



PASTORAL EDUCATION

July 2007 ■ A newsletter for those interested in the ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

THE MESSAGE: What's HOT?

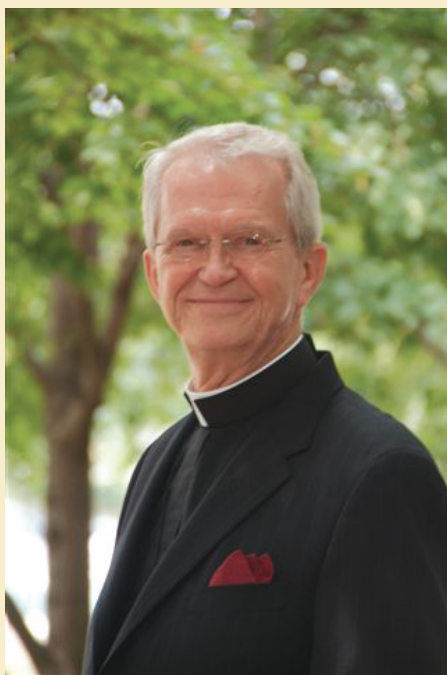
Reading *Sports Illustrated*, as I do weekly, sparked the headline. "What's HOT in pastoral education? What's IN?"

Hey, I say to myself, I'm just getting used to books! I know pretty much how to read them. Books are my friends. And to find them, well, remember the card catalog? That system worked. We also have beautiful buildings, called libraries, to house our books. To run one of these is a science by now. In the same place you can find magazines, journals, newspapers, and a host of resources.

But, if you have not heard, card catalogs are out. Computer reference desks are in. There are books today, of course, but there are also "books" that are not bound and hardly bound. And journals, with a host of other resources, are out there, too.

God's Word remains. That is for sure. God's truth is timeless. But God gives gifts and more gifts by which to teach. Many tools for learning continue to surface. The seminaries use technologies and creative resources to teach students to serve God's people as pastors.

Some HOT new things are Podcasts and Web sites. iTunes are available. Distance education is expanding. In-service preparation, contextual education, modules and mentors are HOT. Research capabilities are enhanced



through search engines and available CDs. IN are discussion boards for "asynchronous chat." Can you believe that? PowerPoint still exists, but it's not as cool as it once was (and I'm just getting good at it!). All of these things are found in so-called smart classrooms. You see why I feel like a "digital immigrant."

The medium is not the message, but the message IS the message. Our seminaries take what God gives—His Word—and teach His Word to pastors-in-preparation

and pastors serving God's people. Technology merits a place in the theological education process not because it is there but because it supports the purposes of theological education.

Tools emerge to improve learning. Sound educational practice includes use of all these tools and more. Teachers desire to enrich student learning, and they have the courage to move away from what is familiar or comfortable toward new ways of teaching. Some of this is hard for theologians, for pastors, because we are more traditionally tied to written texts. However, students are encouraged in their learning through use of multiple senses in the learning process.

You can check it out some of these tools at www.csl.edu and www.ctsfw.edu.

To what end is all of this? That God's Word is faithfully passed from one generation to the next. That Christ, His person and work, be the center and core of our study—Christ our risen and ascended Lord!

God keep you strong in your ministry of passing THE MESSAGE—CHRIST to this generation and the next!

God's PEACE to you!

■ Dr. L. Dean Hempelmann
Executive Director
LCMS Board for Pastoral Education

questions and receive answers from their professors, and submit their papers. After completing a basic 10-course series, they are designated as vicars and meet weekly with a pastor-mentor in their area.

"I love it," Wollenburg says of the distance process. "It's a marvelous opportunity for us to provide training for people who want to share the faith with others. It is an opportunity for the church to expand in ways we didn't think possible in the past."

With its distance education programs, the St. Louis seminary requires an annual residential seminar on campus. While students develop closer connections with faculty and fellow students through Internet discussion groups, Wollenburg notes that the seminars strengthen relationships, help students feel more a part of the seminary, and allow faculty to know students better.

For students, it's a different kind of learning, he says. Most have a full-time job and family, they serve a parish and, now, they are going to school. "You're on your own and self-disciplined, but even at midnight you can go to your computer and view a lecture, ask questions of your professor or turn in an assignment. Far from being easy or shorter than residential studies, it is more difficult in many ways."

A student in the seminary's Distance Education Leading to Ordination Program (DELTO), Jim Stogdill, says "We come out more missional because of the contextual experience." Through the program, he is designated as a vicar, organizing a new congregation in Johnston, Iowa, on the outskirts of Des Moines.

