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PASTORAL FORMATION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: THE PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF GLOBALIZATION

International Lutheran Conference, Prague, Czech Republic, October 6, 2011

by Lawrence R. Rast Jr.

I. INTRODUCTION—PEDAGOGY AND GLOBALIZATION?

Pedagogy and globalization—perhaps not the most exciting terms I might have chosen to entice you to engage the topic of pastoral formation. Yet I think they have something to offer us in this particular conference where we are considering the future of Lutheranism in the twenty-first century. For again, as this conference illustrates, 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.

But as a professionally trained historian, I would like to note a problem that we all as human beings share. That is, that we tend toward the parochial; we as finite beings tend to think of the beginning of history with our birth and the ending of history with our death. And so, we necessarily live, in a sense, simultaneously in the first days and 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 has its existence in the eternal and blessed Trinity. The church, therefore, while it exists in time and place, has its being in and through the Holy Trinity himself. This challenges us to think beyond the limitations of our particular time and place.

And so, as we consider globalization and pedagogy this morning, I would like to stretch us *back* over the history of Lutheranism, even as we stretch 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, to a growing importance of China (at least economically), and the emergence of the “global south,” particularly in terms of the growth of Christianity. Philip Jenkins’ 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 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, doctrinal change is not only likely, 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 Scripture. The faith does not change. At the same time, we all know that church today exists in rapidly changing circumstances. The theological/religious

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

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.

This morning I want to draw attention particularly to the issue of pastoral formation and two aspects of Lutheran commitment to this formation. First, I want to stress how Lutheran identity is linked to the way the Lutheran tradition has formed its pastors. Lutheran commitment to biblical doctrine that is confessionally expressed *demande*—*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 always was 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 extent—the duration and character—of pastoral formation, a conversation that is going on even today. And so, there are many historical instances of men who lacked a full theological education being admitted to the pastoral office. However, while employing a variety of forms and modalities (short-term study in the sixteenth century, 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. So, simply put, 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.” Strongly confessional universities and seminaries,

which formed strongly confessional pastors, have led to strongly confessional Lutheran congregations. Pedagogy and the global nature of Lutheranism have always interacted—sometimes harmoniously, though sometimes uncomfortably.

II. THE PROBLEM OF LUTHERAN 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.

Be alert, study, keep on reading! Truly you cannot read too much in the Scripture; and what you read, you cannot understand too well; and what you understand, you cannot teach too well; and what you teach well, you cannot live too well. Believe me, I know by experience! It is the devil, it is the world, it is our own flesh that storm and rage against us. Therefore dear sirs and brothers, pastors and preachers: pray, read, study, be diligent! I tell you the truth: there is no time for us to lazy around, to snore and sleep in these evil, wicked times. So bring your

talents that have been entrusted to you and reveal the mystery of Christ.¹

These are Luther’s words, and they are not surprising words for us as Lutherans to hear. Luther, after all, was a professor, in addition to being 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, IN, 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

¹ Martin Luther, Introduction to *Spangenberg’s Postille* of the Year 1542, vol. XIV, 379–81, from C.F.W. Walther, “Third Sermon at the Synodical Convention,” trans. Everette W. Meier in C.F.W. Walther, *Lutherische Brosamen: Predigten und Reden* (Saint Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio, u. a. Staaten, 1867), 11.

confession of the Lutheran tradition, and in the Lutheran Symbols which 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), 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 as to 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 man. He was 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. 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 that Luther had recovered through his reading of the Scripture and which 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—they do still today!

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

⁴ Schwiebert, “Theological Education,” 29.

⁵ Ernest G. Schwiebert, *Reformation Lectures Delivered at Valparaiso University* (Valparaiso, IN: 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,” 32.

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

IV. THE COST OF PASTORAL FORMATION AND SUPPLY

This kind of intense pastoral formation took time and money. We've seen how John the Steadfast made provision for this. 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 Melancthon 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 death in 1539. A large percentage of the clergy had families through 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 Justus 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 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?

Again, 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 study of medicine without a mastery of physiology and mathematics, Melancthon 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. What I would like to do now is shift somewhat to a consideration of some of the challenges and pressures to putting that ideal into practice—some of which are historical and some of which are contemporary.

V. 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.

The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore

⁸ Schwiebert, "Theological Education," 26.

⁹ Schwiebert, "Theological Education," 26.

⁷ Schwiebert, *Reformation Lectures*, 277.

an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil. (1 TIM 3:1-7 ESV)

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. (2 TIM 2:1-3 ESV)

So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will. (2 TIM 2:22-26 ESV)

One of the early challenges facing the Lutheran tradition—and one that Wittenberg struggled to meet—was the challenge 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 Melancthon revised the curriculum.

