

# ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Fall 1991

Vol. 25, No.3



SUPPORT FOR PROFESSIONAL CHURCH WORKER EDUCATION: A CRISIS



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## Support for Professional Church Worker Education: A Crisis

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## Reflections

A story is told about a young couple who had been married for several years. One day the husband and wife were discussing the fact that they were no longer sitting as close to each other while traveling in their automobile as they had before they were married. The husband, who did most of the driving, is supposed to have said, "Well, dear, who moved?"

In looking at the relationship between The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and its colleges, universities, and seminaries, the same type of question might be asked: "Who has moved?" There have been tremendous changes in the funding of church worker education programs in Synod's institutions of higher education, especially in the last decade.

This edition attempts to address the current crisis in the funding of professional church worker education programs in the Synod. Why is there a crisis? How did all of us, walking together as a Synod, get to where we are today? Included in the three articles is a case study from one of Synod's premier institutions in the preparation of full-time church workers, Concordia College, Seward. If excellence is to be maintained in the future, what changes need to be made in support of church worker programs as The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod faces the challenges of this decade and the start of a new century only eight years away?

The three articles in this edition are not light, recreational reading. As you read what the authors have shared, there may be a frown or two forming on your forehead. Some of the projections and scenarios are frightening. Furthermore, some of the suggested solutions to the challenges before Synod may not win wide support. In fact, some reactions may be quite negative.

As the 1992 Synodical Convention approaches, it is hoped that this edition of *Issues in Christian Education* will provide some important background as the funding of church worker education programs is discussed and resolutions are voted upon in Pittsburgh next July.

Orville C. Walz, President

# CRISIS!



## Support for the Education of Church Workers

It may come as a surprise to the membership of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod that the financial support which the Synod provides for its ten colleges/universities is now only about 12.2 percent of the educational and general funds they need. This compares with 23 percent in 1984–1985 and 36.1 percent in 1980–1981.

The Synod does allocate some funds for capital construction on the campuses. But it is a strange turn of events that the colleges which were established originally to assure a supply of professional church workers for the various ministries of the Synod must now depend nearly 90 percent upon tuition and third-source funding for their operations. From the Synod's point of view this is unwise, and from the colleges/universities' outlook, it is unfortunate.

Accompanying the reduction in synodical funding of these institutions is a decline in the number of students planning to enter church work programs. There were 2,292 church work students at the ten schools in 1990–1991, compared with 2,563 in 1984–1985 and 3,313 in 1980–1981. Several factors help to explain this decline.

One simple reason for the shortfall is that the number of traditional students of college age nationwide has been reduced. The birth-rate fell off in the 1970's, and the 18 to 20 year olds, who usually constitute the bulk of college freshmen annually, are not nearly as numerous now as they were in former years. The college age membership of the Synod today, for example, is about 182,000 compared with 251,000 just ten years ago.

Another reason for the fall-off in church work students at synodical colleges/universities is the smaller number of young people who choose to enter the professional service of the church. Practically all of the denominations are having difficulty attracting students to become full-time church workers, and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is no exception to this trend.

But it is also true that the rising cost of preparing for the church work professions is a discouraging factor to young men and women. A college/university education is expensive. For those going on to the seminaries, education costs become an even heavier burden. Since the salaries of church workers continue to be more modest than in other occupations, many prospective students do not wish to assume substantial debts for their church work education.

Thus, in a very real sense, the failure of the church to attract young people to prepare for service in church professions is due to a combination of problems. The young people must have a commitment, the colleges must do more effective recruiting, and the Synod must make the necessary financial investment. With the blessing of the Holy Spirit, the colleges and

the agencies of the church can do much to solve the problems of commitment and recruitment. But it will be up to the broader constituency of the Synod to confront and resolve the problem of financial support.

The articles which follow in this edition of *Issues* define the financial questions involved from several aspects. The first one is an analysis of the effects of decreasing financial support by the Synod for its colleges. The second explains how this situation came about. The third is a discussion of possible steps to reach a satisfactory solution to the problem.

At the present time, the Board for Higher Education Services has about \$5.6 million per year from the synodical budget to distribute among the ten schools. This distribution is made according to a formula which is weighted heavily toward the numbers of church work students a college or university has enrolled. Ideally, a reasonable way to secure more support for church work education would be to increase the subsidy from the annual budget for this purpose. Since that is not likely because of budgetary constraints in synodical finances, other approaches will have to be explored, such as the establishment of an endowed Church Worker Scholarship Fund.

Providing for greater financial assistance for church work students and programs may not be the only answer to the problems of declining church worker enrollments at the synodical colleges/universities, but it is at least a partial answer—and an important one. No one doubts that the church badly needs a regular supply of well-prepared ministers, teachers, and other professional workers. It cannot afford **not** to find the ways and means of supporting them and their programs in their years of preparation at the educational institutions of the church.

A. G. Huegeli

President *emeritus* of Valparaiso University and Consultant to the 1986 LCMS President's Commission on Synodical Higher Education

## Adequate Support for the Education of Called Workers of the Church

"Pastors, teachers, missionaries; where do they come from? Are they parachuted to congregations directly from heaven? Are they beings who have strangely come into existence and then mysteriously spirited away to waiting congregations?" When he penned those questions several decades ago, the now sainted Dr. John Herrmann did not believe those myths, and neither do I today.

Rather, supplying pastors, missionaries, and teachers to the congregations, mission fields, and schools involves a costly process of education and nurture. It costs the United States Air Force \$443,795 to produce a competent pilot. Most everyone will agree that

the product justifies the cost, and is well worth the cost. It does not seem inappropriate to ask the question: How much is a competent "Sky Pilot" worth?

During 1970, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod provided 56 percent of the income budget for Concordia-Seward; in 1991 the Synod is supplying 14 percent of the income. The synodical subsidy to Concordia College, Austin, for 1991 is less than 5 percent of the school's budget. It might be of interest to note that the Texas District supplies around \$2,400,000 annually for the Synod's income budget.

During recent years the income level at the congregations and districts has increased steadily. However, the "sovereign" parishes and districts have discovered that they have valid ideas as to how the money they have gathered should be spent. It is quite possible that this concept will continue unless the decision makers at the Synod's "Washington" awaken to the fact that not all wisdom is concentrated at the board rooms of the Synod.

Few, if any, Air Force pilots have educational debts hanging over their heads when they begin flying their multi-million dollar machines of destruction. However, the Synod seems unconcerned over the fact that some called workers of the church are entering into full-time professional work with \$30,000 to \$50,000 debts. In spite of the fact that they have perhaps taken "an involuntary vow of poverty," they often find that these debts are a heavy burden to ministry and family well being.

And how does God provide pastors, missionaries, teachers, and other church workers? The long-time synodical stewardship executive, Dr. Herrmann, observed: "HE selects them from among HIS people; HE creates the desire in the hearts of those whom HE chooses; HE makes their parents willing to offer them into HIS service; HE uses their pastors to inspire them to become HIS special servants; HE teaches and prepares them at colleges and seminaries through faithful, dedicated faculty members."

In the army the foot soldiers have long been called "The Grunts." In the church, the missionaries are the Grunts that advance under enemy fire, move the cause forward and are accorded very little recognition. A lot more appreciation is in order.

I hope that not many are surprised to learn that after the Spring, 1991, assignments of pastoral candidates, there are still 280 vacant congregations in the Synod. An old African proverb says: "The worst sin is to know where the water is and not tell others," especially when it is the water of life.

It is possible that the Synod's "Schools of the Prophets" may not be just the greatest in everyone's opinion. However, they just happen to be about the only tried and tested producers of called workers of the church that the Synod has. A belated recognition of that fact would not hurt a thing.

Arthur M. Ahlschwede

former Executive Director, Board for Higher Education, LCMS, 1956–1980

## Leadership Shortage As a Function of Gender Shift

Lutheran elementary schools are facing a serious shortage of trained administrators. Ask any congregation that has recently experienced a vacancy in the position of elementary principal. Smaller schools have been the first to become sensitized to this fact. Larger schools also are finding it increasingly difficult to fill vacancies in the principalship.

Various reasons could be cited as to why fewer persons aspire to the role of the Lutheran elementary principal. It is the position of this writer that the shortage results in part from a sharp gender shift from what was once a male majority in the Lutheran teaching profession to the current female majority. What has caused this shift? The simplest explanation is that the Synod's system of higher education is simply producing fewer male elementary teacher graduates. The number has been declining for more than a decade. The entire system graduated fewer than a dozen this past year. The supply has been reduced further by a trend for male Lutheran teachers to opt for a pastoral colloquy, thus further reducing the pool of male Lutheran teachers. Some men trained for elementary have moved to secondary positions.

A shift from a male majority to a female majority among Lutheran elementary teachers needs not necessarily result in a smaller supply of candidates for the principalship in Lutheran elementary schools. However, the gender shift seems to have been accompanied by a shift of grade focus for the female teachers, so that more and more of them tend to identify themselves as being prepared chiefly for early childhood positions, and fewer of them are willing to teach in upper elementary grades.

Many examples could be cited to indicate that elementary teachers whose experience has been chiefly at kindergarten and primary grade levels can indeed function as successful elementary school principals provided that they are trained to serve in such positions. Many already serve effectively as directors of preschools. The reality, however, seems to be that many of them do not seek positions as elementary school principals.

Simply stated, the problem seems to be that a greater proportion of Lutheran elementary teachers is now female, a greater proportion of these female teachers prefers to be teachers of early childhood, and a greater proportion of all teachers prefers not to think of themselves as candidates for positions as elementary principals.

In view of these realities, the church body probably should consider several actions for reversing the trend. Unless something is done, many Lutheran elementary schools will soon be without qualified principals.

A first step might be for the church body to devise ways of encouraging more young men to train for the Lutheran elementary teaching

ministry. Public school administrators have long proclaimed the value of maintaining a gender balance among teachers in public elementary schools. In times past they have often admired the gender balance found in teaching faculties of Lutheran elementary schools.

As a second step the church body should seek out ways of encouraging more of its female elementary teachers to consider the challenges of the Lutheran principalship. A positive beginning might be made by providing equal salaries for male or female principals. The traditional notion that female teachers are not breadwinners and so should be content with smaller salaries is simply not defensible. To be sure, great strides have been made in salary equalization, but inequities based on gender still exist.

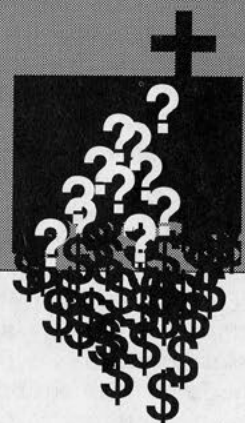
As a third step the institutions preparing female teachers for elementary positions may wish to take extra care to see that those whose focus is early childhood also discover the joys of working with older elementary pupils and even exploring the field of administration.

If principals of Lutheran elementary schools are to experience maximum job satisfaction and to achieve legitimate identity among their peers in administration, they must be appropriately trained and licensed for their positions. The Lutheran school system must shed the idea that any member of a teaching faculty can be designated appropriately as a principal without appropriate development of administrative knowledge and skill.

