

REEVALUATING MINISTERIAL EDUCATION: THE NEED THERE IS, THE PROBLEM
WE HAVE, AND THOUGHTS FOR THE FUTURE

BY

MATTHEW R. MUELLER

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PROF. JOEL D. OTTO, ADVISOR
WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY
MEQUON, WISCONSIN
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Abstract

“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few” (Matthew 9:37). The fact was true in Jesus’ day and the fact remains true to this day. With the declining numbers in the ministerial education system and an increasing number of pastors retiring, there will soon be a shortage in pastors. This is especially discouraging when the world is becoming more anti-religious and more in need of hearing the Word of God in order that the Holy Spirit can work faith in hearts.

By the will of God, the WELS education system is strong and has proven to send out biblically trained workers for generations. I am confident that our synod will fill the need there is for the gospel to be heard and will raise men up to publically witness the gospel of Christ. Therefore, WELS could benefit from exploring additional methods in pastoral training in order to place more called workers into the harvest field who are fully equipped to lead souls to Christ. After displaying the need for the Gospel and the upcoming problem the synod will face, this paper will explore a few thoughts in training men for the gospel ministry.

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INTRODUCTION

As you walk through the halls and look into the classrooms at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, there is one thing that will stand out to you the most: the pictures of its graduating classes hanging on the walls. Many visitors of the seminary have relatives in these pictures and it is always a highlight for them to locate the people they know. I, myself, find it amusing to see my dad, my grandpa, and a couple of my uncles in these photos. When I first found them, especially my dad and my uncles, I noticed that there were a lot of pictures, a lot of graduates, in the frames they were in. I didn't think much of it at that time when I was visiting the seminary during my senior year at Luther Preparatory School until I personally started walking the halls and sitting in the classrooms at the seminary. It was then that I began taking note that the recent graduation pictures had fewer students than the majority that came before. Then during my Vicar year, when I was trying to think of topics for my senior thesis, the topic of a lack of pastors was talked about. The 2014 Dakota-Montana District Convention verified the upcoming issue in multiple publications. It was then that I wanted to see just how bad this problem was and if there was indeed something to be concerned about. For if the issue was serious, I felt adequate measures should be taken to prevent such a thing for the good of our churches and the souls in them.

Therefore, in this paper, I will inform its readers of the seriousness of the problem. I will accomplish this, first of all, by reflecting just how crucially the people in the world need to hear and continue to hear the Word of God in their lives. I will achieve this goal by displaying with numbers and graphs how significantly the graduates of WLS have decreased. I want to make this paper's readers aware that this decrease in pastors is not the normal roller coaster ride that our synod has gone through in the past, but rather the nature of the problem is significant. Upcoming graduating class numbers are low and the number of pastors which are going to be retiring soon is high. This is where the problem lies.

This paper will begin by reflecting on how God builds his Church through his Word through which the Holy Spirit works. I want to make it very clear that no matter how much we plan or how hard we work, only the Holy Spirit has the power to bring someone to faith in Christ. He alone has the power; he alone has the authority. After establishing this point, I will then show the need for the Gospel in a world full of sin and unbelief. God's Word changes lives; the message of Christ's love fills people's hearts and by the Holy Spirit faith is created. WELS is

doing a fantastic job getting God's message of salvation into the world. We are spending enormous amounts of time and energy to get the pure teachings of the Bible in places where it is not. The problem is we will not have enough pastors to fill the areas in which we want to spread the good news of Jesus. The seminary has been doing a fantastic job in preparing men for the pastoral ministry for 150 years and yet, it finds itself with this sad predicament. Therefore, WELS could benefit from exploring additional methods in pastoral training in order to place more called workers into the harvest field who are fully equipped to lead souls to Christ.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The United States of America is one of the many countries in the world that allows freedom of religion. It does not matter whether you are Muslim or Buddhist or Hindu or Christian, you are free to worship. Therefore, there is a plethora of books that have been written in regard to this. Since Christianity is the most popular religion in America, much literature has been written about Christianity.

The first area of my research began with delving into what people understand the gospel and evangelism to mean. All the books agreed that the good news of Jesus Christ dying on the cross to save all people from their sins needs to be shared. The resources made it obvious that, although we are free to worship in America as we want, a large portion of the population doesn't at all, and even a greater portion does not believe in Jesus as he is revealed in the Bible. I was happy to see that although Jesus' words to go and make disciples of all nations, while spoken thousands of years ago, still are taken to heart by all Christians. This is a wonderful blessing to the unbelieving world around us.

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod has taken to heart the need to spread God's Word in this country and around the world. Many professors, pastors, and committees have written pamphlets and papers discussing the ideas and plans of the synod. In fact, the Board for Home Missions has made it very clear in their strategic planning paper just how aggressive they are going to be. Ten new home missions a year and continuing the support of many other areas of ministry around the country is at the forefront of their goals.

The problem that this paper is addressing forces us to ask the question whether WELS will have enough pastors to place in the churches that are being established. One source in

particular went into great detail in this matter. *Pastor as Exegete*,¹ a paper written in response to Pastor Goetziner's essay given at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary's symposium, analyzed how deep the problem really could become if the spectrum continues to lean in the direction that it has been. This paper laid out every year of the seminary's existence with the number of graduates per year showing just how much of a decrease there has been. I thank the author of this paper for his extensive work. Another piece of literature that was extremely helpful in researching the history of WLS was *Jars of Clay*. This book showed how the seminary has transformed into what we have today. I appreciate knowing the past before I begin to discuss the future.

