

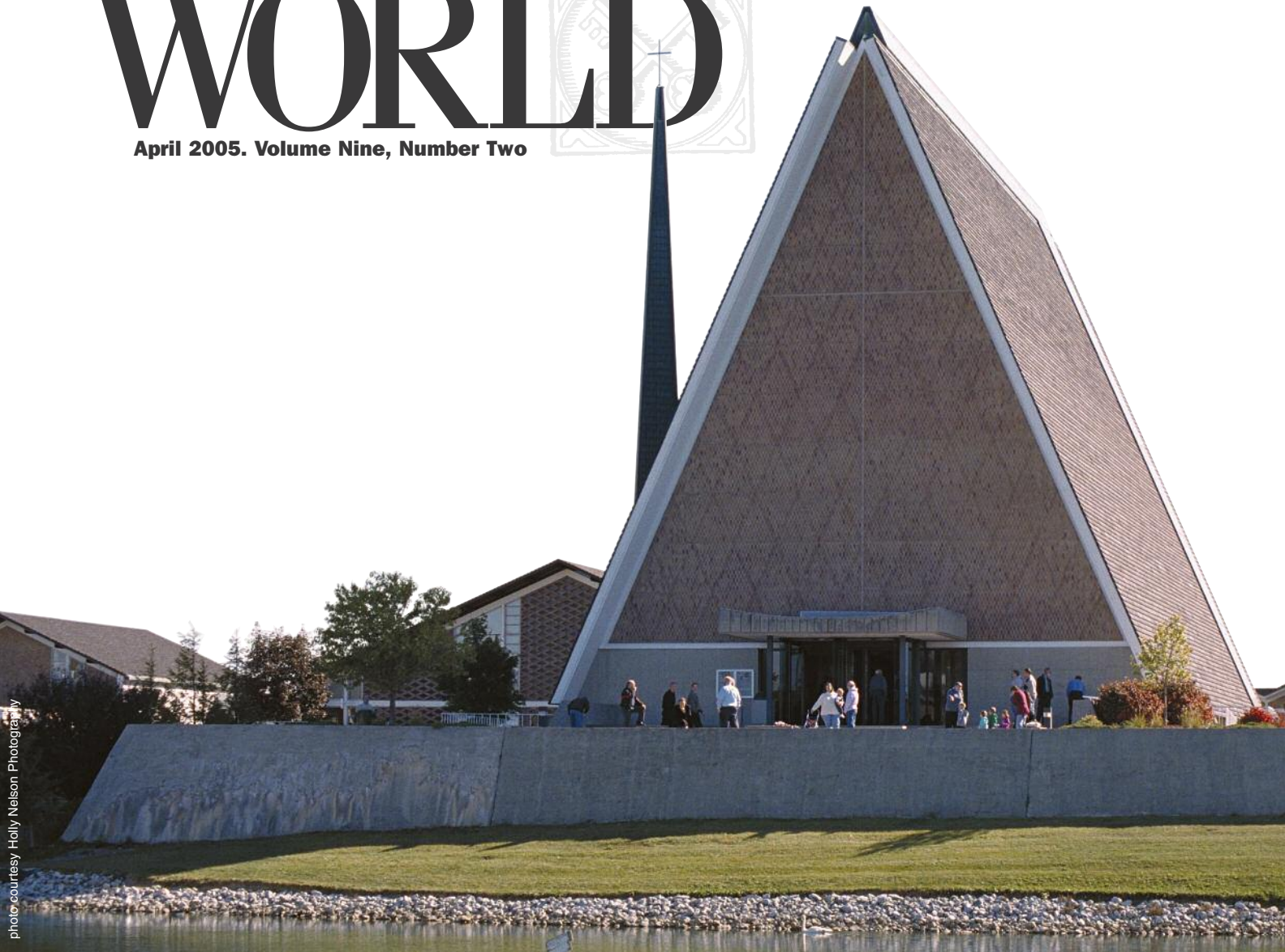
For the

# LIFE of the WORLD

April 2005. Volume Nine, Number Two



photo courtesy Holly Nelson Photography

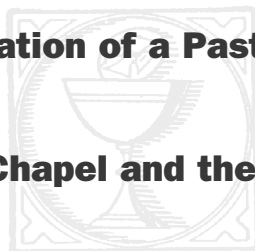


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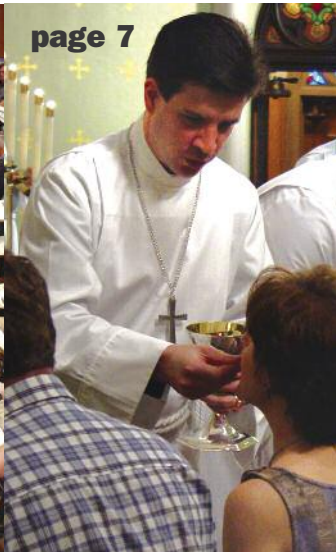


  
CONCORDIA  
THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY  
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## FEATURES

### 4 Formation of a Pastor: Classroom to Church

By Jonathon J. Bakker, Fourth-Year Seminarian, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

It is no coincidence that the things that make Lutherans Lutheran are the things that Lutheran seminarians learn most in seminary: Jesus Christ as the center of the Scriptures and theology; the proper distinction of Law and Gospel; and the centrality of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection to name a few.

