was

¹⁰ Schwiebert, *Reformation Lectures*, 285. For narrower studies of the question of ordination in early Lutheranism, see Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *Luther's Pastors: The Reformation in the Ernestine Countryside* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1979), 56–60; Martin Krarup, *Ordination in Wittenberg* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

only by means of the extensive educational system of Luther and his co-workers, beginning with the grade schools and continuing through the preparatory schools and colleges, a marvel of organization for the period of the 16th Century, that the Reformation took root and flourished.”¹¹

This was a Lutheran given—almost a matter of identity. Lutherans were deeply committed to the education of their clergy. Only once a man had a strong theological education could he even be considered for the Office of the Ministry. It was straightforward and simple. But questions continually presented themselves as this commitment was put into practice.

*Problem 2—What to do when there is not an adjudicatory
for inducting men into the office?*

When Lutherans came to North America they faced new problems. The case of Justus Falckner (1672–1623) demonstrates the challenges of applying ecclesiology in the American setting. It was assumed that Justus, born into a clergy family, would follow his father, Daniel Sr., and brothers into ministerial service. Having studied at Halle, Justus was unconvinced that he was a viable candidate for pastoral ministry. In 1700, he came to Philadelphia as a land agent for William Penn. But the presence of a young, theologically trained Lutheran proved too compelling for the Swedish missionary pastors of the American setting.

Andreas Rudman was serving the widely scattered and ethnically diverse Lutheran congregations of America—ranging from the Swedish Lutherans on the Delaware River to the Dutch and German Lutherans in the Hudson River Valley of the former New Netherland. There was even a smattering of English being used in the church at this point. Later, there were American Indians and African-Americans in the Hudson River congregation. By 1703, Rudman was convinced that Justus Falckner was the perfect candidate for the congregation in New York, which stretched from New York City up the Hudson River Valley to Albany, New York.

The problem for Rudman, however, was how to properly induct the candidate of theology into the ministerial office.¹² Lutherans had insisted that the preparation of pastors required four steps: education, examination by peers, call, and ordination (with the last two being conflated in some cases). Falckner had the first point, education, but lacked the final three. The Lutheran church in America lacked a bishop, a consistory, or even an organized synod. What churchly adjudicatory

¹¹ Schwiebert, *Reformation Lectures*, 286.

¹² There is some evidence that Rudman had attempted to ordain a candidate for the ministry earlier in North America. This ordination was simply not recognized due to its “irregular” character.

would authorize Falckner for ordination? The answer, in the end, was rather complex. Rudman was appointed suffragan bishop—limited to this one episcopal act. Forming a consistory with his Swedish ministerial colleagues, Erik Tobias Bjorck and Andreas Sandel, they examined Falckner and found him properly prepared for service. At the ordination proper, which occurred on November 24, 1703, Rudman served as bishop and ordinotor, Bjorck as representative of the consistory, and Sandel as sponsor of the ordinand.¹³

Problem 3—What do we do if we don't have schools to form Lutheran pastors?

Lutherans in North America struggled in the colonial period for a series of reasons. One was that the earliest Lutherans, the Swedes and the Dutch in the seventeenth century, were never fully successful in adapting themselves to the new setting with its lack of formal structures and institutions. As such, they had to depend on candidates for the ministry from Europe—especially once the Germans began arriving in the early eighteenth century. Pastors received their training, examination, call, and ordination outside of the North American context, for the most part. Attracting candidates to the American frontier was terribly difficult. The result was that there were never enough pastors.

The question thus became whether an adjudicatory could authorize or license a man for service in the church when there was no official faculty or institution to provide “certification” for candidates for the office. The American answer was rather simple: to have pastors train candidates on their own. At times, this worked very well. One example is that of the Henkels, such as when Pastor Paul Henkel trained his son David and ended up producing one of the most articulate and

