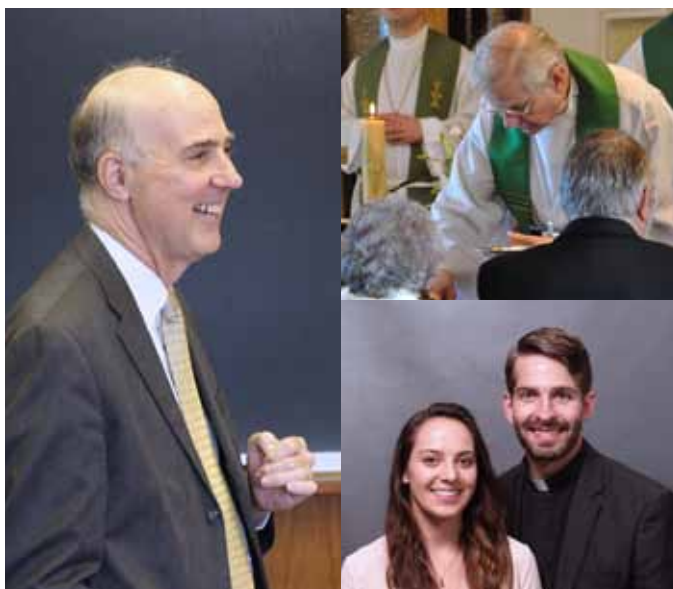


CONTENTS

Volume Twenty-Three, Number One



For the Life of the World

PUBLISHER

Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr.
President

PUBLISHER ASSISTANT
Carrie O'Donnell

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Colleen M. Bartzsch

EDITOR
Andrea L. Schultz

COPY EDITOR
Trudy E. Behning

ART DIRECTOR
Steve J. Blakey

For the Life of the World is published by Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 6600 N. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without the consent of the Editor of *For the Life of the World* by email at SeminaryRelations@ctsfw.edu or (260) 452-3150. Copyright 2019. Printed in the United States. Postage paid at Berne, Indiana.

For the Life of the World is mailed to all pastors and congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the United States and Canada and to anyone interested in the work of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

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

FEATURES

4 **No Time for Timidity!** **The Church's Confession on Campus** By Marcus T. Zill

Across denominational lines, college freshmen are simply not retaining the faith of their parents in slightly increasing numbers. This is not a good trend. But an even worse trend is that the number of atheists and agnostics among college freshmen is double the number of their parents.

7 **Reaching Into the Secular World** By Chad D. Kendall

I have come to the realization that the young secular humanists do not simply want Church to be a weekly social event akin to pop culture. Those who inquire want to be permeated by the Holy. They want deep and symbolic meaning to waft around them like a sweet and unique fragrance different from the world.

10 **Does God Speak in Your Heart?** By Benjamin T. G. Mayes

People often torment themselves trying to find out what God's will is for their life. Some people even think that if they try to listen to God speaking in their hearts and conclude that He wants them to do one thing, but then that thing does not succeed—in this case they think they have sinned and need to repent, since they did not obey God's will! To them I would respond with *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture Alone).

Also in this issue:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| What Does This Mean? | 11 |
| Admission | 13 |
| Called to Serve | 14 |
| Upcoming Events at CTSFW | 16 |
| Faculty Focus | 18 |
| Alumni | 20 |
| Profiles in Giving | 26 |
| Seminary Guild | 28 |
| Bible Study | 30 |

No Time for Timidity!

The Church's Confession on Campus

Rev. Marcus T. Zill



Photo courtesy Michael P. Schuemann

A comprehensive annual survey of incoming American freshman college students demonstrates what many of our own LCMS young adult research has also shown: we are increasingly struggling to keep our young people in the faith.

Every spring a new batch of fresh faced, idealistic, and eyes-wide-opened high school seniors get ready for graduation and their likely transition to college. We always take great pride in seeing our children head off to school. Let's face it. We love university life! We want to see our youth succeed in the classroom and beyond. We love cheering on their educational progress and re-living our own dreams vicariously through their tender years. And, of course, we need new replacement bumper stickers to put on top of the old faded "My child is an Honor Roll Student!" ones.

This springtime rite of passage has become so important that increasingly common are “big reveal” photo shoots and social media announcements. High school seniors announce with great fanfare where they will be attending college, complete with a school hat for dad and a “College Mom” sweatshirt for mom. “It’s a boy/girl!” is replaced in 18 years with “It’s a college student!”

As exciting as such moments are, they are often tragically replaced when parents wonder what has happened to their ambitious son or daughter, why they seem withdrawn or worse, and maybe aren’t interested in going to church any longer. In these moments we are all reminded by our Lord’s own words to us: “For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?” (Mark 8:36).

It turns out that the most revealing thing in the end is the one that goes relatively unnoticed, namely, how harsh this transition really is and just how many forces are working against our young people as they enter collegiate life. It is no secret to any of us that we are losing many of our young people through the atheological vortex of higher education.