The future is unknown, and yet there are so many different thoughts as to how we should press into it. Among authors there certainly is a split in opinion as to whether studying the Bible in Greek and Hebrew is necessary for a seminary. A large number of writers hold the opinion that abandoning the biblical languages will lead to abandoning Scripture's teachings. While other writers feel the languages are important, they are confident that an English translation will give them the true Word of God. In addition to these two views, there are also those writers who walk in the middle by saying that an ability to do a word study of the Greek and Hebrew can open the door to a deeper understanding. The purpose of my study is not to show which way is better, but rather that you can have any of these methods and still hold to the teachings of Scripture so that you will not be tossed back and forth by the waves that threaten biblical truths.²

Finally, this paper will address what it means for a minister of the gospel to lead people to Christ. The subject of leadership is important in a world full of new innovations and people striving for better. For this reason, it was not difficult to find books and papers written about leadership in the church. All of the Christian leadership books that I read agree on the fact that in order to lead in a congregation you first must learn to follow Christ and his example. Christ served, therefore a leader must also. The authors agreed that a leadership quality is still achievable even if you weren't born with it. This trait can be taught through instruction and learning. This subject comes up in my paper as I reevaluate the ministerial education program

¹ Thomas Nass, "Pastor as Exegete With a Foundation Laid at the College Level." (paper presented at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Symposium, Mequon, WI, September 16, 2013).

² Ephesians 4:14.

with ideas for the future. All in all, I am happy with the research I did and was pleased to see that plenty of material was available pertaining to my topic.

PART 1: GOD BUILDS HIS CHURCH

One of the biggest problems people have in this world with God is that they feel as though he is never around when they need him. “If there was a God, then how come he let my mom die in that accident? If there was a God, then how come all those people were killed in that tragedy? If there was a God, then why does my life seem as though it is being led farther and farther away from him even though I try to get closer and closer to him?” Hearing these kind of comments tears at your heart and you want to do nothing more than share the Word of God with them. God says, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Mt 28:20). “The Lord Almighty is with us the God of Jacob is our fortress” (Ps 46:7). “Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Is 41:10). God is with us and he does care for us.

How do we get these people who do not know the true God to believe what these passages say? The answer to this question is we don't; God himself does. “The Means of Grace (Gospel in Word and sacraments) is the means God has provided to win the lost for Christ and to sustain believers in a community that confesses his name.”³ The Word of God that created faith in us still builds faith in people today. This is the power that the Word of God has contained in and of itself. It is like dynamite ready to cause a large impact wherever it is placed. God's Word is what we place on the minds and on the hearts of anyone who has doubts and does not believe.

As we talk about the Bible with people the Holy Spirit is right there with us working through the words that are coming out of our mouths. It is not our job to make these people believe or to force them to comprehend it. Rather, that is the job of the Holy Spirit. Scott Sunquist describes well the work the Holy Spirit does through individuals speaking about Jesus when he says, “The active agent in Christian mission is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works both with power and personality, for he is the power of the creator God and he is the Spirit of the living Christ. The Holy Spirit also works in righteousness, for he is the *Holy* Spirit bringing

³ Board for Home Missions, “Home Mission's Strategic Plan,” *Online Paper* (2013), <https://connect.wels.net/AOM/BHM/layouts/WordViewer.aspx?id=/AOM/BHM/Home%20Missions%20Documents/BHM%20Strategic%20Plan.doc&Source=https%3A%2F%2Fconnect%2Ewels%2Enet%2FAOM%2FBHM%2FHome%2520Missions%2520Documents%2FForms%2FAllItems%2Easpx&DefaultItemOpen=1> (accessed November 18, 2014).

about holiness in the world, and he is the one who relates the Word of God to God’s people both in the Old and New Testament.”⁴ The Holy Spirit brought me to faith; the Holy Spirit brought you to faith; and now through you and me and the Word of God coming out of our mouths, the Holy Spirit can bring others to faith as well.

“Every person born of the Spirit – past, present and future – belongs to this ‘people for God’s own possession’ (1 Pe 2:9), purchased by ‘the precious blood of Christ’ (1 Pe 1:19). In a real sense, the church is God’s trophy of grace, displaying to himself the magnificence of his holiness and power.”⁵ The words Robert Coleman used here give a Christian a sense of security. With God’s almighty power guiding your life, there is nothing that can come over you beyond what you can bear. When a loved one passes away, God is there to cry on. When the world seems that it is falling apart with tragedies all around, God is there to give you stability. When it seems as though your life is going in the wrong direction, God will use his almighty hand to guide you exactly where he wants you. God has made you one of his believers and you can be sure he loves you.

PART 2: THE HARVEST IS PLENTIFUL

Everyone Needs the Word

There are so many people in the world who do not know Jesus as their Savior. According to Baylor Religion Survey Wave 2 done in 2007, 63.4% of people in the United States believe in God. That leaves over 36% who either doubt there is a God or don’t believe there is one at all.⁶ So many people do not have anything to cling to for hope in this life or after death. They must have so many questions. Robert Coleman, a professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, shows just how lost these people must be without God and his Word when he writes, “We can conclude from observations in nature that everything has an ending, and the grave seems certain, but our basic questions remain unanswered: Who am I? How did I get here? What is the reason

⁴ Sunquist, Scott W. *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013, 232.

⁵ Coleman, Robert E. *The Heart of the Gospel: The Theology Behind the Master Plan of Evangelism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011, 211.

⁶ Baylor Religion Survey, “Belief in God,” *Online survey, Wave 2* (2007), http://www.thearda.com/quickstats/qs_63.asp (accessed November 3, 2014).

for my turmoil? Where am I going? How can I be saved?”⁷ We know that the Bible has all of these answers. The Holy Spirit is ready to work in the hearts of these people through the Word of God, but the fact remains they need it taught to them.