¹³ One of the questions surrounding Falckner is his pietism. He was trained at Halle; however, over time he clearly moved toward a more robust confessional position. For competing pictures, see Kim-Eric Williams, *The Journey of Justus Falckner, 1672–1723* (Delhi, New York: American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, 2003); and Julius Sachse, *Justus Falckner: Mystic and Scholar, Devout Pietist in Germany, Hermit on the Wissahickon, Missionary on the Hudson: A Bi-Centennial Memorial of the First Regular Ordination of an Orthodox Pastor in America, Done November 24, 1703, at Gloria Dei, the Swedish Lutheran Church at Wicaco, Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1903). One piece of evidence for this shift toward a more confessional orientation was Falckner’s catechetical work, about which Susan Denise Gantt, “Catechetical Instruction as an Educational Process for the Teaching of Doctrine to Children in Southern Baptist Churches” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004), 147, says, “The first book of Christian instruction by a Lutheran clergyman in America was written by Justus Falckner and printed in 1708 (Repp 1982, 19). The title of his book was *Fundamental Instruction upon Certain Points of the True, Pure, Saving Christian Teaching; Founded upon the Apostles and Prophets, of Which Jesus Christ is the Chief Corner Stone; Set Forth in Plain but Edifying Questions and Answers* (Clark 1946, 77). Although it was not based on Luther’s Small Catechism, as were many of the catechisms produced during this time, this new catechism was intended to prepare candidates for Holy Communion (Repp 1982, 18).”

creative Lutheran theologians in history. On the other hand, when this became the norm rather than the exception for pastoral formation, the results were extremely uneven, and the impact of a less-educated clergy made itself particularly evident in the succeeding generation. That is to say, the pragmatic move away from the Wittenberg ideal of education affected the life of the church in longstanding ways.

Darius Petkunas's *The Repression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lithuania during the Stalinist Era* touches on this subject excellently. While the purpose of Petkunas's work is self-evident from the title, he speaks to this issue in one section of the book:

Because of the urgent need for pastors, Baltris had taken to ordaining cantors and other warm bodies totally lacking in even most basic theological education. They did not know the difference between a Lutheran and a Baptist and could not care less. What was being heard from the pulpits was drivel and downright heresy.

The outcome of the situation, in Petkunas's estimation, is, "The situation with the uneducated pastors was indeed serious. The Lutheran Church was being threatened from within. It could easily lose its identity as a Lutheran Church."¹⁴

Problem 4—What do we do in a fully democratized setting that has (1) a different ecclesiology and (2) a different understanding of the Office of the Ministry?

Another problem was the democratization of American Christianity. Americans take their freedom seriously—oftentimes expressed as freedom *from* the past. This process of democratization, along with its attendant system of checks and balances, is the subject of Nathan Hatch's enormously influential study, *The Democratization of American Christianity*.¹⁵ It was in the churches, argues Hatch, that the people forged their fundamental ideas about the nature of individual responsibility. The preachers of the day stimulated this defining process by seizing the opportunity to lead. They expressed their leadership primarily by organizing religious movements "from the ground up." They did so by using vernacular sermons based on the life experiences of their hearers, popular literature and music, protracted meetings, and, most importantly, new ideologies that both denied the hierarchical structure of elitist religions and promised to exalt those of lower status to at least an equal level with their supposed superiors.

¹⁴ Darius Petkūnas, *The Repression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lithuania during the Stalinist Era* (Klaipeda, Lithuania: Klaipeda University, 2011), 226.

¹⁵ Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

The leaders were accepted because they challenged the people to take their personal destiny into their own hands and to oppose centralized authority and hierarchical conceptions of society. They empowered the people by giving them a sense of self-trust. As the people learned to trust their religious impulses, they in turn spoke out boldly in defense of their experiences. Common people exhibited a new confidence in the validity of their personal religious experiences, and when they began to demand that religion offer an avenue to express this newfound individualism, the American church was revolutionized.

According to Hatch, freedom from the domination of the hierarchical clergy required three steps. First, the new preachers refused to defer to the seminary-trained theologians. Second, they empowered the laity by taking seriously their religious practices, affirming and validating the people's experiences. Finally, they exuded enthusiasm about the potential for their movements, and the people caught the vision. "They dreamed that a new age of religious and social harmony would naturally spring up out of their efforts to overthrow coercive and authoritarian structures."¹⁶

In this context, the fourfold nature of pastoral formation was seriously compressed. Education came to be seen as unnecessary; examination an expression of tyranny and power; the "call" as artificial because a personal experience, ratified in a quantifiable number of demonstrable "conversions," was the true mark of calling; and ordination as a superfluous act, which, if retained at all, was carried out by the congregation.

Indeed, an overt antagonism emerged toward men who had prepared themselves for ministerial service via seminary or university study.