The machinery for accomplishing this is all in place. A number of synodical colleges offer graduate programs of study for school administrators. Programs enjoying state, regional and national accreditation are available. These departments of graduate study are eager to provide trained leaders for Lutheran schools. All that is needed is for candidates to avail themselves of opportunities already available. Individuals and congregations are challenged to exploit the offerings already available to provide a supply of certified elementary principals who can continue to lead Lutheran elementary schools into a new century of excellence.

Lee Holtzen

Registrar and Professor of Education  
Concordia-Seward





# Consequences of Reducing Synodical Support for Professional Church Worker Education

## A CASE STUDY

Orville C. Walz

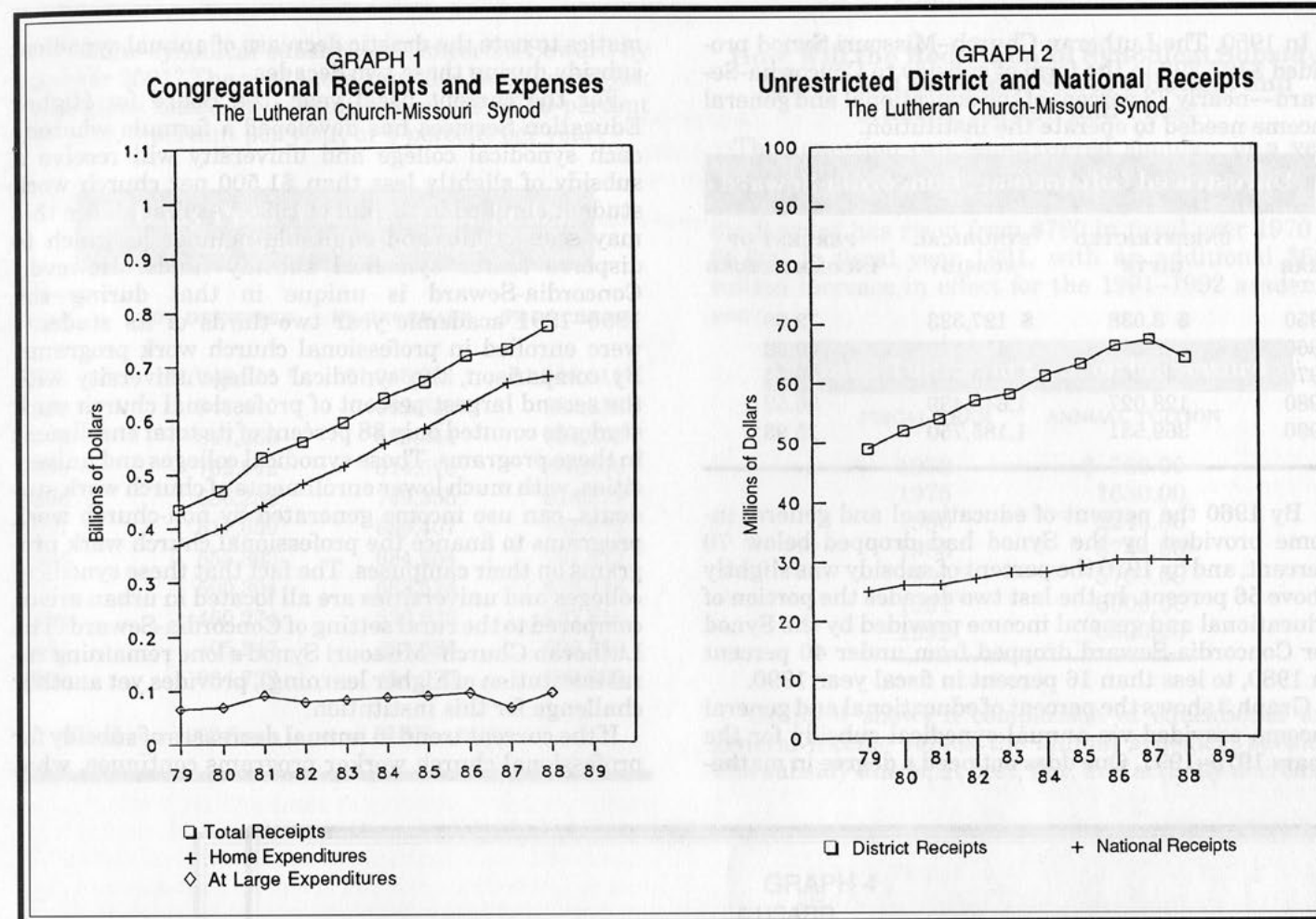
### Introduction

Today, The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod is faced with a paradox: while overall contributions by congregational members and investments in financial portfolios are increasing, at the same time allocations of resources for professional church worker education are being reduced. The availability of resources in the church is not the issue; the question centers in the value placed upon professional church worker education. A continuing reduction of synodical support for church worker education has far-reaching consequences, which means it is time for a larger segment of the church to engage in analysis, discussion, and debate concerning this crisis in the education of called ministers of the Gospel. This article focuses on one of Synod's twelve institutions of higher learning, Concordia-Seward, as a case study to highlight some of the consequences resulting from the continued erosion of synodical support for professional church worker education.

Members of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod have continued to increase their contributions for the work of the church for the past decade. Total congregational receipts in the Synod for work at home, in the districts, and by the Synod-at-large now total in excess of \$800 million annually (Graph 1). Diminished support for the church at large, and as a result for professional church worker education, however, has created a crisis, because many congregations of Synod are using more and more of their increased receipts for work at home. In recent years this also has begun to affect negatively the receipts received by the 35 districts of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, but this has been a problem for the Synod-at-large for over a decade (Graph 2). Unrestricted contributions received by the Synod for national and international programs have remained between \$28 million and \$30 million for over a decade, and this makes no allowance for the inflation factor.

As a consequence, Concordia-Seward has been receiving less synodical subsidy for its professional church

**Orville C. Walz is the President of Concordia College, Seward, Nebraska. The writer gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Edward Dollase, Dean of Operations, Concordia College, Seward, Nebraska, who provided the statistical data.**



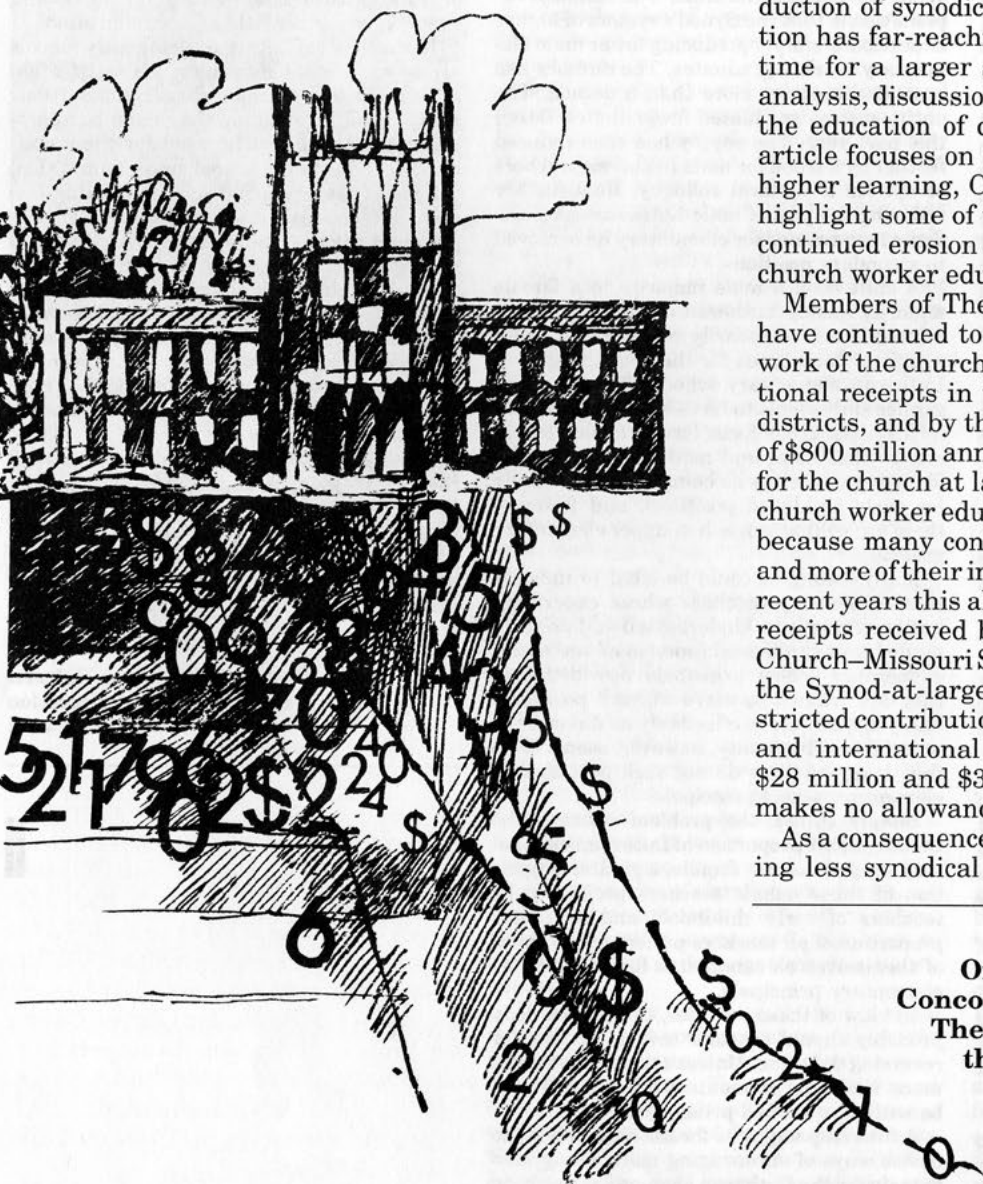
worker programs for ten consecutive years, a result of budget cuts made by the Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. For example, in the 1991–1992 fiscal year, the Board of Directors has again reduced the Board for Higher Education Services budget, this time in an amount of \$644,488.<sup>1</sup> In addition to synodical subsidy cutbacks, Concordia-Seward in recent years also has been required by the BHES to pay for all audit expenses and costly insurance premiums. Previously such expenses were covered by The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

One of the major causes of a cumulative operating deficit in excess of \$1 million that Concordia-Seward experienced in the three fiscal years, 1986–1988, was a result of decreased synodical subsidy. Nor is this synodical institution unique in facing this type of crisis. For example, in November of 1990 Concordia-Seward received a letter of commendation from the Board for Higher Education Services, thanking the institution for meeting all six standards of fiscal viability established by the BHES. However, the letter indicated that this institution was one of only three synodical institutions of higher education which met or exceeded all six BHES criteria for fiscal viability during the 1989–1990 academic year.<sup>2</sup>

Is there a crisis in the support for professional church worker education in The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod today? If not, is a crisis on the way? If the crisis has arrived, is it manageable? Acceptable? Tolerable? Using Concordia-Seward as a case study, we examine in closer detail some of the consequences of a reduction of synodical support for professional church worker education programs.