“There is a growing number (estimated now at 1 in 5 Americans; 1 in 3 of those under the age of 30) who are classified as *nones* – regarding connection with a church, they claim: ‘none.’”⁸ The statistics show that people are not making God a priority in their lives. As time goes on generations are becoming less and less religious. As Christians in this world, we have the mission to lead these people away from their unbelief to Christ. We do this through passages from Scripture like Romans 3:23-24, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” Once this has been placed on people ears and are taken to heart by the Holy Spirit working through them, there will be a change. But what still needs to be done is the actual proclaiming of these words to those in the world. Harry Boer, a theologian-missionary of the Christian Reformed Church of the United States, emphasizes this point while reflecting on the importance of those who speak the Word of God to others.

The condition of receiving the life of the Spirit is the hearing of the gospel, on the one hand, and faith embracing to proclaimed word on the other. The gospel is the word of life, Philippians 2:16, it is the power of God to salvation, Romans 1:16, it brings life an immortality to light, 2 Timothy 1:10, and surpasses the ministration of the letter in glory, for the ministration of the Spirit gives life, 2 Corinthians 3:6-12. It was a recognition of the central function of preaching, and of faith as the proper response to it, that constrained Paul to write, “For whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? Even as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things!” (Ro 10:13-15).⁹

It is not only those who do not believe there is a God who needs to hear the truths of the Bible spoken to them, but also many people who do believe there is one. You see, although an individual claims they know God that does not say what god they believe in. Is it Buddha? Is it

⁷ Coleman, 29.

⁸ Donn Dobberstein and Mike Hintz, “Commission on Evangelism” (update, May 2014).

⁹ Boer, Harry R. *Pentecost and Missions*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eermans Publishing Company, 1961, 99.

Allah? Is it Shiva? Is it Christ? “While 90 percent of Americans believe in God, those beliefs differ widely.”¹⁰ Although a person has faith in something does not mean that person has faith that saves them. Jesus says, “I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn 14:6). If you do not put your faith in the right thing, your faith is useless. Those who do not believe in the one true God need to hear about who really can save them.

Furthermore, it is not only those who do not believe there is a God or those who believe in the wrong god that need to hear more and more of what the Bible says, but also those who believe in the God of the Bible. To continue to feed on the Word of God is a necessity. Without it, we can become weak and begin to think according to our own natural minds. Our human minds tell us that we need to do something for everything that we receive in this world. This mentality is ingrained in us. But the opposite is true for salvation. We do nothing. We do not have to please God. We do not have to go to church every Sunday. We do not have to volunteer for church events. “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast” (Eph 2:8-9). This is the message of the Gospel.

Many people feel as long as they accept God’s grace for themselves that is enough, that is all they have to worry about, and anything else that goes on around them is simply okay. Today this is made clear by looking at thousands of bumper stickers stuck on car fenders. COEXIST written in the symbols for Islam, peace, males/females, Judaism, Wiccan Pentangle, Confucianism, and Christianity. This sticker demonstrates one’s tolerance and understanding for all religious walks of life. This mentality is like saying it is okay for someone to put their faith in that anchor to save them. Yet, many Christians feel this way and begin to fall into the warning that Adeney describes, “If various portions of the world accept other religions, how can we know that Christianity is true? Even as Christians become more tolerant of other religious path, they can become uncertain of their own.”¹¹ The Word in all its truth and purity must be preached to everyone in all places until life as we know it has ended.

¹⁰ Adeney, Frances S. *Graceful Evangelism: Christian Witness in a Complex World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010, 58.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 64.

The World Needs Something Strong to Stand On

In Psalm 18, God is described as a rock, a stronghold, a fortress, something that can be fully relied and depended on. When you have faith in Christ and his Father is your Father, this is exactly what you have. Whenever you feel as though the world is caving in around you, whenever you sense that everything is falling out from underneath you, there is one thing that you can always stand firm on, God and his Word. Bible believing Christians have been given this gift as one of the many blessings from God and there is nothing or no one that can take it away from them. When I was growing up, there was one family that was especially close to mine. One year, terrible things came one right after another for them. At first, it was a shock for me to see how the Lord worked in his mysterious ways, but then it was encouraging to see just how much God can strengthen people in such dire circumstances. He most certainly is the rock we can stand firm on.

Unfortunately, some who believe in Christ are being led astray and having this rock taken from underneath them due to false teachings in their churches. Sadness comes upon me thinking about how these people are being misled. Their leaders instruct them in teachings like, good works can earn your way into heaven or you have to come to Christ first before he can enter into your life, and then they in turn teach these things to their children and the systems spider web from there. Adeney shows how terrible this can become if members of a congregation don't test the teachings they hear according to the Bible. "We tell the story of Jesus as it has been told to us; we stand in traditions of theological interpretations of a set of texts we believe to be divinely inspired."¹² As Christians who have been given the Word of God, we must go back to it and learn for ourselves whether or not what we are hearing is parallel with what is being taught in our church. This is the task of a Christian.

Thanks be to God that some congregational members are indeed going back to the Word and testing what they are hearing. And indeed, they are finding out what is being taught is contrary to the Word of God. After recognizing these errors, they are not simply standing idly by while such perversion of the Scripture takes place, but rather they are voicing their concerns and are making sure they are being heard. Finally when they recognize that no more can be done to change the direction the church is headed, they do the only thing they can, they leave taking a step in the right direction. "The ELCA's 2009 decision to permit openly gay clergy in committed

¹² Ibid, 61.

partnerships to serve as pastors has contributed to membership losses in the 4.2-million-member denomination.”¹³ Christians want the Word of God taught in its truth and purity. They want that rock to stand on and so, they sing together, “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness; I dare to make no other claim but wholly lean on Jesus’ name. On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.”¹⁴

WELS is Following the Great Commission

Role models are a great thing to have no matter how old you are. Children have role models and they are so proud to share with anyone they meet who it is. Their role model may be able to be recognized by the toy they carry around or the poster and memorabilia they have in their room. Sometimes they even want to get the same type of haircut of that certain special person they look up to. Adults have role models as well, but instead of hanging posters and collecting items, they keep it more on the inside. However, it is the same internal love a child has for their role model; adults look up to these individuals and strive to be like them in their own facets of life.