Why are we in such slavery, to men of that degree;
 Bound to support their knavery; when we might all be free?
 They're nothing but a canker; we can with boldness say;
 So let us hoist the anchor, let Priest-craft float away.¹⁷

In this context, Lutherans faced a series of choices that crystalized around, among other issues, the doctrines of church and ministry. What shape would the church take in democratic America? What authority do general, national bodies have over against particular, local congregations?

What did this mean for pastoral formation? An assumption began to develop in America that had two intensities: 1) theological education is not necessary for one to be a pastor; and 2) theological education is a hindrance for one becoming a pastor. As William Warren Sweet put it, "Alfred Brunson opposed theological schools

¹⁶ Hatch, *Democratization*, 10–11.

¹⁷ Hatch, *Democratization*, 231.

on the ground that they so often turned out ‘learned dunces and third rate preachers,’ while Peter Cartwright compared the theologically educated preachers he knew to the pale lettuce ‘growing under the shade of a peach tree’ or to a ‘gosling that has got the waddles wading in the dew.’”¹⁸

The test of ministerial validity was the success, or failure, of the preacher in producing converts (recall that this was contemporary with the emergence of the market as the dominant economic engine in the United States). If you could win people to Christ (whatever that meant), you had the gift of the Spirit and were a legitimate minister. If you could not gain converts, it did not matter what education you did or did not have, whatever examination you had or had not passed, or whether you had received the laying on of hands in an ordination service.¹⁹

V. Conclusion—Lutheran Identity in the Twenty-First Century

This study began to explore the relationship of theological formation (and only tangentially pedagogy as such) to the mission and life of the church. It hopefully has raised some questions and initial conclusions as we work to frame a concrete vision for the future of confessional Lutheran theological education and pastoral formation. Two acts of the 2016 LCMS convention are of enormous importance for theological education. I include them here for ongoing reflection. First, Resolution 6–03 sought to affirm what most of us think of as the “classic” route to acquiring ministerial credentials.

Whereas, Our Lord said, “The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers

¹⁸ William Warren Sweet, “The Rise of Theological Schools in America,” *Church History* 6 (September 1937): 271. Later, when some of these denominations began to form clergy in dedicated theological schools, the reasoning was based in the increasing educational level of the laity. “. . . educated and wealthy laymen . . . began to demand ministers of whom they need not feel ashamed. Trained ministers, they said, were needed to attract the cultured people of the cities, and scholars were needed to refute the attacks on their theology.” Sweet, “Theological Schools,” 272.

¹⁹ The literature on the transformation of pastoral formation is enormous. Hatch, *Democratization*, is, of course, of paramount importance. See also E. Brooks Holifield, *God’s Ambassadors: A History of the Christian Clergy in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); Glenn T. Miller, *Piety and Intellect: The Aims and Purposes of Ante-Bellum Theological Education* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990); Donald M. Scott, *From Office to Profession: The New England Ministry, 1750–1850* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978); and Glenn T. Miller, *Piety and Profession: American Protestant Theological Education, 1870–1970* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007). For a quick view of the popular version of this transformation, see “Billy Sunday Burns Up the Backsliding World: Whirlwind Evangelist Swings into Action in Boston,” <http://youtu.be/Ykn8YcIbmfo>, accessed October 6, 2011.

into His harvest" (Luke 10:2), and the apostle Paul wrote, "If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task" (1 Tim. 3:1); and

Whereas, The 2013 Res. 5–14A Task Force Report states, "The New Testament passages listing qualifications for the pastoral office focus mainly on the character of the man proposed for the office ('above reproach, husband of one wife, sober minded, self-controlled, respectable,' etc. [1 Tim. 3:2ff]). The one theological requirement in that section is that the man be 'able to teach.' He must 'keep a close watch on himself and on the teaching' (1 Tim. 4:16). He must be 'able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it' (Titus 1:9). Character and the ability to teach and to hand the doctrine on to others are the qualifications Scripture looks for. These high standards apply to each of the various means by which the church recruits and trains pastors from her midst. Here is scriptural rationale supporting the work of our seminaries to train future pastors, as well as the careful work of our Colloquy Committee. We want men who love Jesus, whose hearts have been transformed by the Holy Spirit so that they also love people. We want men who are fiercely loyal to their Savior and to His Body, the Church. But we want these men to be thoroughly trained in biblical truth as well as other necessary disciplines for the task" (R64, p. 268); and

