

For the

LIFE of the WORLD

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For the LIFE of the WORLD

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By Dr. L. Dean Hempelmann, Executive Director of the LCMS Board for Pastoral Education, St. Louis, Missouri

The tie that binds the church and the seminaries is Christ the Word in Scripture and Christ the Word presented in the Lutheran Confessions. Christ, His person and work, binds the two together. They are ONE. Both are centered in Christ.

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By Dr. Charles A. Gieschen, Professor of Exegetical Theology and Chairman of the Exegetical Theology Department at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Future pastors who want to be formed as faithful shepherds of Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, do well to look and listen to Christ in order to understand who a pastor is as well as what a pastor does. . . . Through Jesus, whom we hear and see in the Scriptures and Sacraments, future pastors are formed by Him to do what He does and say what He says.

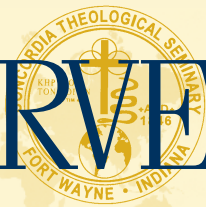
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By the Rev. Robert E. Smith, Electronic Resources Librarian at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

One hundred and fifty years ago Pastor Sihler praised God for the blessings of laborers sent into the harvest field of souls. Christ, the Good Shepherd, has found His lost sheep. He has sent thousands of shepherds from Fort Wayne, St. Louis, Springfield, and Fort Wayne again. They preach His Word, share His means of grace, and faithfully guide generations into His eternal pastures.

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Shepherds Formed by Jesus Christ, the Chief Shepherd

By Dr. Charles A. Gieschen



Where does one look for a pastor who can serve as the model for the formation of future pastors? We could look to the many faithful pastors currently serving the church in order to have a clear picture of whom we want our seminary students to be like someday; or we could survey congregations in order to ask what they would like to see in their pastors. Although there are some merits into such investigations, an even more important place to start is to look to Jesus as the model of a pastor. In Jesus we see the Shepherd who is the model for future shepherds and learn much about being a faithful shepherd.

There are some who think that the “pastoral office” was a later development long after Jesus, something dreamed up by the early church in order to meet changing leadership needs. A more accurate understanding, however, is to see Jesus as the first and Chief Pastor of the Christian church. Although there are several terms used for the pastoral office

in the New Testament, pastor in English is the equivalent of the word shepherd. Jesus is referred to as the Shepherd of the church in the Scriptures. After Peter exhorts the elders (an early title for pastors) to “tend the flock,” he then refers to Jesus Christ as the Chief Shepherd (I Peter 5:1-4). Jesus, who calls Himself the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-14), later calls upon Peter in light of his denials to confess his love three times and exhorts him each time to “Feed My lambs (sheep)” (John 21:15-17). Jesus, therefore, not only instituted the pastoral office for His church but He is also her Chief Shepherd or Pastor.

What do we learn from Jesus about being a shepherd? “He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. . . . I am the



In Jesus we see one who was sent by the Father, who did the Father's will, and who revealed the Father. In like manner, His apostles were sent by Jesus, did His bidding, and revealed Him in word and deed. Being a pastor in the apostolic ministry is not a vocation that we can choose of our own or define as we like; like the apostles, pastors are called and sent by Jesus to deliver His words and actions through their lips and lives.

Good Shepherd; I know My own and My own know Me . . . and I lay down My whole being on behalf of the sheep" (John 10:12-14). Because sheep are slow and have little ability to defend themselves, the primary responsibilities of a shepherd are to feed his sheep and protect them from harm. In Jesus we see the ultimate example of one who feeds and protects His sheep. When the 5000 were hungry and "like sheep without a shepherd," Jesus had compassion on them, making them to sit in "green pastures," and feeding them from the five loaves and two fish (Mark 6:34-44). Even though we all are rebellious sheep who strayed from God's flock due to sin, Jesus went out and found us, rescuing us from Satan by laying down His whole being in His crucifixion as a payment for the sin of the world. In the compassion, feeding, and protecting of Jesus, future pastors see the model for their compassion, feeding, and protecting in the church today. From this we see that pastors are not "professionals" who only deliver services from nine to five, but they are 24/7 shepherds whose commitment to the Chief Shepherd and

compassion for the flock lead them to serve and sacrifice in order to feed and protect their congregation.

We learn more about this "seeking out activity" of the pastor by looking at another title shared by Jesus and His first pastors. The Epistle to the Hebrews identifies Jesus as "the Apostle of our confession" (3:1). Because the noun apostle means "one who is sent," an apostle is someone who represents the One who sent him. Jesus Himself said: "Amen, amen, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor the apostle greater than the one who sent him" (John 13:16). Although Jesus is addressing His disciples as ones whom He will send out, His self-identification as the Apostle sent by the Father is implicit. That Jesus understands Himself to be the Apostle can also be concluded from an earlier saying: "He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me" (John 12:45). Jesus was sent by the Father and He in turn sent out His disciples who were also called apostles: "As the Father has sent Me, even so I send you" (John 20:21b).

What does the teaching surrounding this title teach future pastors? In Jesus we see one who was sent by the Father, who did the Father's will, and who revealed the Father. In like manner, His apostles were sent by Jesus, did His bidding, and revealed Him in word and deed. Being a pastor in the apostolic ministry is not a vocation that we can choose of our own or define as we like; like the apostles, pastors are called and sent by Jesus to deliver His words and actions through their lips and lives. Pastors do not choose

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to be pastors; they are called. Pastors do not choose where to serve; they are sent, sometimes to places they never planned to go! Pastors do not choose what to say or do in this vocation; they look to Jesus and listen to Him, then speak His words and live His life. Because He taught that His death and resurrection were central to His work, pastors proclaim Christ crucified and risen. Because He actively reached out to Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles with forgiveness, pastors reach out to all nations. Because He was the servant who gave His life, pastors are servants who sacrificially give to others.

In faithful apostolic ministers we see Jesus Christ continuing and extending His shepherding of His church. We see in Paul, for example, an apostle who was "sent" by Christ to reach out to the lost sheep of the world, first to the Jew and then to the Gentile (Rom. 1:16). In the life and words of Paul, we see the compassion and protecting actions of Jesus. Listen to what this apostolic pastor says to other pastors and see how it echoes the words of Jesus: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which He obtained with the blood of His own

Son. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore, be alert” (Acts 20:28-31a).

Future pastors who want to be formed as faithful shepherds of Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, do well to look and listen to Christ in order to understand who a pastor is as well as what a pastor does. This is one of the reasons that our new curriculum at this seminary dedicates so much time and attention to the four Gospels. This is also the reason that worship in Kramer Chapel is so central to forming pastors here. Through Jesus, whom we hear and see in the Scriptures and Sacraments, future pastors are formed by Him to do what He does and say what He says. When pastors fall short of this model, as often happens, Jesus’ forgiveness renews and strengthens them to continue the good fight. As we see our weaknesses, we hear the assurance of Jesus: “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness” (II Cor. 12:9). And this formation does not end with graduation from the seminary. Because of our sinful condition, this process is ongoing in the lives of faithful pastors who are ever looking and listening to Jesus as the model for shepherding the flocks He has placed in their care.

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