Jesus wants all of us to have a role model, He says, “As the Father has sent me so I am sending you” (Jn 20:21). Jesus is telling us to follow in his footsteps, to go out into the world and bring the spiritually lost to God. We have so many examples of Jesus to follow in this regard. Zacchaeus the tax collector¹⁵ is a great example of how Jesus did exactly what his Father sent him to do. Zacchaeus was a thief; he cheated people out of huge sums of money and made himself very wealthy in the process. But when Jesus came to him and told him the Word of God and he found out how much God loved him, he changed. He was willing to pay back all the money he stole and then some. Jesus went to this man, this “scum of the earth,” and gave him the greatest gift that could ever be given, forgiveness and life eternal. This is how Jesus wants us to use him as our role model. In fact, he wanted to make it very clear that we did so, therefore right before he returned to heaven he said, “Go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I

¹³ Dart, John. "A rapid transition at Luther Seminary." *Christian Century* 130, no. 3 (February 6, 2013): 14-15. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials*, EBSCOhost (accessed September 3, 2014), 14.

¹⁴ Edward Mote, “My Hope is Built on Nothing Less” (No. 382) in *Christian Worship: The Lutheran Hymnal* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1993).

¹⁵ Luke 19

have commanded you and surely I am with you always to the very end of the age” (Mt 28:19-20). Having us follow his example was important to Jesus.

Thanks be to God that many people have continued to hold onto this command of Jesus for 2000 years. A Sudanese missionary reflects how direly important it is for us to continue to cling to these words: “Christ’s command is binding on men today as it was binding on the apostles. If this be not true, then the command to baptize should also be restricted to the apostles, then all such ordinary ministers who have endeavored to carry the gospel to the heathen have acted without warrant, and whoever goes now to preach the gospel to them goes without authority.”¹⁶ Jesus certainly used straight forward words when he spoke the words, “Go and make.” These words require action on the part of those who hear them in order for them to be accomplished. “The mission is a command to every Christian. In the routine associations with family and friends – being alert to their desire to learn Christ, showing them how to relate faith to life, helping them discern the joy of service through their gifts – we can live every day in the excitement of the Great Commission.”¹⁷ Our entire lives should be like that of Christ’s.

The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod is a group that has been using Jesus’ mission to reach the lost. He is our role model and that is made evident with all the evangelism outreach that has been taking place in the last 50 years. WELS has opened 41% of all its churches in the past 50 years.¹⁸ If that stat alone does not show how dedicated we are as a group to reach the lost, to get into neighborhoods where we can have an opportunity to get to front doors and sit with people to speak the Word of God, maybe this next one will. WELS has planned, and has already begun, to open ten new home missions a year. The mission board is passionately and aggressively reaching the lost with the Gospel by establishing, supporting, and encouraging churches all over this county.¹⁹ We have a synod sharing the news of Jesus and it is not going to stop. Christ’s command is the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod’s mission.

WELS will do all they can to continue preaching the Word of God from sea to sea. Charles Westra, Chairman for the Board for Home Missions, said “We will take every available

¹⁶ Boer, 17.

¹⁷ Coleman, 219.

¹⁸ John Brenner, class lecture [discussion], Modern Christianity course, November 2014, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.

¹⁹ Board for Home Missions, “Home Mission’s Strategic Plan,” 2.

resource to do this.”²⁰ There is no stopping us as long as we have the means to do so. Money is something that can slow down a bold goal like opening ten new home missions a year. This has proven itself to be a deterrent in the past and we are determined to not let it slow us down now. Special mission offerings are gathered for work throughout the synod regularly and they have truly been a blessing to this work. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary has also taken an anniversary offering to fill the needs they are having in instructing men to go out into churches. On account of these things, we are confident that with continued help of churches and special gifts from individuals the Lord will bless our efforts and continue to lead us where he wants us to go.

WELS is a group of Christians striving to reach the lost with the Word of God. We have a mission minded attitude and a will power to do as much as we are capable of no matter where we need to go, no matter what we need to do, and no matter how much it costs. We have called workers and employees working to find more and more ways to follow the command of our Lord; to spread the good news to all creation. We have professors training up men to go out and fill the world with the pure gospel message; and we have students studying hard at our seminary to be properly prepared to go and tell people about Jesus.

PART 3: THE WORKERS ARE FEW

Our Seminary

The Theological Seminary of the Wisconsin Synod was formally opened in the fall of 1863 at Watertown, Wisconsin. Instruction in theology was initially given by Professor Edward Moldehnke, Ph.D., in the school building of St. Mark's congregation. On September 14, 1865, the synod's college, first known as "Wisconsin University" and then as "Northwestern University" opened its doors, and for five years the seminary was operated in conjunction with it. In 1870, the students of the theological department were transferred to Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, Missouri, in accordance with an arrangement made with the Missouri Synod to conduct a seminary jointly. Eight years later, the Wisconsin Synod reopened its own seminary, this time in Milwaukee, where it remained from 1878 until 1893, though not always in the same quarters. It was housed first in private residences and later in a remodeled building in Eimermann's Park, now 13th and Vine Streets. An important milestone in the synod's history was reached in 1892 when a federation of the synods of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan was effected. Because of the increased enrollment, a new and larger seminary building was erected at 60th and Lloyd Streets in Wauwatosa and was dedicated in 1893.

²⁰ Charles Westra, Board for Home Mission Chairman (seminar presented at Wisconsin Luther Seminary, Mequon, WI, 2013).