Whereas, The Synod has been blessed by the graduates of the master of divinity programs at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne; and

Whereas, The 2013 Res. 5–14A Task Force report states, "The most complete means of preparing a man for the general responsibilities of the pastoral office and a lifetime of service is the master of divinity route at our two seminaries. This full residential experience has always been our 'gold standard' for pastoral formation" (R64, p. 271); therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod in convention affirm that the most complete means of preparing a man for the general responsibilities of the pastoral office and a lifetime of service is the residential master of divinity route at the Synod's seminaries; and be it further

Resolved, That men aspiring to the noble task of pastor be encouraged by the Synod in convention to apply for admission to the master of divinity programs at the Synod's seminaries; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod in convention urge all members of Synod and members of Synod congregations to encourage men to study in the master of divinity programs of the Synod's seminaries.²⁰

The second resolution was even more important.

Whereas, The Office of the Holy Ministry is located within God's plan and work of salvation in Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:18–20; Mark 16:15–16; Luke 24:44–49; John 20:21–23). For this reason we confess AC V, because (*quia*) it is "a true exposition of Holy Scriptures" (*LSB Agenda*, p. 166). "To obtain such faith [i.e., justifying faith, AC IV] God instituted the office of preaching [*Predigtamt*], giving the gospel and sacraments" (AC V 1, German, Kolb-Wengert [KW] edition). See the paper "The Office of the Holy Ministry," which "represents a consensus" of the "systematics departments of both LCMS seminaries" (*CTQ* 70 (2006): 97–111); and

Whereas, The Office of the Holy Ministry was instituted and mandated by Jesus Christ to save sinners by "giving the gospel and the sacraments. Through these, as through means, he gives the Holy Spirit who produces faith, where and when he wills, in those who hear the gospel" (AC V 1–2, German, KW). God instituted the Office of the Holy Ministry, or preaching office, for this very purpose, that sinners obtain saving faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:14–17). We confess that this office has "the command of God and magnificent promises" (Rom 1:16; Ap XIII 11); and

Whereas, Jesus Christ has given the keys of the kingdom of heaven to His Church immediately. Thus the teaching of our church, "It is to the true church of believers and saints that Christ gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (C. F. W. Walther, *The Church and the Office of the Holy Ministry*, Thesis 4 concerning the Church, Thesis 6 concerning the Office, p. 36 of 2012 edition, adopted in 1852 and reaffirmed with 2001 Res. 7–17A). Jesus says in Matt. 18:18–20, "Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them"; so also, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9); and

²⁰ "To Affirm the Master of Divinity Route at the Synod's Seminaries," RESOLUTION 6–03 Report R64 (CW, pp. 268–296); Overture 6–10 (CW, pp. 359–360), *LCMS Proceedings*, 168.

Whereas, God has also instituted and mandated the Office of the Holy Ministry as His gift to the Church through which the saving Word of God and the Holy Sacraments are to be publicly distributed and the Keys are to be used publicly on behalf of the church (Eph. 4:8, 11; AC XIV; Walther on the Office, Theses 3 and 5). Thus Christ says to His apostles, “As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you. . . . Receive the Holy Spirit; if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld” (John 20:21–23; Matt. 16:18–19); and

Whereas, In keeping with God’s own mandate for filling the Office of the Holy Ministry, we confess in AC XIV, “Concerning church government it is taught that no one should publicly teach, preach, or administer the sacraments without a proper [public] call” (KW, German), as the Scripture says, “And how are they to preach unless they are sent?” (Rom. 10:15); and

Whereas, In AC XIV, the “proper call” (*ordentliche Beruf, rite vocatus*) entails three biblical and confessional mandates (R62, pp. 238–240; R64, pp. 268–270),

1. Examination: The Scriptures mandate that the candidate for the holy ministry be personally and theologically qualified for the office (1 Tim. 3:1–7; 2 Tim. 2:24–26; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Pet. 5:1–4). The personal qualifications include that the candidate be a biological male (Gen. 1:26; Matt. 19:4), above reproach, and the husband of only one wife. The theological qualifications especially include the requirement that he be “able to teach” (2 Tim. 2:24), that is, that “he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9), along with competence to perform all the tasks mandated to the office. See the Small Catechism, Table of Duties, 2. To this end the faculties of our seminaries have been called to teach the Scriptures and the Confessions to the pastoral candidates and to form their minds and hearts and skills to the pastoral task. The faculties of the seminaries are also called to examine the confession and life of each of the candidates for the office, along with the Colloquy Committee in the cases reserved for it (Bylaw 3.10.2). By this examination the Synod assures itself of the confessional commitment and the personal and theological fitness of its candidates for call and ordination.