### What Will be the Amount of Synodical Subsidy for Concordia-Seward by the Year 2001?

Late in 1990, only months after having returned to Concordia-Seward, I expressed my concerns about declining synodical subsidy for its colleges, universities, and seminaries to a long-time colleague in higher education in Synod. During the conversation I said, "At the rate we are going, by the year 2001 synodical institutions will receive no subsidy and instead will be asked to pay for a membership in the Board for Higher Education Services, to continue serving in its supervisory role." My friend was unaware that what I had said was meant to be "tongue in cheek." He responded, "I disagree with you. At the rate we are going it will not take until the year 2001 for this to occur."





In 1950, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod provided \$127,323 in the form of subsidy to Concordia-Seward—nearly 73 percent of the educational and general income needed to operate the institution.

#### Unrestricted Gift Income, Concordia-Seward

YEAR	UNRESTRICTED GIFTS	SYNOCDICAL SUBSIDY	PERCENT OF INCOME NEEDED
1950	\$ 3,038	\$ 127,323	72.68
1960	8,236	419,170	69.02
1970	40,261	1,249,701	56.64
1980	128,027	1,648,439	36.52
1990	369,531	1,185,750	15.93

By 1960 the percent of educational and general income provided by the Synod had dropped below 70 percent, and by 1970 the percent of subsidy was slightly above 56 percent. In the last two decades the portion of educational and general income provided by the Synod for Concordia-Seward dropped from under 40 percent in 1980, to less than 16 percent in fiscal year 1990.

Graph 3 shows the percent of educational and general income provided via annual synodical subsidy for the years 1970–1991. One does not need a degree in mathe-

matics to note the drastic decrease of annual synodical subsidy during these two decades.

For the current fiscal year, the Board for Higher Education Services has developed a formula whereby each synodical college and university will receive a subsidy of slightly less than \$1,500 per church work student enrolled in the fall of 1990.<sup>3</sup> At first glance this may seem a fair and equitable manner in which to disperse scarce synodical subsidy funds. However, Concordia-Seward is unique in that during the 1990–1991 academic year two-thirds of its students were enrolled in professional church work programs. By comparison, the synodical college/university with the second largest percent of professional church work students counted only 38 percent of its total enrollment in these programs. These synodical colleges and universities, with much lower enrollments of church work students, can use income generated by non-church work programs to finance the professional church work programs on their campuses. The fact that these synodical colleges and universities are all located in urban areas, compared to the rural setting of Concordia-Seward (The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's lone remaining rural institution of higher learning), provides yet another challenge for this institution.

If the current trend in annual decreases of subsidy for professional church worker programs continues, what

will be the synodical subsidy for Concordia-Seward by the year 2001? The next table provides three scenarios: projections based on subsidy decreases of 10 percent per year, 8 percent per year, or 6 percent per year.

#### Subsidy Projections from the LCMS for Concordia-Seward

FISCAL YEAR	10% DECREASE	8% DECREASE	6% DECREASE
1992	\$1,046,011 *	\$1,046,011 *	\$1,046,011*
1993	941,410	962,330	983,250
1994	847,269	885,344	924,255
1995	762,542	814,516	868,800
1996	686,288	749,355	816,672
1997	617,659	689,407	767,672
1998	555,893	634,254	721,612
1999	500,304	583,514	678,315
2000	450,274	536,833	637,616
2001	405,247	493,886	599,359
2002	364,722	454,375	563,397

\*Fiscal year 1992 figure is actual BHES subsidy.

#### How Will the Reduction in Synodical Subsidy Affect the Concordia-Seward Budget and Student Tuition and Fees?

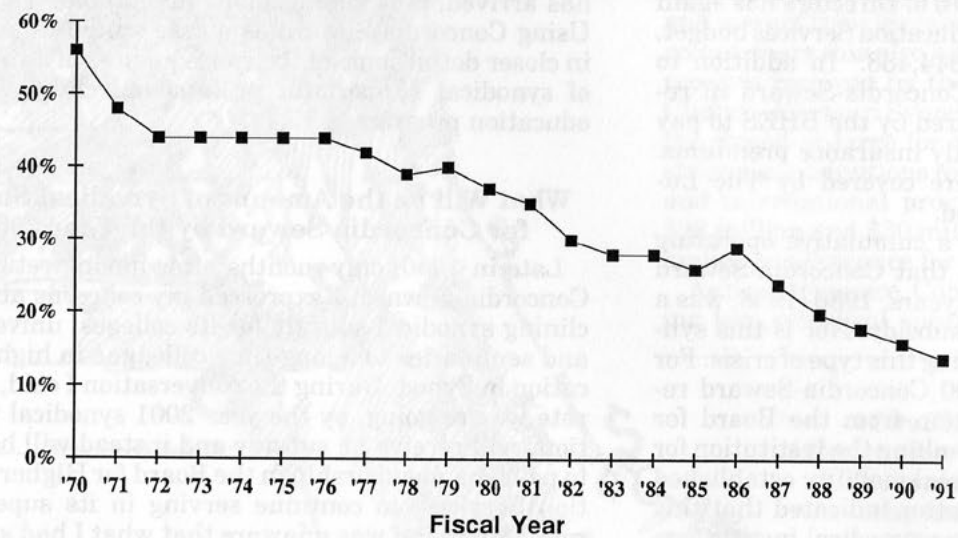
That question can be answered simply: in a very negative manner! As the following table shows, the annual cost of tuition for a full-time student at Concordia-Seward has risen from \$760 in fiscal year 1970 to \$6,000 in fiscal year 1991, with an additional \$600 tuition increase in effect for the 1991–1992 academic year.

#### Annual Tuition at Concordia-Seward

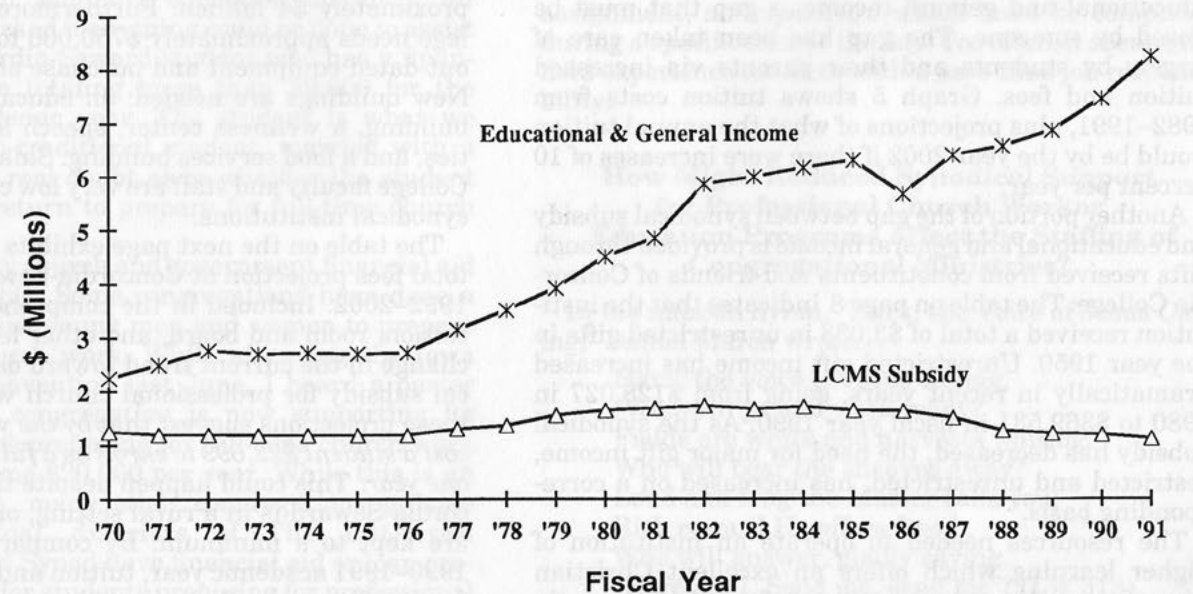
FISCAL YEAR	ANNUAL TUITION
1970	\$ 760.00
1975	1630.00
1980	2246.00
1985	3744.00
1990	5700.00
1991	6000.00
1992	6600.00

Graph 4 shows a comparison of educational and general income versus the annual synodical subsidy. The subsidy line is, at best, flat, and actually decreases

GRAPH 3  
Concordia College-Seward  
Annual Synodical Subsidy  
Shown as a Percent of Educational and General Income

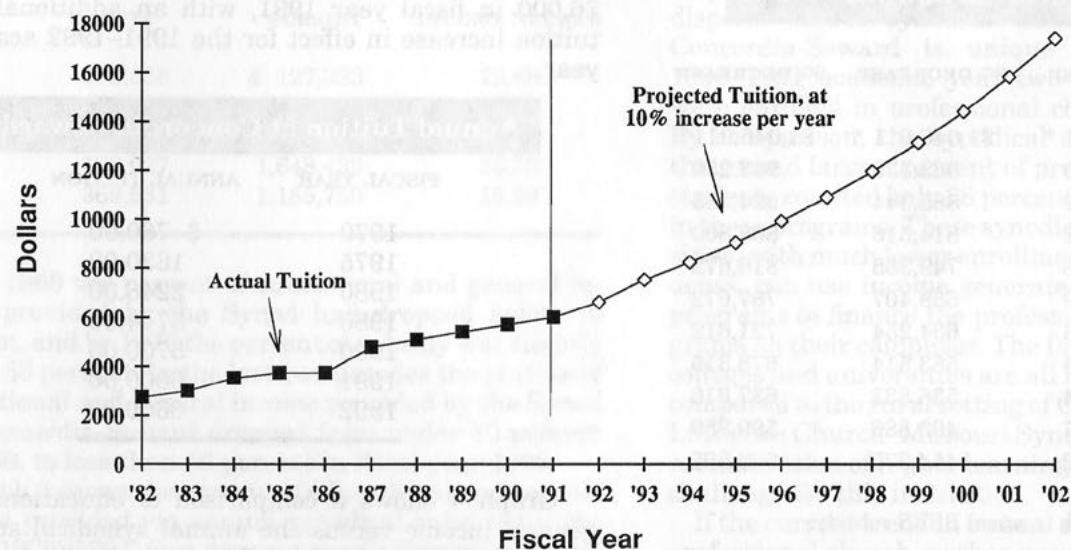


GRAPH 4  
Concordia College-Seward  
Annual Synodical Subsidy vs. Educational and General Income





GRAPH 5  
 Concordia College-Seward  
 Annual Tuition  
 Actual (1982-1991) • Projected (1992-2002)



dramatically when inflation is considered. Educational and general income has risen from slightly over \$2 million in 1970 to over \$8 million in fiscal year 1991. The result is a large gap between synodical subsidy and educational and general income, a gap that must be closed by someone. The gap has been taken care of largely by students and their parents via increased tuition and fees. Graph 5 shows tuition costs from 1982-1991, plus projections of what the annual tuition would be by the year 2002 if there were increases of 10 percent per year.

