

For the

# LIFE of the WORLD

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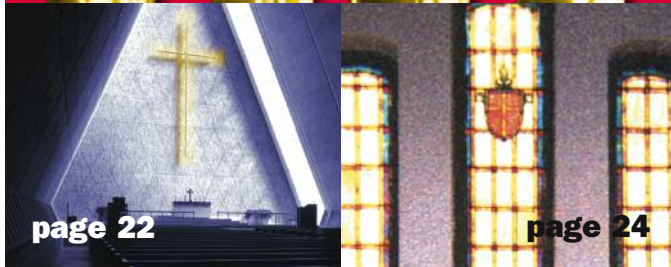
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CONCORDIA  
THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY  
P R E S S

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**Most of the artwork pictured in this issue hang in classrooms, in hallways, and in Kramer Chapel on the CTS campus.**

# Where God Calls

# He Equips

By the Rev. Dr. Klaus Detlev Schulz



**A**t a seminary book sale, I was fortunate enough to acquire Walther's *Pastoraltheologie*, a seminal work for generations of pastors in the Synod and for Lutherans beyond. My new acquisition delighted me, but even more so the glossaries added therein by some committed pastor. "Pastoral theology is sanctified common sense"; "Work yourself to death in the vineyard of the Lord"; "To rest is to rust"; "Don't let it be said: 'The best passage in the entire service was the pastor's passage from the pulpit to the vestry'"; "You get the water of life for nothing; you only pay for the piping"; "*Dic: cur hic?* (Say when asked why you are here), To save souls"; "Hell is the truth discovered too late"; and "Where sin rules, the pastor's office begins." Certainly, helpful aphorisms for a pastor in the pastoral ministry which, though simply put, are indicative of our department's task. We, too, convey principles and offer advice to the student about the nature of his future ministry so that all its functions are performed according to God's design. John Fritz in his *Pastoral Theology* of 1932 puts it more scholarly: "Pastoral Theology is especially designed to be a guide to the pastor, or minister, of the church, in the faithful performance of his official duties."

**In the Old and New Testaments throughout the history of the church to this very day, God's intent is to save mankind. God's purpose is to guide and nurture all believers through His means of grace, and to bring those means of grace to the unbelieving world. To this end, He calls incumbents into His service who are willing to be servants to His salvific will in the capacity of pastors and missionaries.**

Some of those who are familiar with our seminary and

who read this article might suggest the use of the acronym PTM for "Practical Theology and Misions" instead of our use of PMM for "Pastoral Ministry and Misions." After all, Fort Wayne has been known as the "practical" seminary. Why then should we not pay homage to this tradition with a specific choice in nomenclature: Practical Theology instead of Pastoral Ministry? Here our seminary's mission statement may assist us: "*Concordia Theological Seminary is an institution of theological higher education of*





*The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod dedicated primarily to the preparation of students for the pastoral ministry and missions of the LCMS. Its programs and services offer an understanding of the Christian faith that is biblically centered, confessionally Lutheran, and evangelically active.”* Yes, ever since its foundation in 1836, part and parcel of our seminary’s understanding has been to offer assistance towards the furtherance of faith through the office of preaching and teaching. Our understanding is that the church of Christ is, and will always be, in demand of pastors. They are not an arbitrary component in the structure of the church, but representatives of a ministry that the church cannot do without. A suggestion of anything other than “pastoral” would be tantamount to Brutus’ denial of Caesar.