We sense this. We experience this. The statistics don’t lie either. A comprehensive annual survey of incoming American freshman college students demonstrates what many of our own LCMS young adult research has also shown¹: we are increasingly struggling to keep our young people in the faith.

Across denominational lines, college freshman are simply not retaining the faith of their parents in slightly increasing numbers. This is not a good trend. But an even worse trend is that the number of atheists and agnostics among college freshman is double the number of their parents. This is a horrifying trend, especially when considering that this survey is taken at the “beginning” of one’s collegiate years.² In other words, the retention issues don’t begin in college, but they are certainly exasperated there.

I myself nearly lost my faith in college. I later went to seminary with the sole desire to be a “campus” pastor. Why? Simply put, because I never had one and I sorely needed one during that tenuous time in my life when my faith was challenged. I wanted to stand in that exact collegiate gap for others.

In the last two decades since I began serving as a campus pastor, this gap has not only widened, but the gulf has deepened and the consequences have only expanded. We really shouldn’t be surprised. Luther once quipped himself in his letter *To the Christian Nobility* in 1520:

“Every institution that does not unceasingly pursue the study of God’s word becomes corrupt. Because of this we can see what kind of people they become in the universities and what they are like now... I greatly fear that the universities, unless they teach the Holy Scriptures diligently and impress them on the young

students, are wide gates to hell.”³

Luther, of course, spoke in such terms because he was teaching theology at a “state” university in Wittenberg, Germany. University life has certainly changed over the years on this side of the pond, and while we rejoice to have the schools that make up our Concordia University System, the bottom line is that the vast majority of our youth attend college elsewhere.

Luther’s concerns were greatly echoed by many of the great pioneers of Lutheran campus ministry here in the U.S. who recognized the Church’s role in confessing the faith on campus shortly after the turn of the 20th century. As more and more of our young people began attending state universities, it became clear that the Church could not fail to at least go with them in some form. While the Lutherans weren’t the first to call pastors to the secular campus, we were among the first wave to see the importance of campus ministry itself.

Next year, we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the planting of the very first LCMS campus ministry at the University of Wisconsin in Madison in 1920. While we certainly rejoice in the tremendous gift that our campus ministries, big and small, have been to the life of the Church over the past century, we also have increasing opportunities going forward. We both cannot abandon our young precious sheep at the time that they need us most and also have endless openings in the



Photo courtesy: Michael P. Schuermann

Opposite: The Rev. Marcus Zill speaks during a session at the LCMS U “Witness” Conference in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Left: College student attendees of LCMS U “Witness” Conference worship during an Evening Prayer Service with Christmas Lessons and Carols in Kramer Chapel on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW).

Next page: LCMS U “Witness” Conference attendees converse during a breakout session at CTSFW.

academic square to confess the faith, reach the lost, and maintain a much needed place in the academic incubator of ideas.

Our secular university campuses are quickly becoming one of our primary national mission fields. Like Athens of Acts 17, the university is a place permeated with worldly philosophy and religion. Idols are everywhere. It is not a question of *if* religion is on campus. Our young people *will* be ministered to, but ministered to by whom and ministered to with what?

However, in addition to the task of continuing to care for our own LCMS college-age youth, God continues to massively open doors for outreach to international students (there are now over one million studying on our soil)⁴, as well as those who have either lost the faith or are simply searching for truth. The opportunities for evangelism and mission are simply breathtaking.

It is certainly easy to be frustrated

by what you see taking place at college on the news, but there is more than meets the eye. Dare to look past the “snowflakes” and you will see that every challenge on campus is an opportunity. For every social justice warrior you witness, you will also find a college student holding a sign that says, “I Am the Pro-Life Generation.” And for every student who seems consumed with self, I can show you one who wants to care for their neighbor, reach the lost, and serve a bigger purpose than themselves. Yes, that too is a key characteristic of this generation—the desire to serve.

We are uniquely positioned to affect change in the academic square on campus, precisely by being who we are—joyful and faithful confessional Lutherans. Our Lutheran students know this! The university may not teach the Scriptures diligently, but we do. Many college students may be confused about where they have come from and where they are ultimately going, but we aren’t.

That which is lacking on the collegiate quad is precisely what we have been given to confess. So let us stay there. Let us go there. Let us be there. If we accept the challenge, by the grace of God, the results may just be quite “revealing.”

This is no time for timidity. 🏹

*Rev. Marcus T. Zill
(Marcus.Zill@lcms.org),
CTSFW 1996, serves as
The Lutheran Church—
Missouri Synod’s Director
of Campus Ministry and LCMS U.*



- 1 <http://www.youthsource.com/lcms-young-adult-research/>.
- 2 See the latest results of this 50 year continuous survey sponsored by The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California, Los Angeles: <http://www.heri.ucla.edu/monographs/TheAmericanFreshman2019.pdf>.
- 3 AE 44:207.
- 4 See the places of origin for these international students on U.S. soil: <https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Data/International-Students/Places-of-Origin>.



Photo courtesy Michael P. Schuermann