Another portion of the gap between synodical subsidy and educational and general income is provided through gifts received from constituents and friends of Concordia College. The table on page 8 indicates that the institution received a total of \$3,038 in unrestricted gifts in the year 1950. Unrestricted gift income has increased dramatically in recent years, going from \$128,027 in 1980 to \$369,531 in fiscal year 1990. As the synodical subsidy has decreased, the need for major gift income, restricted and unrestricted, has increased on a corresponding basis.

The resources needed to operate an institution of higher learning which offers an excellent Christian education continue to increase. A formula frequently quoted in higher education circles is that an institution

should have an endowment twice the size of its annual operating budget. At the present time that means Concordia-Seward should have an endowment of approximately \$21 million. Instead, its total endowment is approximately \$4 million. Furthermore, Concordia College needs approximately \$750,000 for replacement of out-dated equipment and purchase of new equipment. New buildings are needed: an educational ministries building, a wellness center, speech and drama facilities, and a food services building. Salaries of Concordia College faculty and staff are very low compared to other synodical institutions.

The table on the next page exhibits one example of a total fees projection at Concordia-Seward for the years 1992-2002. Included in the comprehensive figure are tuition, room and board, and other fees. If there is no change in the current trend toward decreasing synodical subsidy for professional church worker programs, these projections suggest that *by the year 2001 it could cost a student \$22,699 to enroll as a full-time student for one year.* This could happen despite the fact that Concordia-Seward is in a rural setting, one in which costs are kept to a minimum. By comparison, during the 1990-1991 academic year, tuition and room-and-board fees at Concordia-Seward were second lowest among Synod's four-year colleges/universities.

Total Annual Fees Projection 1992-2002  
 Concordia-Seward

YEAR	TOTAL FEES
1992	\$10,150
1993	11,102
1994	12,142
1995	13,278
1996	14,520
1997	15,877
1998	17,361
1999	18,983
2000	20,757
2001	22,699
2002	24,823

#### Some Possible Effects on Student Enrollment and the Need by Students to Secure Additional Employment

There is little doubt that The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod throughout its history has been blessed by extremely dedicated full-time professional church workers. The same can be said about hundreds and thousands of parents, many of whom have made personal sacrifice in order to send their sons and daughters to a synodical college to prepare for full-time church work. However, one cannot pay bills in this day and age with dedication. The continuing decrease in synodical support for professional church work programs has placed the major responsibility upon students and their parents to find sufficient resources to pay for a college/university and/or seminary education. Recently, for example, I was asked if anything could be done to assist a current Concordia-Seward student who has a financial aid package totaling more than \$9,000 for the 1991-1992 academic year. The student is what we today call a non-traditional student, married with a family. There is real doubt as to whether the student will be able to return to prepare for full-time church work.

There are many church and government financial aid packages available. Some congregations have done a great deal to assist young men and women to prepare for full-time church work. While attending the Iowa East District Convention last June, I heard a pastor report that his congregation is now supporting its members who are preparing for full-time church work at the rate of some \$20,000 per year. While this is an exceptional case, many other congregations provide assistance. Most districts of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have financial aid or loan programs available for students preparing for professional church work.

Another source of student financing is loan programs. Here at Concordia College, at the conclusion of the 1990-1991 academic year, the average graduating senior who had federal government loans had a total loan to repay of \$8,436.<sup>4</sup> This total included only government-backed loans of which the Concordia College Financial Aid Office was aware. These students represented approximately two-thirds of the graduating class. Some of these students have an additional four-year seminary program to complete, which will undoubtedly add to their total loan indebtedness. In addition, government financial aid and loan programs, especially for middle income families, have been cut in recent years.

Most Concordia-Seward students presently work, as they attempt to earn sufficient financial resources to pay for their college education. While no statistics are available indicating precisely how many are working, during the summer it would appear that well over 90 percent of students have jobs, and many also work during the school year. Furthermore, a greater number of Concordia College students are working more hours per week than previously. For example, of last year's sophomores surveyed, only 30 percent indicated they had no regular work during the school year. Four years earlier over half of Concordia's sophomores indicated they did not have a job during the academic year. Students also appear to be working more hours today than earlier. In 1986, 10 percent of the sophomores surveyed worked 11-20 hours per week during the school year; in 1990-1991, 26 percent were working this number of hours.<sup>5</sup> Recently I had the opportunity to talk with one of our students who had two jobs for the summer, and he was looking earnestly for a third job. Students working during the school year also find that there are frequent conflicts with particular programs in which they are enrolled. For example, it is not unusual for a student in a program to have a field experience assignment, an experience which must be completed during a specific time of the day. Too often, it seems, the field experience conflicts with a part-time job responsibility.

#### How Might Reduced Synodical Support for Professional Church Worker Education Programs Affect the Staffing of Congregational Ministries?

In the mission hymn, "Hark, the Voice of Jesus Calling," Daniel March wrote:

Hark, the voice of Jesus calling,  
 "Who will go and work today?  
 Fields are white and harvests waiting,  
 Who will bear the sheaves away?"  
 Loud and long the Master calls you;  
 Rich reward He offers free.  
 Who will answer, gladly saying,  
 "Here am I, Send me, send me?" (LW 318)



Ministry within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has a singular goal: to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. As the hymn writer said, fields are white and the harvests are waiting. In the spring and summer of 1990, Concordia College's Placement Office was contacted to assist parishes/school associations in filling over 675 different positions in educational ministries. When the spring and summer placement were completed, 92 young men and women had been placed.<sup>6</sup> The large discrepancy between position vacancies and the number of people placed was not the result of graduates being unwilling to accept placements. For example, 100 percent of the mobile female candidates accepted placement, and 94 percent of mobile male candidates accepted placement. Rather, the discrepancy occurred because there were insufficient laborers graduating to send out into the harvest fields.

Christian education is extremely expensive, both in time required and dollars necessary to achieve excellence. The full-time professional church workers in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod certainly are not being over-paid in their ministries. Instead, remuneration borders on the impossible. For example, in the spring of 1990, over 300 synodical college/university graduates were placed into educational ministries, and the average salary they received was \$15,743.<sup>7</sup> In light of the large loans some of these individuals acquire while attending college, it becomes apparent that repayment of the loans is a major obstacle to ministry.

Because of the shortage of synodically trained educational leaders, more and more congregations and schools are employing non-synodically educated teachers, and some schools are even using non-Lutheran teachers. How sad it is to see some full-time church workers attempt to live on salaries that border on the poverty level, as defined by the government. Furthermore, the words of Jesus in Luke 10:7 remind us, "The laborer is worthy of his hire." Often, the morale of the minister suffers when working under such conditions, and the joy of serving one's Savior is greatly diminished.

### Conclusion

Support for professional church worker education: a crisis! What a challenge there is before all of us in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Is this a time for us to throw up our hands and give up? Absolutely not! Twenty-five years ago, in the summer of 1966, during the oral examination for a candidate's master's degree at Moorhead State College in Minnesota, the principal of a Lutheran elementary school was asked whether Lutheran schools were on their death bed, since it appeared there was little interest in Christian education in the United States at that time. How well I remember the challenges facing our church then, and yet in reflecting upon those twenty-five years, I must smile and respond, "God is so good!"

While the challenges of a reduction of synodical support for professional church worker education are seri-

ous, they are not impossible. As The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod looks to the future, I suggest three thoughts to consider in its vision of church worker education for this decade and beyond:

1. The crisis before us is **our** problem. It is not a synodical staff problem, nor their challenge, nor the problem of the colleges/universities/seminaries. The sooner all of us in our beloved Synod accept the challenges before us as ours, collectively, as sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ who are walking together, the sooner we can work toward addressing the issues of this crisis.

2. While analogies are never perfect, I cannot help but think of what occurred in *A Christmas Carol*. As Scrooge was being visited by Marley's ghost, at one point in the conversation the ghost said to Scrooge: "I am here tonight to warn you that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate."<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the projections for continued decreasing synodical subsidy for professional church worker programs, the trend toward higher and higher tuition and fees, and the negative consequences upon ministry in our congregations need not necessarily occur. Something can be done about these trends, and the solutions begin with each member of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

3. Finally, answers to the dilemma can be found in God's Holy Word. If every member of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod could understand and practice what stewardship of life means, there would be no crisis in the support for professional church worker programs today.

Concordia-Seward will soon be celebrating, by God's grace, one hundred years of service as an institution of higher learning, striving for excellence in Christian education. With God's continued blessings we can look forward enthusiastically to the next one hundred years, as Concordia College carries out its mission of Gospel proclamation.

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Letter from Dr. Michael J. Stelmachowicz, June 14, 1991.

<sup>2</sup>Letter from Dr. Michael J. Stelmachowicz, November 19, 1990.

<sup>3</sup>Letter from Dr. Michael J. Stelmachowicz, June 14, 1991.

<sup>4</sup>Concordia-Seward Financial Aid Office.

<sup>5</sup>ACT Sophomore Survey Instrument, Concordia-Seward, 1990.

<sup>6</sup>Concordia-Seward Placement Office.

<sup>7</sup>Concordia-Seward Placement Office.

<sup>8</sup>Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*. New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1915, page 31.



## How in the World Did We Get to Where We Are Today?

Rudolph C. Block

Those of us who have been serving as pastors and teachers in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for 30 or more years find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to understand what in fact has happened with synodical support for the education of church workers. Those of us who attended what was then called a "prep school" in the 1940's and 1950's received basically a free education. The fees collected from students then barely covered the cost of room and board. Only general students paid a small tuition charge; church work students really received their education free.

Things are quite different today. Although church work students are eligible for some designated grants and scholarships, they and their parents must bear the main burden of the cost of their education. Tuition costs today range from four to ten times the amount students would pay at a nearby state university, to say nothing of the relatively negligible tuition charged by local community colleges.

Given the high tuition costs students have to pay to attend one of our colleges or universities, coupled with the prospect of receiving proportionately meager salaries when they accept calls to serve our congregations, it is a wonder that we have as many church work students as we do today. In fact, the number of LCMS confirmands who four years later enroll in a church work program at one of our schools is proportionately about the same as it was ten years ago. We are grateful to the Lord for the dedication and commitment of these young men and women who plan to serve the Lord as professional church workers.

**Rudolph Block is the Director of Curriculum Services of the Board for Higher Education Services of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.**



### Changes in the Level of Support for Colleges/Universities and Seminaries

Now let us look at the level of synodical support for the education of church workers and how this has changed over the last 20 years. Graph 1, based on the *Statistical Yearbook*, shows that congregational contributions for all purposes increased from \$241 million in 1970 to \$809 million in 1990. Over these same years unrestricted funds available to the Synod increased from \$24 million to \$30 million. In other words, while total congregational contributions increased 336 percent, over this same 20 years the Synod's budget increased only 25 percent.