### 7 Serving While Learning

By John C. Bestul, Fourth-Year Seminarian, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

As the church prays that our Lord would send men into His vineyard, may it also pray that through congregations and pastors He provides those men opportunities to serve. For it might be said that the seminarian serves while he learns in order that he might best learn how to serve.

### 10 Chapel and the Formation of the Pastor

By Gifford A. Grobien, Fourth-Year Seminarian, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

The chapel services are the services the seminarians will be praying in their own parishes in a few years. They are learning by doing; learning to pray for their people by praying in the chapel.

### 13 What Does This Mean?



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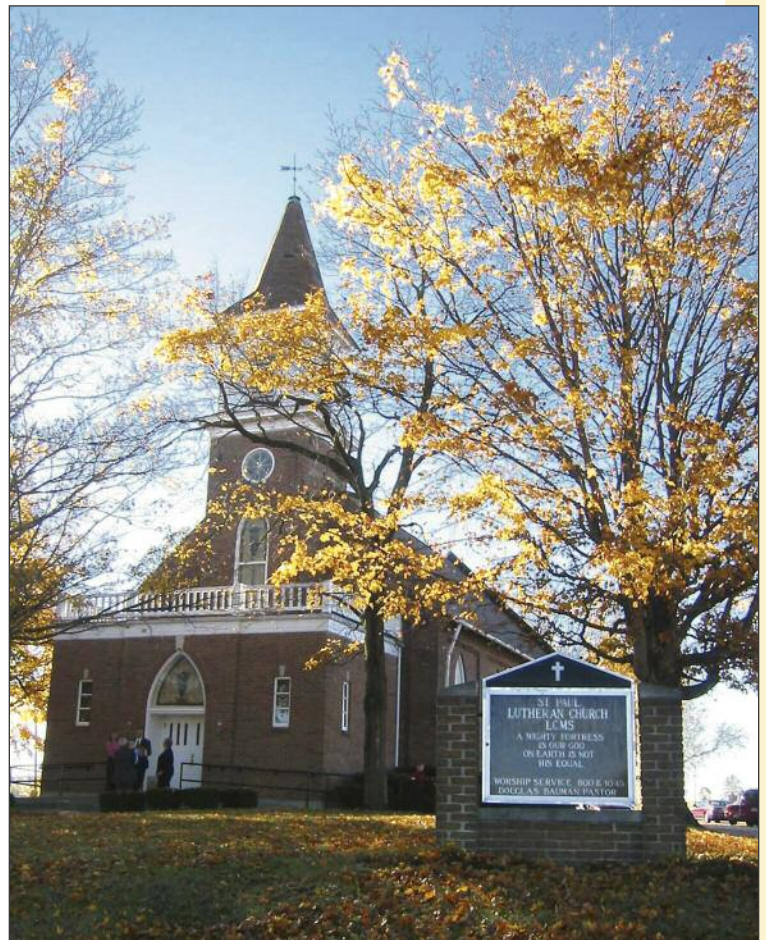
# From the Church, for the Church—In Mission: The New Curriculum

By Dr. William C. Weinrich, CTS, Academic Dean

One of the principal reasons for the formation of the Missouri Synod was to train pastors. The Synod gave this task to its two seminaries, which exist, then, to “educate” pastors. But what does it mean to “educate” a pastor? Questions and issues arising from this task have been the constant companions of the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary for more than seven years. It had been nearly 30 years since CTS had significantly reviewed and revised the curriculum for training pastors for the LCMS. And, as the song says, “the times were a-changin.” The world into which new pastors are sent is not the same as it was 30 years ago. The new pastor cannot depend on a “Christian” culture rooted in Judaeo-Christian values. Indeed, students today are affected by habits of mind reflecting the postmodern emphasis on the individual and the division between truth and life (or substance and style as it is sometimes called).

Beginning in the 1700s, theological education was usually divided into four “departments”: Biblical interpretation, systematic theology, church history, and pastoral theology and practice. Typical of enlightenment rationalism, these departments each had its own discipline—its own method of study—and these disciplines became the domains of “experts.” This had the effect of separating the disciplines from one another and, further, it had the effect of separating theology from practice. Increasingly the education of pastors became understood as the transmission of “theological” subject matter and the training in “pastoral skills.” Not surprisingly, the office of pastor came to be regarded as a “profession,” much like a doctor, a lawyer, or an astro-physicist.