2. Call: God Himself calls a man into the Office of the Holy Ministry through the church, whose right to call and ordain ministers stems from her possession of the Keys, on account of Christ’s institution. By the ministerial call (or sending, John 20:21, Rom. 10:15), Christ, through the church, bestows His own authority and power upon the one who is called, as we confess in the Apology, “They represent the person of Christ on account of the call of the church and do not represent their own persons, as Christ himself testifies (Luke 10:16), ‘Whoever listens to you listens to Me.’ When they offer the Word

of Christ or the sacraments, they offer them in the stead and place of Christ” (Ap VII/VIII 28, KW). The call of the church is not only the call of Christ into the Office, but also indicates the consent of the church in receiving the ministry of the one called (Acts 6:1–6; Walther, Thesis 6 concerning the Office). The divine call is always to a designated location and field of service. We especially defend the right of the local congregation to call her own pastor.

3. Ordination: The rite of ordination, the laying on of hands, is an ancient and laudable practice in the church, but not commanded by God. But when ordination is understood as the whole church’s confirmation of the call, it is an inherent component of transcongregational (transparochial) church fellowship and a part of the “proper call” confessed in AC XIV. So we confess, “Finally [the church’s right to call and ordain ministers] is also confirmed by Peter’s declaration (1 Peter 2:9): ‘You are a . . . royal priesthood.’ These words apply to the true church, which, since it alone possesses the priesthood, certainly has the right of choosing and ordaining ministers. . . . Ordination was nothing other than such confirmation of the candidate by the laying on of hands” (Tr 69–70, KW). The church has the right to put her ministers in place, and ordination guarantees that right. We also confess in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, “But if ordination is understood with reference to the ministry of the Word, we have no objection to calling ordination a sacrament. For the ministry of the Word has the command of God and has magnificent promises like Rom. 1[:16]: the gospel ‘is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith.’ . . . For the church has the mandate to appoint ministers, which ought to please us greatly because we know that God approves this ministry and is present in it” (Ap XIII 11, 12, KW). Again, from the Treatise, “For wherever the church exists, there also is the right to administer the gospel. Therefore, it is necessary for the church to retain the right to call, choose, and ordain ministers” (Tr 67, KW). C. F. W. Walther writes in his *Pastoral Theology* (p. 44), “Neither the examination which one who has been called to the preaching office passes before an appointed commission outside of the calling congregation, nor the ordination which he receives from the appointed persons outside of the congregation, are what make the call valid. But both procedures are among the most beneficial ordinances of the church and have—especially the latter—among other things the important purpose of publicly confirming that the call is recognized by the whole church as legitimate and divine. Anyone who unnecessarily omits one or the other is acting schismatically and making it known that he is one of those whom congregations with itching ears heap up for themselves (2 Tim. 4:3); and

Whereas, Society is challenging the church to conform to the shifting definitions of marriage (no-fault divorce, same-sex marriage, etc.) and sex (transgenderism, surgical modifications, etc.), putting pressure on applications of the qualifications for the holy ministry; and

Whereas, Within the Synod many are debating issues surrounding the Office of the Holy Ministry, including preparation, fitness, examination and certification, and the necessity of call and ordination to “publicly teach, preach or administer the sacraments” (AC XIV; see, e.g., 2013 Res. 4-06A on licensed lay deacons); and

Whereas, The office assigned to the seminary faculties is complementary to that assigned to the visitors of the church (i.e., district presidents). The seminary faculties present the candidates to the church for call and ordination, while the district presidents ordain and install them into office on behalf of the church. The district presidents (as ecclesial visitors) provide for the care and maintenance of the work done by the seminaries by encouraging and strengthening the pastors under their charge with the Word of God (Acts 15:1-35), continuing to examine their doctrine, practice, and life and testifying to the church of the faithfulness of each pastor’s confession and life; and