The problem becomes even more acute when we factor in inflation. The following table shows that the cumulative percent change in the Consumer Price Index from 1970 to 1990 was a staggering 236.9 percent. So while total congregational contributions were well ahead of inflation, funds available to Synod seriously lost out to the ravaging increases in the cost of living.

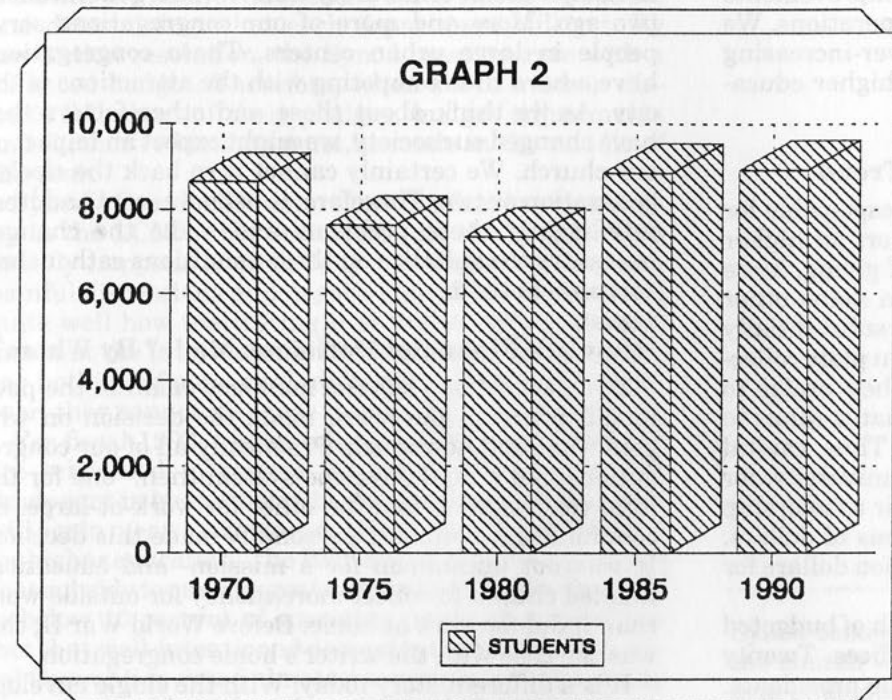
**Consumer Price Index—Selected Years**  
1982-1984 = 100.0

YEAR	CPI
1970	38.8
1975	53.8
1980	82.4
1985	107.6
1990	130.7

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Put another way, the 1970 dollar was worth only 29.7 cents in 1990. So the \$24 million in income to Synod in 1970 should have grown to \$56.9 million just to stay even with rising costs due to inflation. However, unrestricted synodical funds coming from congregations

### Synodical Colleges and Seminaries Summary of Operations



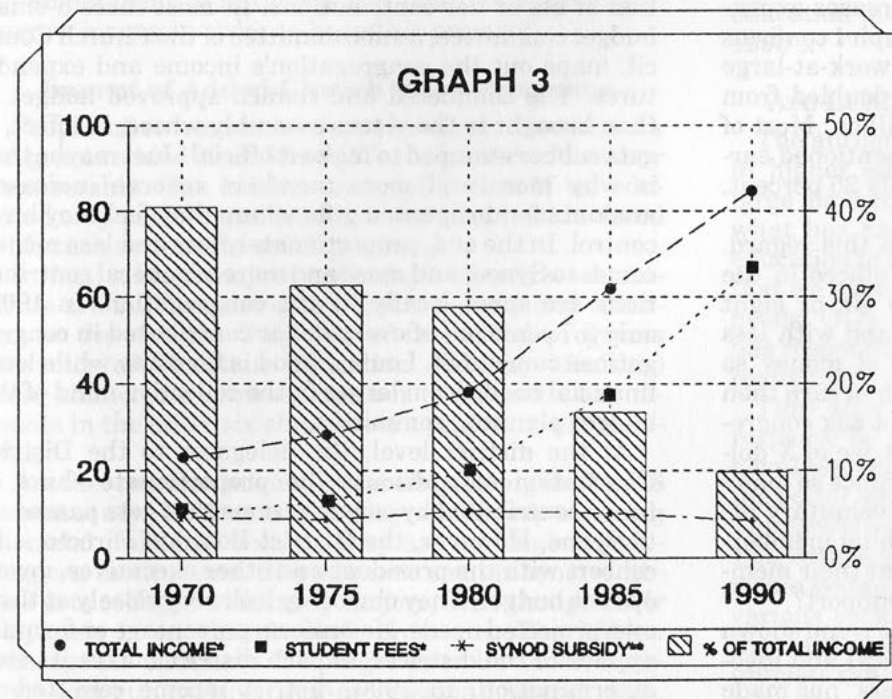
through the districts amounted to only \$30 million, a little over half of what was needed to maintain the *status quo*. Meanwhile, congregations desire new programs and services from the Synod.

Graph 2 shows student enrollment at colleges and seminaries from 1970 to 1990. While there was a sizable decline in 1975 and 1980, the 1990 enrollment (which no longer includes the three institutions in the Lutheran Church Canada) is around 300 students ahead of the 1970 enrollment.

Probably the most significant data for this article appears in Graph 3. Inflation caused a 370 percent increase in combined income needed for LCMS colleges and seminaries, from \$23 million in 1970 to \$85 million in 1990. Since higher education is labor intensive, it is no surprise to see college/university and seminary costs climbing faster than the rate of inflation. Our LCMS schools reflect what has occurred in the higher education community in general.

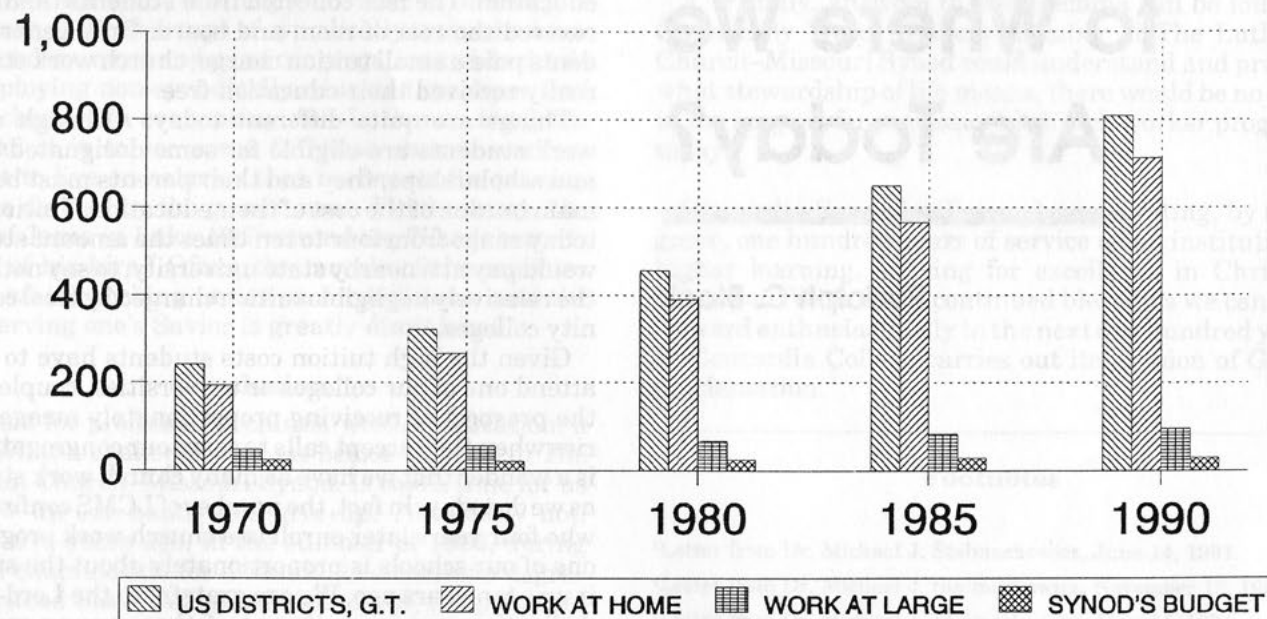
Examining Graph 3 more closely, we note that student fees have gone from \$10 million in 1970 to \$67 million by 1990, while the synodical subsidy actually has dropped from \$9.2 million to \$8.5 million during these same 20 years. The percent of total income to the colleges/universities and seminaries coming from synodical subsidy dropped from 40.5 percent to 9.9 percent during this period of time.

The seriousness of the decline and its impact on the colleges/universities is much more severe than it appears. Facts and figures supplied by the Manager of Financial Services of the Board for Higher Education Services show that while subsidy to the seminaries has remained relatively stable from 1980 to 1990, actual subsidy dollars to the colleges/universities have declined by \$2.6 million during this decade. Approved synodical budget figures for Fiscal 1992 show another \$600,000 plus reduction for college subsidies. In recent years Synod's Stewardship Department has raised more money for operating expenses at the seminaries through the Joint Seminary



\*Rounded to nearest million \*\*Rounded to nearest tenth of a million

**GRAPH 1**  
**Summary of LCMS Contributions\***



\*ROUNDED TO NEAREST MILLION

5/30/91  
BHES



Fund than they received in subsidy. At the same time the development offices of the colleges/universities have had to work on their own to secure third-source income. Fortunately, many fine Christian people have given substantial sums of designated funds directly to the colleges/universities, some for capital improvements and endowments, and some for current operations. We thank God for the generosity of an ever-increasing number of donors who have helped our higher education institutions remain solvent.

### Factors Contributing to this Trend

Possibly the key factor that has been responsible for the precipitous decline in synodical support for higher education has been the changing style of giving. More and more of our LCMS members, like in many other denominations, are unwilling to increase substantially their general contributions to the church in plate collections and offering envelopes. Instead, they prefer to make substantial contributions as designated funds to a cause or a project dear to their hearts. Thus, capital fund drives by a seminary or college/university for building new structures or enlarging their scholarship endowment fund can gather many millions of dollars, but it is almost impossible to add one million dollars for the undesignated synodical operation.

At the same time we see constant growth of budgeted expenditures by the 35 LCMS district offices. Twenty years ago only a few districts had full-time presidents. Now almost all district presidents serve fulltime. As the services of the offices expand, districts hire more executives and supporting personnel. This increases expenditures at the district level. A glance at Graph 1 confirms this dramatic change. Contributions for work-at-large (which is primarily district and Synod) doubled from 1970 to 1990, from \$48 million to \$96 million. Most of this increase stayed in the districts. As mentioned earlier, money coming to Synod increased only 25 percent, or \$6 million during these two decades.

One might ask some hard questions in this regard. Does the LCMS really need 35 district offices in the 1990's? Could not the work be done in six or eight regional districts much more efficiently and with less money? Why can't we change the flow of money so congregations give directly to Synod which in turn then provides funds to district offices? Why not ask congregations to pay a membership assessment fee of X dollars per communicant for work-at-large? Since so many of our adult members belong to several voluntary organizations, where they willingly pay annual membership fees, could not we persuade them that their membership in Synod likewise calls for such support?