In 1929, the seminary's present building complex was erected on an 80-acre site in the present city of Mequon, just outside the west limits of the village of Thiensville, about 15 miles north of downtown Milwaukee.²¹

It is certainly right for us to remember the days gone by and to consider the years of other generations. Let us put ourselves in the place of those students who first enrolled at Theological Seminary of the Wisconsin Synod in 1863. The students who were enrolled 150 years ago came to Watertown by train or buggy. There were no cars until 1886. Many of the students may still have studied by candle light since the light bulb was invented only three years earlier in 1880. Those students wore clothes with only buttons until 1891 when the first zipper was invented.²² The times were certainly different, but one thing remains the same: the Word of God in its truth and purity was, is, and will be taught within the seminary.

Low Numbers

Unfortunately, enrollment at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary has been declining. Ten years ago, 2004-2005, there were 188 students enrolled.²³ This year, 2014-2015, there are 118 students studying to be pastors. Class sizes averaged at 45 just a decade ago when now they are at 30. This year there are 30 Seniors, 31 Vicars, 29 Middlers, and 28 Juniors. Without the need to say it, the graduating class numbers are low. This last year was the first in a number of years when churches with requests for pastors went unfilled on call day.

To make matters even worse, the total number of pastors in our synod is decreasing with the “baby boomers” beginning to come into the age of retirement. From 1946-1956 the birthrate rose significantly due to the men returning back from World War II. Our synod saw a rise in the number of men training to become pastors between the years of 1970-1976 when these children grew up. During this time there were an average number of 50 students in each class. Now, 45 years later, this large number of pastors is retiring. Therefore, taking into account resignations

²¹ Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, “Our Purpose and Objectives” [conclusion], (Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 2013), <http://www.wls.wels.net/our-purpose-and-objectives> (accessed November 23, 2015).

²² Rogers A Gobbel. *On the Glorious Hill: A Short History in Word and Picture of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg*. Pennsylvania: Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1976, 61.

²³ John M. Brenner, and Peter M. Prange. *Jars of Clay: A History of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (1863-2013)*. Mequon, WI: Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Press, 2013, 310.

throughout the years, if about 40-45 pastors retire a year for the next 10 years and only 30 new pastors come into our synod a year, we are looking at 100-150 less pastors preaching the Word of God within our church body. (See appendices A, B, C)

Reports of this declining number of pastors have been flying all over in our synod. Our leaders are taking notice and are making sure that everyone knows what to expect in the upcoming years. President Joel Pettermann wrote on the subject this summer in Michigan Lutheran Seminary's Update.

A severe pain in the chest or arm. A finger or arm that has been severed. Labor pains that have increased in intensity. Each of these situations could be considered urgent. Swifts trips to the hospital's urgent care or emergency room may be required. When does a situation become urgent? This year the graduating class at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary is in the twenties. The number of vacant parishes at call day in Mequon is very likely to exceed this number. The next classes are in the 30's – a bit better, but still just barely enough to supply the needs anticipated by our synod's long range plan. Is it urgent for us to be encouraging more young boys to consider the pastoral ministry?²⁴

President Matthew Crass from Luther Preparatory School has also made mention of the issue while stating that 15 graduates from Luther Prep will continue onto MLC in the pastor track this year making it known what a wonderful blessing from the Lord this is. At the same time, President Crass also clearly wrote, “Witnessing the increase of pastoral and teaching vacancies in our church body, the recruitment of your people to Luther Prep to prepare for ministry continues to be a high priority.”²⁵

The concern for more students preparing for the ministry does not stop at our preparatory school level. It spans far greater than that. News has been spread across the country with district presidents making the pastors in their area aware. Former District President Naumann wrote in his report at the 47th Biennial Convention Dakota-Montana District in June,

There is one huge challenge facing us at this time. That is ensuring a steady supply of called workers. After teacher assignments at Martin Luther College last month, we “took home” 45 unfilled requests; there were also Calls outstanding. The smallest graduating class at our seminary since the 1950s left us with over 50 pastor vacancies after assignments, about a 5% factor. Recruitment is the greatest

²⁴ Joel Petermann, “A Message from the President,” *Michigan Lutheran Seminary Update*, Summer 2014.

²⁵ Matthew Crass, “The Lord is Gracious,” *Luther Preparatory School Convention Update*, June 2014.

need before us right now. It is a Klaxon call. There will be more and longer vacancies in the synod for a while.²⁶

This led a considerable discussion in the ministerial education evaluation committee. In fact, a resolution was drawn up that stated the district as a whole and the churches inside it must encourage young men to pursue the ministry.

To make matters even worse our Lutheran Elementary Schools (LES) have been suffering. In the year 2003, as a synod we had 359 schools. In the year 2015, we have 337 schools. Within these schools in 1993, there were 31,000 students, unfortunately by 2013 our enrollment decreased to under 25,000. (See appendix D) This is especially discouraging since 90% of the pastors in our synod come out of our Lutheran schools.²⁷ If this trend continues we can be sure to see an even greater decrease in young men willing to become pastors.

Measures are being taken to try to slow the hit of fewer number of pastors for the synod. This year two Vicars received emergency calls to serve as tutors at Luther Prep and Martin Luther College. This decision put two more pastoral candidates into the field last summer. It will be interesting to see if this continues.

The main question now is if this situation is simply the regular roller coaster ride that our worker training schools go through? We saw this roller coaster take place in the past fifty years. From 1975-1983, every single graduate from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary received a call on call day. But then the 1984 call day really hit home. “In 1984 there were 59 seminary graduates, but six graduate candidates were left unassigned. This development came as a surprise but was a foretaste of what would come. It was not until 1996 that the assignment committee was once again able to issue a call to every senior on call day.”²⁸ A few short years later, WELS experienced a surplus of pastoral candidates. In fact, in the year 2000 we again had the luxury of issuing exploratory mission calls, searching out new areas to preach the Gospel. Then by the year 2009 there were too many pastoral candidates that the Board for Home Missions drew up a plan called Alternative Outreach Opportunities for WLS Candidates. This board was looking for

²⁶ Peter Naumann, “President’s Report” (report given at the 47th Biennial Convention Dakota-Montana District, June 10-12, 2014).