It is difficult, however, to reconcile this development with the Biblical images of the pastor. The very term “pastor” means “shepherd,” and what characterizes a shepherd is not “head knowledge” and “skills.” A shepherd “knows” his sheep, that is, the shepherd is defined by his relation to the sheep *as* their shepherd. He is not defined by knowing “stuff” about the sheep and



knowing how to manipulate their behavior by techniques and programs. Moreover—and this is important—the shepherd guides the sheep purposively, that is, toward a goal. The image of a shepherd leading his sheep “to green pastures” captures the idea. But we should take special note of the communal aspects of this image. There is no shepherd apart from the sheep, nor do the sheep find their way to green pastures apart from the shepherd. The shepherd *only together with his sheep* goes to the green pastures. When we remember that the shepherd is *also* a sheep, the communal aspect becomes even more evident: *the common goal/destiny of the sheep and the shepherd is that to which the shepherd leads the sheep.*

The more the faculty of CTS reflected on this Biblical image, the more it became evident that the old four-fold structure of the curriculum was *theologically* inadequate. The faculty began (more clearly!) to understand that the structure and shape of such a curriculum carried along within it certain theological assumptions and perspectives. Indeed, we came to realize that the shape of any curriculum carries within it a theological understanding. The shape of a curriculum, its very structure (implicitly) “educates,” that is, assists to form the student into an understanding of his office. A curriculum shaped in the old four-fold disciplinary manner “educates” a student to know many “things” and how to do many “things.” What we wanted was a new curriculum which was shaped *by* the very subject matter which is also its focus of reflection. What was missing in the old curriculum—and this is worth thinking about!—what was missing was Christ and His Church! This, of course, does not mean we were not already teaching about Christian truth and about the

Christian life. But that was the problem. We were teaching “about” Christian truth. In a strange but real way, theological education *as* a four-fold discipline dis-located the true object of theological education. The focus of study of such a curriculum was the four-fold disciplines themselves.

But the Scriptures speak of “education” in the language of participation and formation. For example, read and consider this: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Rom. 12:2). Who is the “you” in this exhortation? Only Christians in general? If this is so, how is this “transformation” accomplished? By self-improvement exercises? No! Now read this: “My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you” (Gal. 4:19). Paul is here speaking of himself as teacher, and the goal of his teaching is that his “children” be formed according to Christ. Here, although in another image, we see the shepherd-sheep relationship. The teacher and those being taught are on the same path toward Christ-likeness. *What* Paul teaches is what is being formed in him, and in them, and in him and them together.

Our LCMS father, Franz Pieper, captured this very well when he wrote: “There is no such thing in the Christian Church as mere teaching; all teaching is to be reduced to practice. The Christian Church is not a philosopher’s school, where only teaching is done, but a society of people who by faith in the Gospel and mortification of the flesh are traveling on the way to everlasting life and are commissioned to lead others into this way.”

Precisely! However, Pieper’s point has curricular implications for theological education. If we think of “education” as “formation,” then we must think of



a spiritual “discipline” by which we are formed. Theological education is not simply mastering “information” and developing “skills.” Nor is theological education only for a special “clerical” group. As David Kelsey of Yale put it, the subject of study in theological education is God. And that is how Paul speaks. One is “educated” by participating *in* the subject matter. *Theological education is fundamentally the forming of the mind according to the life of Christ in the context of the Church in Mission.* This is what “From the Church, for the Church—In Mission” provides. Does the Church have a mind? Yes, it does. It is the Spirit of Christ as He inspires the Church and all her members to speak as Christ speaks and to act as Christ acts. Christ so spoke and so acted “for us and for our salvation” (the green pastures!). Christ came to be in our midst as one sent for us but also one with us (Shepherd and sheep). Theological education—and most specifically the formation of future pastors—must therefore establish the baptismal reality of the Church and her members as the reality also of her pastors. This reality of Christ’s own death and resurrection is nurtured and sustained by the speaking of God and by the continuity of Christ’s giving of His Body and Blood for the life of the world. Baptism-Preaching-Lord’s Supper, these are the (primary) “disciplines” of theological education by which pastor and people in common drink of the cool waters of redemption and feed upon the pastures of the Spirit as they hear the voice of their Shepherd. To “learn”—that is, to be “educated”—is to participate in the gifts of God and to reflect on how best to “declare the mighty acts” of God.

Have you ever heard of a theological curriculum spoken of like that? Probably not. But that’s okay, as we’ll have more to say about it in the future.

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