Other factors also have contributed to the trend shown on these charts. Certainly the philosophical and ideological approach to life of the "baby boomers" has made an impact. The organized church has seen declines both in membership and in giving as this generation matured. Likewise, the internal struggles of the LCMS in

the early 1970's had its negative consequences. The 100 plus churches that left the Synod included many sizable congregations.

The social and cultural changes in recent years have also contributed to this trend. The church is no longer the major social community that it was a generation or two ago. More and more of our congregations serve people in large urban centers. These congregations have a hard time competing with the attractions of the city. As we think about these and other factors that have changed our society, we might expect an impact on our church. We certainly cannot turn back the clock a generation or two. Therefore, it behooves us to address intelligently these problems and make the changes necessary to capitalize on these conditions rather than succumb to them.

### How are Financial Decisions Made? By Whom?

Two generations ago the man or woman in the pew, for all practical purposes, made the decision on who gets what and how much. Practically all of our congregations had a dual envelope system then: one for the local congregation and the other for work-at-large. So communicant members personally made this decision. It was not uncommon for a mission- and education-minded church to collect more money for outside work than it did for work at home. Before World War II, this was the case with the writer's home congregation.

It is a different story today. With the single envelope system the average communicant member has little or nothing to say about what happens with the distribution of his or her contributions. In most cases a small budget committee, a subcommittee of the Church Council, maps out the congregation's income and expenditures. The completed and council-approved budget is then brought to the voters assembly where, in effect, it gets rubber stamped to make it official. Just maybe that is why more and more members reserve increased amounts for designated gifts where they feel they have control. In the end, proportionately less and less money comes to Synod, and more and more of general contributions are spent locally by the congregation. In 1900, only 3.7 cents out of every dollar contributed in congregations came to St. Louis. Synod is far away while local financial needs loom larger in the collective mind of the budget planning committee.

At the district level, the delegates to the District Convention may discuss the proportionate share of funds contributed by congregations that gets passed on to Synod. However, the District Board of Directors, in concert with the president and other executives, develops the budget. They obviously look very closely at their own projected needs. No uniform percentage or formula applies to the districts, so each district makes its own determination. In 1990, district income remitted to Synod ranged from 13.4 percent to 74.3 percent, averaging 45.8 percent. The synodical office depends on the districts' goodwill and their willingness to share.

At the national level, the Council of Administrators (COA: executive directors of the various departments) wrestles with the budget for several months. After they receive word from all the districts concerning their financial commitment to Synod for the coming year, the COA has the painful duty each year of slicing up the pie and determining what each department will get. By convention resolution, the Synod must operate with a balanced budget. Therefore, when six to a dozen districts fall short of their pledges, budget adjustments and further reductions must be made in the middle of the year.

Synod's Board of Directors has the fiscal responsibility in the LCMS; they ultimately set the budget. This usually happens in their May meeting after long and painful discussions and negotiations. They understand quite well how frustrating it is to the various departments at the International Center to have programs, to say nothing of personnel, reduced or eliminated. However, they cannot dispense money they do not have.

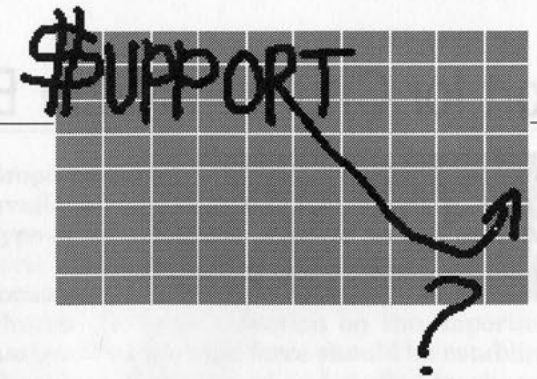
For fiscal 1992, higher education and missions each are scheduled to receive 30 percent of unrestricted funds sent in by the districts. As mentioned earlier, this will again mean a sizable reduction (more than \$600,000) for higher education. The BHES staff is painfully aware that subsidy to our colleges/universities has now dropped to below 10 percent of operating funds, in spite of the fact that well-intentioned delegates to the 1981 Synodical Convention voted almost unanimously that subsidy support should not be allowed to go below 25 percent. An interesting footnote to this action was the defeat of an amendment to authorize the Board of Directors to borrow money in order to keep this promise.

### Impact of Added Church Work Programs

People often comment that the eight church work programs added since World War II have confused our membership. The hidden message is that if we educated only pastors and teachers, we would not be faced with such serious financial problems.

In fact, a large majority of today's church work students are still preparing to become pastors and teachers in the church. Only two of the added programs (Director of Christian Education and Lay Minister) have attracted a growing number of students. Enrollments in the other six church work programs are minimal.

Another common misunderstanding among the LCMS constituency is that the colleges are experiencing financial problems because they are no longer single-purpose institutions; they are now comprehensive liberal arts colleges with many majors, even though their emphasis is on church work programs. The hidden message is: eliminate the programs in business, nursing, communications, pre-professional liberal arts, computer science, commercial art, social work, and other fields, and there will be adequate money to educate church work students. In fact, subsidy provided by



Synod comes nowhere near taking care of the costs of the church work students. Tuition income from liberal arts students has kept the colleges/universities viable financially and academically. Without the growing number of non-church work students, most of the higher education institutions would not have made it into the 1990's.

### Are LCMS Members Aware of the Problem?

The author of this article and many of his colleagues in higher education are absolutely convinced that a large majority of the LCMS constituency is not aware of what has happened to the church's system of higher education in the last 20 years. We are equally convinced that we have a membership that heroically responds to needs. Over the generations, our church membership has responded dramatically to highlighted needs. They really care!

Time after time we have witnessed a heart-warming response by the membership to serious problems that have been honestly shared with them. This has prompted the editor and publisher of *Issues* to address this crisis. The case study points out the impact on a single college. This article has attempted to address the impact on the whole system. The third article in the series will look at various options. We must face the problem and point the way to possible solutions. The negative trend line is unmistakable. Are we ready to face the challenge and take corrective measures?



# Support for Church Worker Education in the LCMS

## A PERSPECTIVE

Vance Hinrichs



### Introduction

Individuals who have attained the age of 60 will remember regular gasoline selling for 15 cents per gallon, eggs costing 10 cents per dozen, and annual college tuition rates below the \$200 threshold. The fact that prices have changed is apparent to us all, but more subtle are the changes in attitudes and priorities. Those who can recall the above prices may also recall the effort made by congregations in Kansas and Nebraska to keep costs low for students planning to enter a church vocation. Truck loads of potatoes and other food stuffs were delivered to the commissary on a regular basis and stored in campus storage cellars. Districts recognized the service role of colleges by sponsoring thank offerings that provided entire buildings, such as Nebraska Hall. Yes, the grass roots of the church took pride in the preparation of professional church workers, and not only supported that preparation through the traditional "mission budget," but also found ways of channeling their support directly without solicitation. Has that enthusiasm for church vocations changed? Is the attitude toward Christian higher education also changing? Have the ministry priorities changed over the decades? Perhaps! Probably!

To develop strategies for evaluating the support of professional church worker education and to consider properly the steps necessary to provide adequate support and reverse the current trend, it should be helpful to consider the factors that have impacted negatively on that support over the decades.

### Negative Factors and Potential Solutions

**1. SHRINKING GRASS ROOTS COMMITMENT RESULTS IN A SHRINKING SUPPORT LEVEL.** Rather than being regional or even synodical in scope, the interest now tends to focus on the needs at the parish level. More and more

the concern is for building programs, budget needs, and challenges at the local level. Preparation of individuals for professional church vocations is a synodical concern, *their* concern, not *our* concern.

Not only are there no truck loads of food coming to our colleges, but support of the Synod's mission program (the source of support dollars) has dropped significantly. In the early years of my ministry I can recall several congregations giving nearly 40 percent of their parish income to "missions." Today, the recent *Statistical Yearbook* shows that the mission budget of these same congregations is scarcely a tithe. At one time small congregations, some with only 250-300 members, had 12-15 students enrolled in church vocation programs. Now, these same congregations may have only one or two students enrolled. This shrinking circle of support suggests that the commitment at the parish level has been shifted. It is difficult, if not inappropriate, to judge this change harshly, but perhaps many at the grass roots are not even aware that such a shift has occurred.

Stephen B. Wenk, in the July, 1991, issue of the *Lutheran Witness*, indicates that "Congregation members are giving more liberally" than before, but "because of changing priorities they are keeping more of the money for local mission opportunities." This indicates that the real task is to *inform* the grass roots level.

• **SUGGESTED STRATEGY FOR CHANGE.** It would seem that *pastoral leadership is essential to bring about a change.* It is easy for a local congregation to become entrenched in its local problems at the expense of something more remote, such as church worker preparation. To change this, our institutions of higher education will need to work with the leadership of the parish and develop a sense of commitment and responsibility to arouse a new spirit of church vocation support. This will take time, but without enthusiastic support at the parish level, other efforts will fall short. Educational institutions should utilize an effective video which emphasizes the purpose and program as well as the needs related to church work vocation. Pastoral conferences

would be an efficient vehicle to inform and share this kind of information. *Once the service role of our colleges is recognized and the need is known, a positive response should emerge.*

Correspondingly, our Christian higher educational institutions should renew and expand recruitment efforts for those church vocations that are experiencing a limited number of graduates. The word at the parish level is that there is a limited number of pastors and DCE's, so we need to look for non-church vocation people to meet our staffing needs. Thus the advent of many more "lay" positions. By recognizing this need and recruiting for it, our colleges/universities and seminaries will be supported at a higher level by the laity of the church.

**2. COMPETITION FOR THE SYNODICAL DOLLAR IS MORE INTENSE TODAY** than at any point in the history of higher education. At the New Orleans Convention of the LCMS and at subsequent conventions, special status was given to the support of the pastoral ministry programs over other ministry programs of the church. Recognizing that the synodical dollar is only so large and that the educational dollar within the synodical budget would remain relatively static, the end result had to be that institutions emphasizing teacher education, preparation of Directors of Christian Education, Ministers of Music, and other ministries would receive less synodical support. Although not every one will agree with that stratification of support, its presence is a recorded fact.

Coupled with this multilevel support program is the changing composition of our campus enrollments. Many of our synodical colleges are changing from church vocation colleges to church related colleges where a strong emphasis on Christian teaching and Christian principles still remains, but where church worker vocation has become a minority component. This means that synodical dollars are being directed more and more toward the preservation of an institution rather than the promotion of church vocation. I must acknowledge that such a statement may not be very popular in some circles, but when only 20-25 percent or less of a campus enrollment is labeled "church vocation," the program of that college/university has changed. Although it is important to acknowledge the value of a good program of Christian higher education, this shift creates more competition for the available synodical dollar, since the partial support of non-church vocation students by the Synod reduces the dollars available to students preparing for church vocations.