²⁷ John Brenner, class lecture [discussion], Modern Christianity course, October 2014, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon.

²⁸ Brenner and Prange, 241.

alternative areas in which these graduates could serve because there were not enough places to put them. Certainly a roller coaster ride, but a change in direction is not foreseen with this decline. *Jars of Clay* shows the history of our graduating numbers very well up to this point.

In 1973 the Commission on Higher Education (CHE) had projected a need for 52 seminary graduates for the next several years. IN the 1970s and 1980s the number of seminary graduates averaged close to this projection. In 1989 the synod's "Vision 2000" called for 70 seminary graduates per year by 2000. In 1993 the "Vision 2003" statement hoped for 52 candidates per year by 2003. In 1999 it was estimated that the synod would need the seminary to produce 55 graduates each year to fill vacancies and to provide manpower for mission expansion. The seminary in the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century came close only a couple of times to producing the number of candidates indicated would be necessary. However, no serious shortage of pastors has developed. Our gracious God has indeed allowed us to be struck down, but not destroyed.²⁹

This year there are 30 graduating seminary students, next year there will be 33, the following 29, and the following 28. The enrollment in the Preseminary Studies at MLC is 151.³⁰ This means there will be an average of 38 graduates from 2019-2023 if every single one of those students continue to WLS. Looking ahead to the next eight years, I would say that a problem is developing; a shortage is coming soon and in just a short few years it will make itself evident. Then it will no longer only be our schools and synod leadership talking about the problem but rather our church body as a whole. Dean Brenner and Pastor Prange have been involved with both long enough to make the statement, "The life and history of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary is intimately connected to the life and history of the Wisconsin Synod. What affects the one usually affects the other."³¹

Jesus said, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:37-38). That is exactly what we need to do. We need to pray to our Father in heaven to bring more students into our ministerial education schools so that we can have the Gospel spread over the face of the earth. The sharing of the good news about Jesus is why the issue of the number of pastors we have is so important. Having someone devoting their full time and energy in a city is a wonderful blessing. The words of Professor Nass after he researched this topic long and hard sums it up, "In short, it seems to

²⁹ Brenner and Prange, 256.

³⁰ Laurie Gauger, "Focus on Enrollment," *In Focus*, District Convention Issue 2014.

³¹ Brenner and Prange, 225.

me that we have to keep praying that the Lord raise up young men for the pastoral ministry and for us to keep recruiting.”³²

PART 4: THE TRAINING OF STUDENTS

We Have a Solid System

Over the past 150 years Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary has prepared more than 3,500 pastors to share the gospel.³³ I am proud to say that in May of 2015, God-willing, I will be added to that number. There are so many blessings that our school system has to offer our students and the base of it lies on the connection between Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. Professor Nass from MLC shows the benefit of this compared to other denomination’s schooling.

“It is fair to say that most denominations operate three or four year denominational seminaries. WELS is certainly not unique in that regard. But how many denominations expect that their pastor candidates usually attend a denominationally run, pre-seminary college? Here is something uncommon and truly special. For four years at the college level we can deepen our pastor candidates in a Word-centered mindset focusing on Christ as the Savior of the world, and we can give them the tools they need to be serious theologians”³⁴

Four years of college connected to four years of seminary is a real treasure. These eight years have deepened my understanding of the Scriptures and have opened my eyes to much more of the Bible than I ever thought I could. Other denominations wish they had it as good as we do. Professor Nass commented on this as well saying, “It is interesting to note that the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, numerically about six times larger than WELS, had only 178 pre-seminary students in all 10 of its Concordia universities last year. If you talk with LCMS seminary professors, they envy our WELS system.”³⁵

Our system is also valuable because of the in depth study we do in the biblical languages. It starts first semester of the first year at Martin Luther College with Greek and continues to build from there adding Hebrew the third year. This training has been recognized within our

³² Nass, 2.

³³ Paul Wendland, “Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.” *Wisconsin Lutheran Synod: Report to the Twelve Districts* (May 2014): 95.

³⁴ Nass, 6.

³⁵ Nass, 7.

synod as some of the best there is. Armin Panning said in a 1983 *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, “The fact of the matter is, we have been blessed with truly outstanding young men -- outstanding in all categories, and in language preparedness perhaps second to none. What seminary in our land has the kind of undergrad program that we enjoy.”³⁶ I am happy to say that I have nearly gone through all eight years of this training. I have learned a lot and would not take those years back for anything offered. I would venture to say that Professor Fredrich would say the same after reading this statement made by him in an article written in 2009, “We still have a curriculum that enables pastor track students to equip themselves well for exegesis. We would do well to support it financially, maintain its standards against erosion, and improve it where we can.”³⁷

The members of our synod stand behind the way we are training our pastors as well. During my Vicar year, I heard so many good things about the way in which previous Vicars have come to Missoula, Montana with such a thorough knowledge of the Bible and how well they carry themselves in a classroom setting. I even had one former LCMS pastor in my congregation who praised WELS for how well the students were being taught at the seminary. It goes to show that all the hard work is paying off where it truly matters.

Without the need to say it, our seminary is necessary. We need to have men equipped to go out into the world to speak the truths of God’s Word. This truth will never fade away. Therefore, we as a church body will continue to do the best we can to do so. Professor Brenner and Pastor Prange make this very clear when they wrote:

This is most certainly true: seminary-trained and ordained preachers are divine gifts from the Lord Jesus to his Church. “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ, the Church, may be built up” (Ephesians 4:11-12) The same Lord uses these divinely-given gifts to his Church to bless his holy people and to keep them from being spiritual “infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming” (Ephesians 4:14). It is God’s holy will that the gospel be entrusted “to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (2 Timothy 2:2). It was no accident then that 12 hand-picked

³⁶ Armin Panning, “Language Requirements for a Gospel Ministry.” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, 80:2 (Spring 1983): 108-117, 6.