In Schuyler, Neb., a retired postal worker is pursuing a second career as he serves a dual parish-rural congregations that couldn't otherwise afford a pastor. "I had to relearn how to learn, not having been a student for years," says Bill Mattfeld, "but it's an amazing opportunity for the church and for me to serve."

Another DELTO student, Dan Flynn of Ann Arbor, Mich., adds, "It's a means of expanding the kingdom through a different model. We could not do the work if not for technology." Flynn, a teacher at St. Luke Lutheran Church, is developing another campus in a growing residential area. While learning from a distance, he believes his professors know him and friendships build through on-line discussion with other students.

"Your experience is different, but your content is the same," comments Jason Scheler, who is forming a mission congregation in Walled Lake, Mich. A DCE at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Wixom, he adds, "In some ways it's a higher level formation, within a [ministry] context, and with a mentor, and professors."

Wollenburg believes the distance education process is just beginning to scratch the surface in theological education and holds strong potential for continuing education for pastors. He adds that if the LCMS intends to start 2,000 new congregations by 2017, it will need leaders—and the seminaries are preparing to make sure men are prepared for pastoral ministry.

From radio mics to computers, the church taps technology

Set in the face of a building at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis is a stone carving of a radio microphone and a biplane flanking an open book. It marks the Oct. 26, 1924; broadcast from fledgling radio station KFUE and the laying of the cornerstone for the "new" seminary. Dr. Theodore Graebner was preaching outdoors—in Latin. A biplane flew over the campus and the sounds were carried along with the Gospel message via radio waves.

Dr. David Wollenburg, associate professor of practical theology and director of distance education, uses the plaque to illustrate how The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has traditionally embraced technology in teaching.

"What we are doing here is using technology to teach the faith and form

pastors," he says, adding that technology is affecting not just distance education, but the instruction of residential students as well.

Distance education has been at the forefront in the use of technology as the church has sought to prepare pastors to meet extraordinary mission needs—among ethnic immigrants, Hispanic popu-

lations, and in rural and urban contexts where congregations cannot support a full-time pastor or missionary. Both seminaries are involved, although they use different technologies and instructional approaches.

Students take courses via the Internet, viewing lectures from seminary professors. Using course delivery software, they participate in on-line discussion sessions, ask



Jim Stogdill,
Iowa District West



Jason Scheler,
Michigan District



Dan Flynn,
Michigan District



Bill Mattfeld,
Nebraska District

Technologies foster student learning on and off campus

Video and the Internet bring new tools to distance education, and professors are finding applications for their classrooms on campus.

At Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Dr. Douglas Rutt observes that on-line discussions are useful in both distance situations and classroom-based instruction. "Students are adult learners," comments Rutt, an associate professor of pastoral theology and missions and dean of distance learning. "They learn through processes and experiences. With technology we can aid the process."

With a module that is taught via distance, a professor has to plan ways to gain feedback, to allow students to ask questions, and to encourage dialog. With a discussion board—an academic chat room via the Internet—students discuss course topics. The professor can reply and the dialog goes on.

"Students are much more engaged. In a class they can doze off or be distracted," he says. "At their computer they can stretch or take a break and return to the topic."

Rutt has used a discussion board with a class of graduate students. "We couldn't talk about everything in class," he says. "We started some discussion topics on the Internet platform. These things would fill up with 80 to 90 posts—and I'm talking about a class of 12 students."

While in a classroom, the professor and students have the advantage of seeing each other and observing nonverbal communication, the discussion may be dominated by only a few students. With the on-line discussion, reserved students are able to express their thoughts and become more involved in the learning process.

As for distance learning, the Fort Wayne seminary also has a Distance Education Leading to Ordination (DELTO) program in addition to an extension program at Concordia College in Selma, Ala., where a student can take up to 10 classes.

CTS offers its distance learning via CUEnet (Concordia University Education Network), a video conferencing and instruction system from the Concordia University System. CUEnet offers both video streaming, accessible by Internet, and video conferencing to specially equipped classrooms at Concordia universities and colleges. With videoconferencing the classes are live with two-way video connections so teachers can see and respond to student questions.

The seminary offers DELTO courses

with video streaming and uses discussion boards and learning modules to promote learning. "A lot of resources have been invested into CUEnet and we feel it is a resource and we want to work on that partnership," Rutt says.

The Selma extension is a "hybrid model" that uses both weekend courses taught by seminary faculty on the campus and video conferencing. "We've been running the Selma extension for several years," Rutt says. "Primarily our interest is to encourage African-American students to follow up with residential studies on the seminary campus."

The connection between professor and student is still important for feedback to the professor, as well as the modeling a professor provides for a student. That can't be done from a distance, Rutt says. With its DELTO program, the seminary offers those opportunities through short-term seminars and through connecting students with good mentors.