• **SUGGESTED STRATEGY FOR CHANGE.** A special task force should be appointed by the Synod to evaluate objectively the Synod's support of church vocations. This task force should be made up primarily of lay and parish vocation representatives but supplemented by a small number of resource representatives from the colleges/universities, seminaries, and synodical leadership. Their specific assignment should be to develop a

proposed strategy or plan that would maximize use of available fiscal resources for church vocations. This type of "arms length analysis" needs to rise above historic allegiance and church or institutional politics and focus on the Great Commission responsibility of our church. To focus attention on the importance of this assignment the task force should be established by the President of the Synod and staffed by church vocation and lay appointments, geographically represented, made by all the districts of the Synod. The task force needs to consider *all* church vocations in order to be effective in its mission. Too often church vocation education is considered to be synonymous with pastoral training. The modern day church uses many church vocations to carry out its varied ministry.

**3. THE "GOOD-OLE DAYS" ARE GONE.** One brokerage house suggests its credibility is achieved in the "old fashioned way: they earn it." Colleges/universities, and seminaries have come to expect the church at large to support them for what they were, not what they are. Gone are the days when support is based on budget needs or even the total full-time equivalent students enrolled. As institutions become more like community colleges and liberal arts institutions, their claim to the synodical support dollar diminishes. We have arrived at the era when the synodical dollar will need to be allocated primarily on the basis of their contribution to the Synod as determined by the number of graduates entering the seminaries or entering one of the ministries of the church.

Not too many years ago a formula was established to allocate available synodical dollars for the support of higher education. Various factors were included in the formula, and a transition period was established so those institutions who would experience a reduction in subsidy had time to adjust for it. A new formula could appropriately be established that gives greater recognition of church vocation preparation rather than institutional preservation. When this happens, and it likely will, our colleges will have greater responsibility for funds directed toward the operating budget.

• **SUGGESTED STRATEGY FOR CHANGE.** To find solutions for this problem will require at least two strategies. The first is to evaluate once again the entire system of colleges/universities and seminaries from the perspective of *need* for church workers within the Synod. The Task Force on Higher Education many years ago recommended a geographically distributed system of colleges and seminaries with comprehensive programs designed to integrate the various ministries on each of the approved campuses. This would have reduced the number of colleges and seminaries and expanded the church vocation programs on the remaining campuses. (This was not a popular recommendation at the time it was made.) The task force's concept is probably still valid and needs to be revisited. The last time this was done, there was enormous pressure to retain all of the



colleges of the Synod, and only a few colleges fell victim to this plan. This time around the task may be more difficult since the programs at many of our colleges/universities have been modified and expanded in their struggle for survival.

The second strategy is perhaps the most obvious. Our colleges/universities and seminaries were a late entry into the field of estate planning and similar development activities. College and seminary presidents and their respective controlling boards saw their presidents primarily, and in some cases exclusively, as spiritual and academic leaders. To survive today institutional leadership needs to be much more than that. The president needs to be heavily involved in fund raising and church and community relations. The difficulty will be the late entry into a heavily populated arena. Secondly, it will not only be important for the college/university and seminary president to be active in development, but our colleges/universities and seminaries would be well advised to inform, educate, and interact regularly with our Synod's deployed development staff. This entourage of estate planners has access to people and places that many of our higher education development staffs may not even know. The district estate planning representatives need to be prepared to represent our educational institutions with the same confidence and clarity as other programs. Once again, information is the essential ingredient.

**4. CONFLICT AND TENSIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH HAVE NOT BEEN HELPFUL.** Several decades ago the Synod experienced tension that is still not erased. Conflict tends to divide and causes people to redirect their resources in support of factions and special issues. Even today one of the entities (not synodically approved) involved in the conflict is receiving support in excess of one million dollars per year. Most of these dollars are diverted away from the primary mission of the church and are directed toward efforts that do not focus on the Great Commission obligation of the church. Multiply this over and over again, and it is easy to see that our colleges/universities and seminaries suffer as a result of redirected support.

• **SUGGESTED STRATEGY FOR CHANGE.** Once again, our pastors, teachers, and DCE's need to exercise the initiative and place ministry as well as ministry support in its proper perspective. To help our church workers in this task, it will be necessary for our colleges/universities and seminaries to provide resource information and a new focus on ministry. People at the grass roots need to hear not only the Good News of the Gospel but also need to experience and be aware of the joys associated with the task of sharing that Good News as a professional church worker. Throughout the church we also need to set aside conflict and be about the task of ministry, the real purpose for the existence of the church. When that happens, a new level of support will emerge and more effective ministry can happen.

**5. "CONCORDIA IS 'THEIR' COLLEGE" SYNDROME.** As my 93-year-old father experiences health problems and as his physical needs expand, he shows less interest in other people and their activities and needs. This is very different from his lifelong pattern, but under the changing circumstances his response to life around him is very natural. The same can be said about people and their attitude toward the church and its various entities, including our institutions of higher education. It is easy for people to have a diminishing interest in an institution. With life about us being complicated and so many interests in today's household, it is easy to understand why interest in a college/university is way down the list of priorities in many homes. When that happens it becomes "their" college/university. To change that mentality is a significant task, but one that needs to be attempted.

• **SUGGESTED STRATEGY FOR CHANGE.** The most obvious strategy is involvement. When people have students attending a college/university, they have an interest. When they bake cakes for students having a birthday, they have involvement. When they come to the Concordia Singers choir concert, they develop an interest. The greater the involvement, the greater the interest and the greater the support. The result is "Concordia is MY college." The same is true for congregations. Encourage congregations to establish a church vocation scholarship fund not only to help the student planning to enter a church vocation, but to make the congregation aware of our church vocation colleges/universities. The college/university might consider providing chartered buses for congregations of surrounding districts that can send a bus load of prospective students and parents to Concordia for a tour day. Such participation will result in ownership as time passes and certainly will inform the grass roots.

In general, a new and enthusiastic spirit toward ministry needs to be cultivated. All the ministries of the church need to be featured and promoted more frequently in publications, at conventions, and by those in ministry positions. Recently a major study was launched to study the future of synodical seminary education. A similar dramatic effort needs to be made to promote and communicate to the grass roots the excitement and joy of ministry. The response that will result will be reflected in increased enrollments and increased financial support. The church vocation college/university will then become "their college/university."

**6. COMPARED TO MANY INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, ALUMNI SUPPORT IS LOW.** Although this may appear to be a criticism of the alumni, it actually is not. I am impressed with the sacrificial giving of the alumni, but the fact that the dollar level of support is down is something that the church needs to address. Church workers, especially teachers and directors of Christian education, are not in a position to support our colleges/universities at a significantly higher level. Their sala-

ries are very low, and the gap between their salaries and their public school counterpart is expanding. The differential between the salaries of the teachers and the DCE's and that of the pastors in the same parish is also increasing. Our teachers and DCE's are subsidizing the ministry within the church because of these salaries. The same attention that has been given to increase pastors' salaries over the years needs to be given to increase teacher and DCE salaries. When this happens, a new level of support from the alumni can be expected.

• **SUGGESTED STRATEGY FOR CHANGE.** It is difficult, perhaps even inappropriate, for the parish worker to stand up and say, "You should give me a better salary!" But this needs to happen. Perhaps the key to change in this area is the district president and his district staff. This will not be easy since a significant change will impact on the local level of support for the district, and that reduced support will impact on the amount of money available for synodical use. But that does not justify failure to act. "The laborer is worthy of his hire." The same can be said for the faculty and administration at our synodical colleges/universities. It should cause outrage among the laity to know that pastors of modestly large congregations receive much higher salaries than members of college/university and seminary faculties who have just as much service experience and usually significantly more academic preparation.

**7. THE SYNOD NEEDS TO LOOK AT A DIFFERENT STRUCTURE TO ACCOMPLISH ITS SERVICE ROLE.** The synodical structure exists to serve the grass roots of the church in its task of ministry. Over the decades the needs, the programs, and the priorities of the grass roots have shifted, and little recognition has been given to that subtle shift or change. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod prides itself in the fact that the congregation is supreme, but the organizational muscle is not at the congregational level. The districts exist as an arm of the Synod (the Synod in location), but they tend to operate independently in many ways. Tension often emerges when change is considered because there is concern about control and conformity and our allegiance to tradition.

It seems appropriate for the church to examine those entities that recognized the need for change and the impact or result of that change. For example, the old Church Extension Fund operated much like the Synod. There were parallel and overlapping programs, and the net result was a struggling branch of the church that had difficulty being effective in its service role in the church. Approximately 10 years ago the CEF became the LCEF, and a new structure emerged placing the programmatic emphasis at the district level and the technical coordination at the synodical level. This restructuring was an act of trust, an act of faith, but note the results. Ten years ago the combined resources of all CED programs (synodical and district) were approximately \$250,000,000. Today that total is approaching

the billion dollar mark. The significance is not the dollar amount, but the fact that when the structure was changed to involve the people closer to the grass roots level, the response was dramatic. When people see the need, understand the program, and become an integral part of the structure, they respond favorably. Today more ministry can happen because change was allowed to happen in LCEF. For our colleges/universities to become more effective in their service role to congregations, a similar change should be considered, and the result will be greater interest in church vocations, greater support for higher education, and a total ministry that people will accept as their own.

• **SUGGESTED STRATEGY FOR CHANGE.** This will be a major undertaking but one that can and should happen. Some leaders within the International Center have attempted to rally support without much success. To change the entire synodical structure has to be very threatening under any circumstance and especially in the climate of recent years. The goal of any restructuring or change should not be to get more synodical dollars or to increase or decrease power, but rather to be more effective in ministry. How that will evolve and what the consequences will be should not be anticipated. Trust will be an important component of this change, and consequently it would be necessary to have massive involvement. To initiate this change I would once again suggest that a separate task force on structure be appointed as was done a number of years ago, but this time limit the scope of the structure to only higher education (colleges/universities and seminaries). Since the primary purpose of our colleges/universities and seminaries relates to parish ministry, extensive involvement by the districts and their representative will be necessary.

The advantage of this approach is that it involves only a few people at the International Center, places emphasis on the product rather than the system, and addresses the interests of those who will eventually need to support the approved programs.

The result easily could be regionally approved colleges/universities for church vocation students, support from regions with similar membership support levels, and a closer link between the supply and demand of both recruitment and placement. As with Church Extension, adjustments may be necessary to recognize known variations. This might include variations in membership support of ministry (well-established districts versus "mission" districts) and the ability of a district to utilize all the placements as well as an exchange of placements. The key ingredient is the desire to improve ministry, not the difficulty of the problem.

As stewards of the resources the Lord has placed before us, it is necessary to utilize the resources most

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## book reviews



**RESIDENT ALIENS: LIFE IN THE CHRISTIAN COLONY** by Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.

Once it seemed exciting and daring to be an atheist in America, according to Hauerwas and Willimon. When movies and television were censored carefully and everything was closed every Sunday to support a common Christian ethic, when the state was dedicated to serving the Church and the Church was dedicated to raising youth who would return the favor, any disregard of God or Church could be seen as an adventure, a rebel yell.