Taken together, these two points—the need to attract and train a sufficient number of students—meant that there simply were not enough pastors to push the work of the Reformation forward. Clearly, this put the future of the Reformation at risk. And this, then, drove the question (which we touched on earlier): When is a man actually 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 Ordiniertenbuch* 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, to twenty-two in 1538, by 1539 the number had climbed to 110. Of those 110 ordinations in 1539, fully one 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
Councilmen—1
Clothiers—1
Village Schoolmen—3
Printers—11¹⁰
36 of 110 total (33%)

Luther and his advisors widely 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 Griefswald, 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 only by means of the extensive educational system of Luther and his coworkers, 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

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* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

¹¹ Schwiebert, *Reformation Lectures*, 286.

continually presented themselves as this commitment was put into practice. Let me give several examples.

VI. PROBLEM 2 – WHAT TO DO WHEN THERE IS NOT AN ADJUDICATORY FOR INDUCTING MEN INTO THE OFFICE?

The case of Justus Falckner demonstrates the challenges of applying ecclesiology in the American setting. Born into a clergy family, it was assumed that Justus (1672–1723) would follow his father, Daniel Sr., and brothers into ministerial service. Having studied at Halle, however, 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 Germans 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 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

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.

as bishop and ordinator, Bjorck as representative of the consistory, and Sandel as sponsor of the ordinand.¹³

VII. 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, their examination, their call, and their 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, could an adjudicatory 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: Have pastors train candidates on their own. At times, this worked very well. One example is that of the Henkels, where Pastor Paul Henkel trained his son David and ended up producing one of the most articulate and creative Lutheran theologians in history. On the other hand, when this became the norm rather than the exception for pastoral formation, the

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 German, Hermit on the Wissahickon, Mission on the Hudson: A Bi-Centennial Memorial of the First Regular Ordination of an Orthodox Lutheran 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 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).” Susan Denise Gantt, “Catechetical Instruction as an Educational Process for the Teaching of Doctrine to Children in Southern Baptist Churches” (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004), 147.

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.

And here I would like to point to an excellent volume that touches on this subject. While the purpose of Darius Petkunas's *The Repression of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lithuania during the Stalinist Era* is self-evident from the title, Dr. Petkunas does speak to our issue in one section of the book.

Because of the urgent need for pastors, Pastor Ansas Baltris had taken to ordaining cantors and other warm bodies totally lacking in even the 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 having uneducated pastors in Petkunas's estimation "was indeed serious. The Lutheran Church was being threatened from within. It could easily lose its identity as a Lutheran Church."¹⁴

VIII. PROBLEM 4—WHAT DO WE DO IN A FULLY DEMOCRATIZED SETTING THAT HAS 1) A DIFFERENT ECCLESIOLOGY, 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.

The leaders were accepted because they challenged the people to take their personal destiny into their own hands, 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 experience, 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" became a personal experience ratified in a quantifiable number of demonstrable "conversions," and ordination an unnecessary 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

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).

¹⁶ Hatch, *Democratization*, 10–11.

¹⁷ Hatch, *Democratization*, 231.

of church and ministry. What shape would the church take in democratic America? What authority do general, national bodies have over and 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, 2) theological education is a hindrance for one becoming a pastor. As William Warren Sweet put it:

Alfred Brunson opposed theological schools 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, 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—whatever education you did or did not have. Whatever examination you had or had not passed. Whether or not you had received the laying on of hands in an ordination service.

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. Whether or not you had received the laying on of hands in an ordination service.¹⁹

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, a 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 Antebellum 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); 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/Ykn8Yclbmfo>, accessed September 30, 2017.

IX. CONCLUSION—LUTHERAN IDENTITY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The purpose of this paper has been to begin 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 in your mind—though it may not have offered any answers. One possible outcome may be to help in framing questions and initial conclusions as we work on Dr. Kalme’s homework assignment from yesterday in respect to framing a concrete vision for the future for confessional Lutheranism. Some of the issues that this vision will have to address are at least implicit in this paper. 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 paper will contribute modestly to that endeavor, and I look forward to working through these issues with you. In concluding, I’d like to offer the following two statements for your consideration. First: “The educational factor in the growth and spread of the Reformation has not been fully realized and appreciated. In a sense the Reformation rose and fell with the educational system instituted by Luther and his fellow Reformers.”²⁰ And finally, Luther again:

Be alert, study, keep on reading! Truly you cannot read too much in the Scripture; and what you read, you cannot understand too well; and what you understand, you cannot teach too well; and what you teach well, you cannot live too well. Believe me, I know by experience! It is the devil, it is the world, it is our own flesh that storm and rage against us. Therefore dear sirs and brothers, pastors and preachers: pray, read, study, be diligent! I tell you the truth: there is no time for us to lazy around, to snore and sleep in these evil, wicked times. So bring your talents that have been entrusted to you and reveal the mystery of Christ.²¹

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²⁰ Schwiebert, *Reformation Lectures*, 290.

²¹ Luther, intro to *Spangenberg’s Postille*, 11.