Whereas, God calls pastors to love and care for His people, to minister to them with compassion and understanding, and as the church asks her pastors to promise in the Rite of Ordination, “Will you faithfully instruct both young and old in the articles of Christian doctrine, will you forgive the sins of all those who repent, and will you promise never to divulge the sins confessed to you? Will you minister faithfully to the sick and dying, and will you demonstrate to the Church a constant and ready ministry centered in the Gospel? Will you admonish and encourage the people to a lively confidence in Christ and in holy living?” (*LSB Agenda*, p. 166); therefore be it

Resolved, That the seminaries in consultation with the Council of Presidents review their admissions and certification standards to ensure that all those admitted to or certified through any of the routes to the Office of the Holy Ministry conform to the personal qualifications outlined in Holy Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:1-7; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 1:5-9), including that they be a biological male (Gen. 1:26; Matt. 19:4; Acts 1:21; 1 Tim. 3:2), the husband of only one wife if married (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6; see also Ap XXIII); and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod in convention uphold these scriptural and confessional qualifications of the holy ministry by directing the seminaries and district presidents to ensure that (1) the candidate for office be examined by a seminary faculty or the colloquy committee to certify his fitness in life, doctrine, and confessional commitment; (2) he be called by the church to a

particular field of service in the public teaching of God's Word and administration of the Holy Sacraments; and (3) he be ordained into this office by the appropriate district president or his representative according to the order of the church; and be it further

Resolved, That where a man does the work of the holy ministry (AC V), he have a "proper public call" by examination and certification, call, and ordination; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod receive this resolution in the spirit of Friedrich Wyneken (second LCMS President): "This office is not about concealing from the so-called laity its sovereignty, patronizing it, and defining ever more narrowly the boundaries within which it may move. It does not clip its rights, limit its heart, close its lips, [or] reduce it to timidity that it remain nice-looking and subject and not dare in any way to impinge upon the sovereignty of the educated and well-reasoned pastor. In short, the office does not consist in suppression of the laity in order to elevate the clergy at the laity's expense. . . . The dignity, the desire, and the joy of the true co-worker of God is to draw ever more his community of believers into their freedom and its worthy use, to encourage them and lead them ever more in the exercise of their rights, to show them how to exercise their duties that they be more and more convinced of their high calling and that they demonstrate that they are ever more worthy of that calling" (Friedrich Wyneken, *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, p. 366).²¹

Res. 6-02 was adopted as presented by a vote of Yes: 875; No: 177. That is an 83 percent favorable vote. That is a truly encouraging result.

Questions about pastoral formation and certification, delivery systems for theological education, the relationship of pedagogy and methodology, increasing democratization, basic issues of funding, and many others will need the attention of the best minds gathered together in prayerful consideration of the future of our confession.

I hope this study will contribute modestly to that endeavor. In conclusion, consider the following statements. First: "The educational factor in the growth and spread of the Reformation has not been fully realized and appreciated. In a sense the

²¹ "To Uphold the Scriptural and Confessional Qualifications for the Office of the Holy Ministry," RESOLUTION 6-02, Reports R62, R64 (CW, pp. 235–261, 268–289), LCMS 2017 *Proceedings*, 166–68.

Reformation rose and fell with the educational system instituted by Luther and his fellow Reformers.”²² And finally, Luther again:

Keep watch! Study! *Attende lectioni!* [“Attend to reading!” 1 Tim. 4:13]. Truly, you cannot read in Scripture too much, and what you do read you cannot read too well, and what you read well you cannot understand too well, and what you understand well you cannot teach too well, and what you teach well you cannot live too well. . . . It is the devil, the world, and the flesh that are ranting and raging against us. Therefore, beloved lords and brothers, pastors and preachers, pray, read, study, and keep busy. Truly, at this evil, shameful time, it is no time for loafing, snoring, or sleeping. Use your gift, which has been entrusted to you [cf. 1 Tim. 4:14], and reveal the mystery of Christ [cf. Col. 1:26].²³

²² Schwiebert, *Reformation Lectures*, 290.

²³ Luther, “Preface to Johann Spangenberg, *German Postil, from Advent to Easter, Arranged in Questions for Young Christians, both Boys and Girls*” (1543), AE 60:285.