

Editorial

Our Aspirations

PERHAPS this is a good time for Concordia Theological Seminary to examine its aspirations. What are we working for, where are we heading, what do we want to be? We must be aware that not only the church, and perhaps to some extent the world, is looking at us, but particularly our Heavenly Father is looking at us. And we are looking at ourselves. We exist not for ourselves, however, not for the secular world, but for God and for His church. This makes a great deal of difference regarding our aspirations and goals. This makes a difference in the thinking of an educational institution. It makes us ask different questions. It brings forth different answers. We see ourselves as belonging first to God, as serving His church. To be sure, we see ourselves as imperfect, but we aspire to improve in every area of our life and work. We aspire to greatness, not for its own sake, not for our own sake, but for the sake of Christ and His church.

In four areas we are especially concerned and have our highest aspirations. Here we strive for excellence. Here we hope for progress.

1. *Aggressive Recruitment.* Concordia Theological Seminary is vitally concerned about its recruitment program. When one hears that by 1985—not so very far off—we will need over 700 graduates a year from our seminaries to fill the regular requirements of our synodical program, one is impressed with the fact that whether we like it or not, bigness is here to stay, and we must work for it. The Lord's work requires it. By this date we will need three, possibly four, theological schools, each graduating over 200 men a year. Where are they to come from? From our preparatory schools, of course, but also from among the thousands of young men of our church on non-synodical campuses throughout our country and Canada. Recruitment of church workers, especially pastors, will become one of the most pressing concerns of our church in the coming decades. It will require prayer, imagination, restudy of many concepts, and plenty of hard work on the part of pastors and teachers. Our campus pastors are on the front lines in this area, but the home pastors are right with them. Much remains to be done, and our seminaries must take the lead in pointing up the problem and suggesting solutions.

2. *Academic Quality.* Concordia Theological Seminary seeks academic excellence. For the past several years we have been engaged in a program of curricular revision, a restudy of entrance requirements, an academic counseling program, an effort toward accreditation, and the awarding of the Bachelor of Divinity degree, all of which have as their basic purpose to make this school a better one, which in turn can give better training, and thus train better

pastors for the church. We have involved the entire faculty in the curricular study, we have endeavored to call to the faculty men who have specialized gifts and training, we have urged all of our men to engage in post graduate work, we have encouraged writing, the preparation of special studies, membership in learned societies, and we have tried to make the classroom work more meaningful and significant for the students. We have studied methods of instruction and testing—all with the purpose of improving our academic program. On this front things have been moving ahead at a rate fast enough to show progress and slow enough to insure careful work. We must not neglect mention of Wessel Hall as a new classroom building and the Schulz Memorial Library as very significant aspects of this movement.

3. *Professional Competence.* Concordia Theological Seminary seeks to train faithful parish pastors. The over-all purpose of our academic program is to produce the kind of pastors who can fit into many situations. In a day when everyone is a specialist we need to remember that the church always ministers to all sorts and conditions of men, and hence a pastor must be more than a good Greek scholar, more than a good doorbell ringer, more than a good liturgiologist. He must be "all things to all men" that he may gain as many as possible for Christ. Our aim must be to train faithful parish pastors who can fit into rural, urban, suburban, campus, foreign, classroom, or institutional situations with as little difficulty and adjustment as possible. Certain ministries take special training, and certain take special talents, but all require basically a love for Christ, a pastor's heart, and a fundamental core of learning. To accomplish this aim we must develop the right attitude in our students through the chapel services, the devotional life, the classroom, the extra-curricular program, the personal association between students and faculty. Men called to the faculty must possess the qualities which will help to produce these attitudes in men. This is not to say that our church does not need specialists, but we do say that no man should become a specialist until he has demonstrated that he is a good general practitioner. Otherwise he may be one-sided and lacking in proper perspective.

4. *Ecclesiastical Responsibility.* Concordia Theological Seminary must have a keen sense of responsibility to our church and to our Lord. A theological school which is under the direct control of a confessional church is not a place for theological one-upmanship or for immature smart alecks. The times in which we live, with their dangers and opportunities, call for men who have the sober and mature spirit of the Reformers, men who "believe, teach, and confess" boldly and in the fear of God, men filled with the Spirit, with love and zeal, men if need be also able to pronounce the *damnamus*. While a seminary must lead, it must not lead astray; while it must have vision, it must have clear and Scriptural vision. It must be pious but not pietistic, orthodox but not obscurantist,

academic but not pedantic. Perhaps in no church body on earth are theological faculties held in such high esteem as in the Missouri Synod, and perhaps no church body has been blessed for so long with so many fine men among its faculties. It is our prayer that this may continue, and our intention that it shall. To preach the Word to lost sinners is the greatest calling a man can have. And to teach men to preach this Word is fully as great. Hence, in every phase of the life and work of a seminary it must be the purpose of all connected with it that Christ may shine forth in their lives, their classrooms, their sermons, their personal counseling, their family life. These are our aspirations and our goals. By striving to fulfill these aspirations we believe we will serve God faithfully and well and help His church effectually.

J. A. O. P.

FROM OUR LIBRARIAN

Readers of *The Springfielder* will be pleased to know that it is now regularly indexed in the *Index to Religious Periodical Literature*. Notification of this has been received locally from Dr. Calvin H. Schmitt of McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, a co-editor of the *Index*.

The *Index* is published by The American Theological Library Association. It is the major American venture of its kind, having begun publication in 1949 and indexing more than sixty significant religious and theological periodicals published in America and abroad.

The inclusion of *The Springfielder* in the *Index* is evidence of the growing influence and service of the Seminary in the Church.

John W. Heussman,
Seminary Librarian