He says faculty find there is more work in teaching a distance course. A professor has to check the discussion boards, respond to students and give feedback on papers, using the feedback systems built into WebCT, the Internet platform used by the seminary.

Rutt adds, "While distance learning does not replace residential training where certain things take place, we're convinced that it is a reality for the future." ■■

Dr. Hempelmann to retire Oct. 1

Dr. L. Dean Hempelmann, executive director of the Board for Pastoral Education since its formation in 2004, has announced plans to retire Oct. 1 this year.

The board has called for nominations for a new executive director and will consider candidates at a future meeting.

Prior to the board's formation, Dr. Hempelmann also served on the staff of the LCMS Board for Higher Education with responsibilities for seminary education. He also served as president of Concordia Lutheran Seminary in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, on the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and as a parish pastor. ■■



Call day, such as this service at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, is the culmination of the process of pastoral education. Technology is bringing many new dimensions to the formation process.

ELEMENTARY GREEK:

Coming to you on your iPod or home computer

Download seminary courses to your iPod®, MP3 player, or home computer? It was done about 43,000 times during the first week of June when offerings of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, were integrated into Apple Computer's iTunes U.

In fact, Elementary Greek, taught by Dr. James Voelz, professor of exegetical theology, was the fifth most popular download among offerings from a dozen institutions, including Duke University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Stanford University.

Rev. Anthony Cook, director of educational technology, was ecstatic the day the iTunes U was activated. "We've had the content, but not the delivery method," he said. "This partnership with Apple will deliver it at no cost. Because our information is about the Gospel, it should be free."

Until June, the seminary had been offering the downloads—in either audio or video forms—from its Web site. It averaged 3,000 to 5,000 downloads of theological resources a week. The most popular have been a 30-session overview of the Lutheran Confessions taught in conversational style by Professors Charles Arand and Robert Kolb.

It's one of the ways the seminary is working to put courses in the hands—and ears—of students and the church-at-large. (Note that while people can

download the classes, they don't receive seminary credit.)

The digital age, coupled with high speed Internet, is also affecting the teaching-learning process on the campus. For example, all the lectures for "Lutheran Mind," a required systematics course introducing Lutheran theological reflection, have been recorded. The objective is that students can view the lectures in advance, then attend class where all the time is devoted for discussion.

"It was done to maximize the face time between student and professor. You want to talk and to share experiences," Cook said.

"What makes this fun is that we're at the right moment, a creative environment," said Cook, formerly a parish pastor who is a Ph.D. candidate in curriculum design and instruction. He said the seminary position allows him to develop his vision of combining theology, pedagogy and technology.

Cook envisions a wider reach for seminary offerings, including teaching laity in Bible classes, studies for pastors' conferences, or seminars using both Internet and conference calls. ■■

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As the haystack grows larger, the needle is also easier to find

Books will continue to be important in theological education, yet seminary library staff are keenly aware that accessing theological resources is also a factor of punching the computer keyboard.

In fact, Professor Robert Roethemeyer, director of library and information services at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, says accrediting agencies look at the seminary's capability to provide a wide range of formats for information.

Roethemeyer said his role also encourages information literacy among students. Using resources doesn't end with formal seminary studies. "Lifelong learning is very important for pastors. If the shepherd isn't feeding himself, he will have no storehouse from which to feed his sheep."

Roethemeyer says the items produced digitally in Fort Wayne don't stay there. They are available to alumni, church workers, seminaries of the International Lutheran Council, faculty deployed in the Baltics and Russia, and Ph.D. candidates in South Africa, Kenya, or Latin America.

"Students despair because the haystack has grown bigger in which to find the needle," observes Robert Smith, electronic resources librarian at the seminary. Thanks to the digital age, the "needle" has become easier to find. He says it is now possible to answer questions—like finding a phrase or grammatical construction in a text—that might have taken generations not too long ago.

"The trick on my side is to keep up on new tools and techniques," he com-

ments. "Yesterday I would have told you this, but, today, let's try this."

The seminary's electronic classrooms—with capabilities to access maps on the Internet, show videos and computer slide presentations, and use audio—bring wide ranging visual, verbal and hands-on learning opportunities. Roethemeyer says they also open students' vision to how they can teach catechumens or adult learners in the parish.

He adds that the library is a storehouse of knowledge from which faculty and students can draw so theological education can occur in residence, "but also the powerhouse from which traditional resources are 'electrified' and made available for learners at a distance." ■■

The LCMS Board for Pastoral Education advocates

and coordinates the formation of pastors, missionaries, and other church servants to serve the mission and ministry needs of Christ's church.

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