³⁷ Joel D. Fredrich, “Our College Pastoral Training Curriculum: A Channel of Blessings from Our God,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, 106:1 (Winter 2009): 34-48, 6.

apostles (missionaries) of Jesus were first the 12 hand-picked disciples (students) of Jesus. By word and example, the Lord Jesus shows us that he wants the gospel proclaimed and administered by men who are gifted by him, and called by him through his Church to carry out the role of Shepherd (the word “pastor” means shepherd) among God’s flock (1 Peter 5:2-3).³⁸

We will train our pastors thoroughly. We will make sure they are firmly rooted in the Words of Scripture. We will instruct them to see the way the Bible talks rather than the way we as human beings think. The Word of God is a gift to the world and we will treat it with as much honor and respect that it deserves without changing or altering a single word. This is required by God.

Reevaluating Ministerial Education

I now lay the question before us: does holding to Scripture, standing firm on the rock, not being able to be swayed in the wind or tossed back and forth by the waves, require us to continue to train our pastors the same way we have been doing for 150 years? This question is not a new one by any means; rather it has come up many times in our synod. One discussion on the matter was whether or not our pastors needed to attend Martin Luther College to become a WELS pastor. Professor Nass wrote about this topic in his reaction to a WLS symposium essay,

Students of our synod’s history know that the topic of a “practical seminary” has come up on numerous occasions. In simple terms, a practical seminary would allow students to bypass the pre-seminary college (MLC). Our Wauwatosa seminary actually ran a “practical course” from the time of its establishment in 1878 until 1897 when the synod voted to discontinue it. According to synod records, the issue resurfaced in 1903, 1907, 1909, 1911, 1955, and 1961. Every time, the discussion has come to the same conclusion. We want well-trained pastors. We don’t want short-cuts in our pastor training. As a general rule, we want pastors to complete the program at our pre-seminary college.³⁹

All attempts at having a practical seminary failed for the reasons mentioned above and I would agree with all of them. What good would a pastor be if he wasn’t well-trained? Professor Panning agreed as well and made his readers aware that having a practical seminary course would mean not being able to include Greek and Hebrew in the curriculum at the seminary due to the lack of instruction at the college level. He wrote, “The temptation is there to reduce ministerial training to a Bible college program, and to view the work of the ministry primarily in

³⁸ Brenner and Prange 10.

³⁹ Nass, 6.

social terms. Both can function without the languages, but neither are in the best interests of the gospel.”⁴⁰ Panning and others felt that the Greek and Hebrew needed to remain, therefore having a practical seminary would not be possible. Luther had strong feelings about studying the Word of God in Greek and Hebrew. He wrote,

Therefore...let us open our eyes, thank God for this precious treasure, and guard it well, lest it be again taken from us and the devil have his will. For though the Gospel has come and daily comes through the Holy Spirit alone, we cannot deny that it has come by means of the languages, by which it was spread abroad and by which it must be preserved....

In proportion, then, as we prize the Gospel, let us guard the languages. For not in vain did God have His Scriptures set down in these two languages alone -- the Old Testament in Hebrew, the New in Greek. The languages, therefore, that God did not despise but chose above all others for His Word, we too ought to honor above all others....

And let us be sure of this: we shall not long preserve the Gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit is contained; they are the casket in which we carry this jewel; they are the vessel in which we hold this wine, they are the larder in which this food is stored; and as the Gospel itself says, they are the baskets in which we bear these loaves and fishes and fragments....

For know this, God's Word and grace are a passing rainstorm, which does not return where it has once been. It came to the Jews, but it passed over; now they have nothing. Paul brought it to the Greeks, but it passed over; now they have the Turk. Rome and the Latins had it, too; but it passed over; now they have the pope. And you Germans must not think you will have it forever; for ingratitude and contempt will not suffer it to remain.⁴¹

Greek and Hebrew certainly are treasures we hold near in our hearts. These were the languages that God gave the biblical people his Word in to reveal the truth of his Son Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God that he has given his message of love to the world today in languages they can read and understand. Translations of the Bible are wonderful blessings from God. However, it has been said that translations do the original languages and intent of their meaning injustice. *Traddutore, traditore*. This Italian pun insists, in effect, that all translation is treason.

⁴⁰ Panning, 6.

⁴¹ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works: To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany, 1524. That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools*, http://www.godrules.net/library/luther/NEW1luther_d9.htm (accessed November 8, 2015).

D. A. Carson, while writing on the inclusive language debate, agreed that because of the differences from language to language translations of the Bible are treason. He says that this is the exact reason why we still teach ministerial candidates to read the original languages.⁴² He is not the only one who feels this way, Williams Smalley writes in his book *Translation as a Mission*,

“Accessibility through translation does not come without cost, for a translation is always something less and something more than the original, much as the translator works to minimize flaws. Perfect translation is impossible because no two languages are the same, no two cultures are the same, the world views of no two people are the same. A translation is always an approximation of the original. Some degree of accessibility and distortion are therefore the anticipated product and inevitable byproduct of all translation.”⁴³

Carson and Smalley are incorrect when they say translations of the Bible are not equal to the Greek and the Hebrew. The original Greek and Hebrew of the Bible are the Word of God. English, Chinese, Portuguese, and every other translation are the Word of God. Through them the message of Christ’s love can be told. Translations are adequate. Our seminary dogmatic notes make this very clear. “In and of themselves, the sounds or syllables are not the Word in the strict sense. These external vehicles of thought may be destroyed, while the Word is enduring. If the sounds, letters, or syllables were the essence of God’s Word, translations of the Word would be impossible.”⁴⁴ What a blessing it is to have the Word of God in the languages the people of the world can read and hear and speak.