But even the casual observer knows that the Church does not control the culture today (if indeed it ever did), and being an unbeliever has become dreadfully commonplace. This is great news, for it means that today the real adventure comes from being a faithful member of a confessing Church. We can stop compromising our message to suit a culture that too easily ignores us, and start getting its attention by showing the world what the Church is, namely, a place where God is forming a family out of strangers.

The authors accuse organized religion of having spent most of its energy convincing our culture that there is nothing special about being a Christian. "The greatest challenge facing the Church in any age is the creation of

a living, breathing, witnessing colony of truth." Instead, we lobby for legislation that will make this unChristian culture "a little less racist, a little less promiscuous, a little less violent." In doing this we "imply that one can practice Christian ethics without being a Christian community."

Having thus proven ourselves unnecessary, we try to revalidate our existence by presenting our ministers, not as priests of the Most High God and stewards of His mysteries, but as "members of the helping professions." Too often this means: "We have the resources to make your life a little less miserable. Don't worry. You don't have to change, accept the truth, or live in the light. We'll just make it a bit less awful to live in the dark."

For a better view of how God calls the Church to live as strangers in this strange land, buy and read this book. Though the authors jumble justification and sanctification, they know the Church and speak of it lovingly.

**Gregory Mech**  
Chaplain and Assistant Professor  
of Theology, Concordia-Seward

**SHAPING CHARACTER: MORAL EDUCATION IN THE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE** by Arthur F. Holmes. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

What a timely book! We have heard or said that frequently when a new book arrives just as we are dealing with a significant current issue. *Shaping Character: Moral Education in the Christian College* is one of those timely books.

Each day the news media seem to be dealing with another ethical dilemma for our times. Was Desert Storm a just war? Should Nebraska stay the execution of a prisoner on death row? Is it right for a child to be conceived in order to provide body tissue for a sibling? Are Sununu's methods of travel ethical? And the list goes on.

Is it any wonder that Christian college faculties are debating how to modify curricula to prepare graduates for so many complex and, in some instances, new ethical questions? The faculty at Concordia College in Seward is also debating the issue as it is confronted with a proposal to restructure a course entitled "Faith and Life" to apply Christian principles and ethics to a variety of contemporary issues.

Arthur F. Holmes, professor of philosophy and department chair at Wheaton College in Illinois, is the author of the timely book being reviewed. He served as coordinator of the "Ethics Across the Curriculum" project launched in 1986 by the 13 member colleges of the Christian college consortium. This project was launched to extend and stress ethics teaching in general education and in every major offered.

Professor Holmes begins with a very brief historical perspective as he reminds us that the teaching of ethics and transmission of values which historically permeated all phases of the curriculum in church related colleges are today generally assigned to the philosophy or religion departments. Furthermore, he points out that the initial finding of the Ethics Across the Curriculum project indicates that little if anything is being done in most Christian colleges other than occasional moralizing or consciousness raising.

In his relatively short book (78 pages) he frequently reiterates his belief that moral education must be everybody's business and cannot be relegated to one course or department. All professors in all departments, all students, all activities both in and out of the classroom must be involved in his three overall objectives of ethics education: forming the conscience, making moral decisions, and developing character. As he develops each of these in separate chapters, he provides ample, specific examples or suggestions of how teaching toward these objectives can be observed or experienced on a Christian campus committed to making it "everybody's business" (page 8).

For someone who is a member of a denomination that remains strongly committed to the Scriptures as the source and norm of faith and life, it was encouraging for me to read

throughout the book so many references to the Holy Scriptures to undergird his beliefs.

The book is worthwhile reading for any Christian college reviewing its mission and what its students experience both in and out of the classroom under the name of moral education. The book is also worthwhile reading for Christian parish schools and school associations at any level. It is timely because these schools at all levels are being bombarded by the temptation to lose sight of their basic reason for existence as they address enrollment and financial pressures.

Professor Holmes provides an important reminder for those who are concerned enough to evaluate what they are doing and question why moral education is needed in campus experiences. "Scriptural life emphasizes that ignore the moral life, bypass the social responsibility of believers, fail to encourage responsible involvement in the life and work of the church, or otherwise assume a mistakenly individualistic approach will have limited effectiveness both ethically and spiritually. . . a more holistic spirituality is crucial, one that habitually practices the Lordship of Christ over every dimension of life, so that a hunger and thirst for righteousness, personal and social, becomes insatiable" (page 68).

It is a good time for the reading of this timely book.

**Jack Duensing**  
Director of Placement and  
Professor of Education, Concordia-Seward

**THE DAY AMERICA TOLD THE TRUTH** by James Patterson and Peter Kim. New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1991.

Finding that many Americans hide a lot of themselves and that a majority of adults would not welcome the opportunity to be hooked up to a lie detector and questioned by their closest relatives or friends, the researchers asked, "What would we learn if adults were guaranteed absolute privacy in expressing their fantasies, dreams, attitudes, beliefs, values, and actions related to love, marriage, family, religion, politics, community, work, leisure, and global perspectives?"

The results of their study, based on the responses of 2000 adults in 50 locations in all geographical regions of the country, are revealing. After seeing how subjects welcomed the opportunity to share deeply-held views and secrets in the context of confidentiality and anonymity, the researchers concluded that few—including the government, churches, educators, and the press—know what most people really think or believe.

In this study, described as the most in-depth survey ever conducted, respondents reflected changes described as tumultuous

when compared with the 1950's. Examples are:

1. A new moral authority which centers in the "I" and a new decalogue which many live by, such as "I will steal from those who won't really miss it" and "I will lie when it suits me, so long as it doesn't cause any real damage."
2. A new moral orthodoxy which says, "If everybody's doing it, why shouldn't I?" leading to more "freedom," personal doubts concerning morality, and more depression than in any previous generation.
3. The most troubling area is sexuality, marriage, and family, with sexuality creating the most problems for people. One-half see no need for marriage, one-third of those married have had or are having an affair, and 20 percent report losing their virginity by age 13.
4. Growing tensions between men and women seen in negative attitudes between the sexes, actions based on stereotypes and prejudice, and a lack of understanding and communication.
5. An absence of moral instruction, seen in peer pressure among the young being the main force for sexual involvement rather than guidance from parents or schools, and the 50 percent of the 18-24 year age group who believe that they did not receive a strong moral foundation from parents.
6. An epidemic of violence, with our citizens being the most violent and the most heavily armed in the world, and TV violence, child and spouse abuse, date rape and criminal acts reaching record levels (the data suggest that our crime rates may be underestimated by as much as 600 percent).
7. The loss of community, with practically no sense of community to be found anywhere in this country (72 percent say that they do not know people next door).
8. News concerning congregations is good and bad. While 90 percent who were questioned say that they truly believe in God, religious belief plays virtually no role in shaping responses to moral and life decisions. The exception is seen in the responses of those who describe themselves as "very religious," who score higher on moral questions, make better citizens, are more at peace with themselves, are more committed to the family, make better workers, and are much less involved in illegal activities, such as petty crime and drug use.

The finding just cited relates to the one ray of hope that appears in the study. There is a core group of citizens described as being so fed up and frightened by our national problems that they are willing to invest time and money. A majority of the sample said that they are willing to invest three weeks of time per year and an additional ten percent of their income

in taxes in efforts that address the serious problems in our country. Based on responses of this sample, there are 100 million volunteers waiting for the call to act. The one perceived missing ingredient is LEADERSHIP. Leadership of all major institutions (but not all leaders) is seen by the people as not coping or being able to cope with the challenges of the day. Based on data collected in the study, the researchers suggest that the leadership of women is not being utilized and that women are the hope of this country's future.

What can the church learn from the study? The willingness to listen to what people in our congregations and communities really think and believe can result in many learnings. We can learn, for example, how to reshape ways of doing education and evangelism. A point of contact with many outside the church is investing time and energy in service that addresses the hurts and problems of people rather than beginning with the church's teachings, since most are not interested in hearing what the church is saying. The data also suggest that Biblical and systematic theologians can do much more in correlating theology and the religious/moral mind-sets of the American population. Educators can direct more attention to experiential-based teaching and learning which integrates solid Biblical and theological foundations. Preachers who want to relate proclamation and pastoral concerns will be able to address a multitude of needs that surface in the study.

Insights of a study depend, of course, on the reliability and validity of the investigation. In the opinion of the reviewer, the study is conceptualized brilliantly, with the study's report on the perspectives of the sample stimulating a high level of confidence. Whether or not the findings are representative of views, beliefs, and actions of the American population is another question. As a colleague suggested, a random sample of 2000 subjects who responded in 50 locations throughout the country does not guarantee that the sites were selected at random. A study that involved subjects selected randomly in shopping malls would not instill a high level of confidence. Though the number of subjects and the margin of error reported are adequate, the lack of information concerning sample selection places the study at the "gray" level of confidence in generalizing results to the larger population. There is enough light, however, to identify major opportunities for ministry by congregations and educational institutions of the church in a society searching for answers to big problems.

**Marvin Bergman**  
Professor of Theology  
Concordia-Seward



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advantageously so that the Great Commission task can be carried out. When we let tradition, personal biases and concerns redirect our thinking we probably are not really being good stewards of available resources. New approaches and ideas need to be considered, adapted and eventually tested so that ministry can be more effective. If this is not the way to achieve that goal, perhaps it will help us see a preferred plan of action.

### Concluding Remarks

Concern about the support of the professional church worker is universal. It is not just a matter of generating more dollars or reallocating the dollars we already have, but it is a question of mission and ministry. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, our colleges/universities and seminaries, and those who graduate from these institutions exist to serve the Lord and to carry out His Great Commission. To retain that purpose, objectivity is difficult when jobs are at stake, when programs are brought into question, and when traditions are challenged. But being good stewards may demand precisely that.

Beyond the matter of stewardship is the question of quality. We all need to ask if we can maintain a quality product with declining support and waning interest on the part of the constituency. We need to find a better way of doing what needs to be done. For many of us, the *Sabre Tooth Curriculum* was required reading during our college years because it reminded us as future teachers to not necessarily do things the way they have

always been done, but rather to be sensitive to the present and the future needs and potentials. Our colleges and our Synod must also do that. Colleges/universities can expand their development staffs, cuts can be made in the budget, and other extreme actions taken, but if we do not adequately consider change in light of the present and the future, we tend only to mess up things more and more.

Colleges/universities might learn from successful congregations within our Synod. Traditionally, church growth programs were limited to the pastor and a few service oriented members of the congregation. Today we learn that as more and more people are involved and the more we utilize the extended family and the networking of many people, the more effective we become. The same will be true of our institutions of higher education. Information dissemination, awareness, and broad participation at many levels should also impact on the support of higher education. We have a product that is easy to sell (preparing people for the professional ministry of the church and preparation for life experiences) and a base that is eager to support and encourage that ministry. Once that network is assembled, results will occur. Along with that, a revised operating structure will be helpful and make an institution's task much easier. May God bless our colleges/universities and seminaries as they strive to meet that challenge.



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