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For the Life of the World

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture verses are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

FEATURES

4 How Are They to Learn without Someone Teaching?

Charles A. Gieschen

One could paraphrase this question and apply it to the importance of funding Seminary faculty: “And how are they to learn without someone teaching?” Funding student aid often draws the attention of donors as a worthy cause. It is also important, however, to support financially the faithful and qualified faculty who are central to the formation process of faithful and qualified pastors and deaconesses. One of the ways that CTSFW has worked with donors to assure the support of faculty for the future is through the establishment and funding of endowed chairs.

10 Where Most Needed

Michael E. Ritzman

The general operations budget encompasses all the “unseen” work that occurs at CTSFW on a daily basis. We label donations for this purpose: “Where most needed.” Your resources, given in this way, allow us the flexibility to meet the known and unknown challenges of running this institution.

12 Student Indebtedness

Trena L. Merryman

When a student graduates from the Seminary and receives a first call or placement, it is essential to begin service to the church with the smallest amount of accumulated debt possible. At Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), we, by the grace of God and the generosity of His people, can provide full tuition coverage to each of the residential church work students to ensure that this is possible.

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Make Known His Deeds!

Brian T. Stark



Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

For those who desire the noble task, this life of sacrifice begins not with ordination, but with the decision to come to the Seminary. It is worth noting that when St. Peter exclaimed, “Behold, we have left everything and followed you” (Matt. 19:27a), he was still a seminarian! Those who would become pastors are always men of great courage and faith, for they too leave everything and follow our Lord to the Seminary to serve His people in the office of the holy ministry.

In 1 Timothy 3:1 St. Paul writes, “The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.” This noble task is the foundation of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW) and the reason it exists. From its inception, our Seminary’s mission has been to form servants of Jesus Christ to teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all.

It will come as no surprise then that the primary task of our admission counselors is pastoral in nature. In so many words, we are pastoring future pastors throughout the discernment process, encouraging and guiding them along the way as they navigate the road towards service in Christ’s church. In 2016, CTSFW launched the “Make

Known His Deeds!” campaign to remove as many obstacles along that road as possible. The goal of the campaign was to raise enough funds to cover the cost of tuition for all residential students, and God’s people answered the call with unparalleled generosity!

It is always interesting to hear the stories of prospective students who are

If you are aspiring to the noble task of pastoral ministry, there has never been a better time to pursue it at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne! We invite you to contact our Office of Admission to begin the conversation about answering the Spirit's call.

considering coming to the Seminary. Some are in the final phases of their undergraduate studies and plan to come after graduating from college. Others are married with children and well-established careers. But in every case, like many threads combining to form a rich tapestry, the Holy Spirit has worked throughout their lives in a variety of ways and through many people to lead them to consider pastoral ministry. There are common examples: a beloved pastor asking if they have ever considered Seminary, an elderly couple at church telling them they would make an excellent pastor, godly parents who brought them up in the faith, an encouraging spouse, an innate interest in theology.

What is often overlooked, however, is precisely what St. Paul identifies in 1 Timothy 3. The man who would serve in the pastoral office *aspires to* and *desires* it. In other words, the aspiration and desire to become a pastor are themselves evidence of the Spirit's call—perhaps the most important evidence of all. On the surface, this seems counterintuitive. Pastors are supposed to be humble servants who set aside their own desires for the sake of others. But in this case desire is a holy thing, for the thing desired is a life of service to, and sacrifice for, the sheep of the Shepherd.

For those who desire the noble task, this life of sacrifice begins not with ordination, but with the decision to come to the Seminary. It is worth noting that when St. Peter exclaimed, “Behold, we have left everything and followed you” (Matt. 19:27a)—he was still a seminarian! Those who would become pastors are always men of great courage and faith, for they too leave everything and follow our Lord to the Seminary to serve His people in the office of the holy ministry. That sacrifice has always been a significant part of the formation that takes place.

So the task is noble, but the decision to pursue can be a daunting one that

presents many challenges. Practically speaking, the prospective student may find more *cons* than *pros* on his list as he considers coming to the Seminary. For some it means leaving a well-established career and the loss of a lucrative income, selling a house, uprooting wife and children from familiar surroundings to those unknown, and leaving good friends and church families behind. Those completing their undergraduate degrees face the prospect of three additional years in the classroom and one year on vicarage before earning a salary to begin paying off their student loans. If this is the case, we might wonder why any man would choose to come at all! But come they do, for however many *cons* there may be, there is one *pro* that overrules them all: attaining the office by which he may preach Jesus Christ crucified for the sins of the world. For those whom the Spirit calls, nothing less will do.

Still, the obstacles men face in coming to the Seminary are very real. Chief among them is the fact that Seminary education, like all higher education, is expensive. Pursuing a degree means tuition, room and board, health insurance, books, and a host of other miscellaneous expenses. Prospective students wonder how they can possibly afford it all, especially now that they are no longer earning a full-time salary. Another complicating factor is student debt. Consider the man who intends to come to the Seminary upon completing his undergraduate degree. In 2021, the average college graduate entered the workforce with over \$30,000 in student loans. If he is married, that number may double. In either case, he enters the Seminary already with tens of thousands of dollars in student loan debt. If loans for three years of residential Seminary education are then added, that newly ordained pastor could possibly enter the ministry with student loan debt exceeding \$100k.

The church needs Seminary-formed

and educated pastors, now more than ever before. When we ask a man to consider becoming a pastor, we oftentimes forget that we are asking him to “leave everything and follow You.” We often forget the cost of Seminary education and its impact on seminarians and their families. Yes, coming to the Seminary will always mean sacrifice. However, as the people of God, it is incumbent upon the church to ease the financial burden of those who aspire to the office, that they may tend to the noble task, free from the worry of excessive student debt.

The “Make Known His Deeds!” campaign exceeded its goal of \$75 million, and tuition for our residential students is now completely covered through the gifts of our generous donors. How generous, you ask? The total cost of tuition for the four-year Master of Divinity program is roughly \$100k. Our students no longer bear this burden; our donors bear it for them. The importance of 100% tuition coverage for future ministry cannot be overstated. For many students, it has made Seminary education possible. By removing one of the major obstacles men face when considering pastoral ministry, our tuition coverage is also paying dividends for Seminary recruitment. Prospective students who once thought Seminary education was out of reach are now embarking on the journey to teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all.

If you are aspiring to the noble task of pastoral ministry, there has never been a better time to pursue it at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne! We invite you to contact our Office of Admission to begin the conversation about answering the Spirit's call. [📧](#)

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