And yet, our seminary is practical in focus, and our department supports it wholeheartedly. From the outset, though, I should dismiss one false notion that might consider us as practical in the sense of “testing” or “experimenting” our theology, or perhaps being a boot camp, which for the sake of expediting the education process compromises the need for a good education. All this would imply that we are *pragmatic* rather than *practical*. Instead, we should establish the practical character of our seminary from the very nature of our theology. Theology is the study of God not just on who He *is* but also what He *does*. This means that we are fully aware that God Himself has a practical aptitude or a *soteriological* purpose. This theological insight serves not only as the backbone to our department, but to all departments and their disciplines as well: in the Old and New Testaments throughout the history of the church to this very day, God’s intent is to save mankind. God’s purpose is to guide and nurture all believers through His means of grace, and to bring those means of grace to the unbelieving world. To this end, He calls incumbents into His service who are willing to be servants to His salvific will in the capacity of pastors and mission-

aries. In agreement with the very nature of God and theology, we are compelled to find and train bearers of the tools of God, those who administer them by divine right to the people, to the church, and the world beyond. God is practical, and we on campus are, therefore, endemically *clerical* and *missional*.

By virtue of the above said, we must maintain further that God Himself sets the standard and the qualification for the candidacy in His office. In Scripture, it is He who invokes the student with the solemn words: “*Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers*” (1 Timothy 4:16). Training future pastors is serious business. If done wrong, it adversely impacts the message of salvation itself and the life of the believer in the pew. In line with the important words in 1 Timothy 3:2-7; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Titus 1:5-9, we hope to entrust the student with spiritual and ethical prerogatives: 1. Sincerity in confession (*confessionis sinceritas*); 2. Dexterity in teaching (*docendi dexteritas*); 3. Integrity of character and of life (*morum integritas*). Luther puts it similarly: A theologian must engage in prayer (*oratio*), endure the temptation of faith and flesh (*tentatio*), and meditate over Scripture (*meditatio*). And yet, in all teaching and training resides a sober realism. Per-

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fection eludes us all: Where God calls He equips. He works through seeming contradictions, as Paul himself was told by God when bemoaning his own apparent weakness: “*My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness*” (2 Corinthians 12:9). It is good that we refrain from any modern forms of Donatism (the Donatists were a fourth Century, North African Christian sect that had extremely rigorous views concerning purity and sanctity) which, in the quest for finding perfect incumbents of the office, have deflected the power of God from His Word to the person himself.

As much as the focus is on God and His Word, there is also the context that beckons and influences the department’s agenda. We might call it its bipolar character. State of art media and technology are now used for the training in pastoral skills. In this connection a famous theologian is often quoted as saying: “A pastor is in need of two books: the Bible under one arm and the newspaper under the other.” We respond to the questions asked in the field. In fact, the life of the church, configured around its fundamental expressions of worship, organization, outreach, care, shepherding, and instruction, demands our reply. For this reason, our department offers sub-disciplines with which we hope to cover the following life expressions: worship, liturgy, preaching, mission, catechesis, pastoral care, and counseling. With hardly any two congregations agreeing on the nature of the pastoral ministry, it is in these areas that the pastor’s skills must prevail most. What is particularly in demand is active duty. As a called and ordained shepherd of the church, he is not a mere facilitator or motivator for action; he is given a specific charge: to shepherd the flock through the means of grace.

Bipolarity means that our department must correspond the demands of the Word of God with the claims of the context, a difficult task indeed. Being conscious of context, we are denied a speculative or purely academic character. Unarguably, though, what was often thought of as the “truth” from the Word of God has, in fact, in context, lost its normativity. Individual cups have replaced the common cup, discussions on roles of women have led to their suffrage, simple uniformity in worship has changed to diversity, the nurture of denominational distinctiveness has ceded to open communion (and plurality of belief), and pastoral issues have been democratized. Indeed, pastoral theology is done in view of the context, and caution must prevail. All the more, therefore, we are demanded to seriously consult the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. False intransigence of both pastor and members on issues will hurt the church, but equally, also, unhindered libertarianism. Only faithful resilience, nourished by Scripture and our Confessions, and coupled with prayer and a good dose of realism, will provide the answers on campus and in challenging environments.

*The Rev. Dr. Klaus Detlev Schulz is Chairman and Associate Professor of the Department of Pastoral Ministry and Missions at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind.*

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