Yet the world has become increasingly more un-churched and more and more families have neglected God altogether. We must continue to reach out to these people with the lifesaving message of God. We must do all we can to put the Word of God into these people’s ears so that the Holy Spirit can put it into their hearts. We have the task of getting the Word of God to them. This is the command of God. He wants all people to know of his Son Jesus Christ. Scott Sunquist understood this when he wrote, “Evangelism is, at heart, introducing Jesus Christ to others and

⁴² D.A. Carson, *The Inclusive Language Debate: A Plea for Realism* (Baker Book House Company: Grand Rapids, MI, 1998), 47.

⁴³ William A. Smalley, *Translation as Mission: Bible Translation in the Modern Missionary Movement*. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1991, 3.

⁴⁴ Forest Bivens, class lecture [discussion], Soteriology II, Eschatology course, December 2014, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, 65.

inviting them to become partakers in his Kingdom. It is about Jesus Christ. It is hard to imagine a person starting anywhere else, or focusing on any other idea, doctrine, or person than Jesus Christ when trying to communicate the Christian faith.”⁴⁵ We want to introduce Christ to everyone in the world.

A WELS home and world mission project recently was developed to help bring the gospel to more people. The project was introduced when a puzzling fact was realized. The driving force of the project was described with these words: “Our called workers receive language training in the biblical languages during their college and seminary years. However, they do not have the time in their schedules to become proficient in the languages that are spoken in the ethnic communities of our mission fields throughout North America.”⁴⁶ Therefore, the project is working on building funds in order to train pastors in foreign languages while they are still accomplishing all their tasks in their call so that the Word of God can be preached in the languages that are spoken around them. Being able to communicate in the languages of the world is a necessity. Let us do all we can to contribute to this need.

The term VUCA has been developed to describe the world that we live in today. Coined in the late 1990’s, the military-derived acronym stands for the volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity—terms that reflect an increasingly unstable and rapidly changing situation.”⁴⁷ Soldiers before they go into Afghanistan are trained in depth to always be ready for when a situation changes. They are always prepared to change their course of action to adapt to what is going on around them. We as a synod are flexible for any situation that comes our way as well. We have shown in the past how we are willing to alter to better train the men going out into this VUCA world. In fact, upon asking Paul Prange, “What do you see happening with our ministerial education in the near future?” He told me that they are planning to have their first formal curriculum revision and alignment since 2001.⁴⁸ What will this revision look like? We will have to wait and see.

⁴⁵ Sunquist, 312, 318.

⁴⁶ Jackie Hieb, “Project #HM-2012-03: Language Training,” *Home and World Mission Projects*, 2012-2013, 5.

⁴⁷ Kirk Lawrence, *Developing Leaders in a VUCA Environment*. UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School, 2013. http://www.growbold.com/2013/developing-leaders-in-a-vuca-environment_UNC.2013.pdf (accessed November 5, 2014).

⁴⁸ Paul Prange, E-mail message to author, November 7, 2014.

The Reevaluation

Using a very broad brush to evaluate our pastoral education as it stands right now, there are four years of Greek and two years of Hebrew mixed in with a liberal arts degree from Martin Luther College and three years of Greek and three years of Hebrew, four dogmatic classes, numerous history, teaching, and preaching courses, as well as a Vicar year of hands on learning from the seminary. The question is should we continue along this same route or should we explore new thoughts on how we can train men for the pastoral ministry?

If the answer is the former, then we need to do the best job we can in recruiting young men to enter into the public ministry. But this is not always the easiest task to do. I can recall from my Vicar congregation three eighth grade boys who obviously loved God. And yet I did not encourage them to consider Luther Preparatory School because in the back of my mind I thought they wouldn't go anyways. After all, one boy's family I figured could not afford it, for another I thought it was too far away from Montana, and for the other I presumed he just did not have the right gifts. This was wrong of me to do. First off, who is to judge a family's willingness to not send their young man because of financial reason or because it would be too far from home? Secondly, who is to decide whether a young man has the gifts for the ministry at the age of thirteen or even eighteen for that matter? Oswald Sanders' book *Spiritual Leadership* shows that some of the great religious leaders had shortcomings when it said, "The Bible shows us that when God does find a person who is ready to lead, to commit to full discipleship and take on responsibility for others, that person is used to the limit. Such leaders still have shortcomings and flaws, but despite them, they become spiritual leaders. Such were Moses, Gideon, and David. And in the history of the church, Martin Luther."⁴⁹ Just because we humanly do not see ability in someone to become a pastor does not mean God doesn't. Think also of the disciples. They were nothing special to begin. For the most part they were uneducated and probably not the most social people, but God saw something in them that no one else did and soon they became the greatest missionaries and pastors of all. This is how we are to look at the young men around us and soon they can become the spiritual shepherds we are looking for in our churches to spread God's Word into the world. Let us do the best we can to encourage them.

Again, if the answer to the previous stated question is that we should continue along the same method of training we are doing right now; the Pastoral Studies Institute (PSI) program is a

⁴⁹ Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*. Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute, 1994. 17.

great place to encourage men to look if they have an interest in becoming a pastor as well. The PSI program is a wonderful gift that the Lord has given to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. For ten years this program has been training non-traditional⁵⁰ students from different cultures or different careers for service as pastors in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. There have been thirty-two men who have received diplomas from the PSI program. Currently there are thirty-five students enrolled. What a blessing this program is, not only to our church body but also to the men who have gone through it and for the world at large. For our synod, it has provided more workers to go out into the harvest field. For the men enrolled, it has given them the opportunity to prepare themselves for full-time gospel ministry while they are taking care of their current duties and not having to deal with the struggle of relocating their family to Martin Luther College in New Ulm, MN. For the world, it has provided Christian men to preach of Christ's love and mercy.

The best part of the PSI program is its flexibility. There is now no one in the world who can say, "I want to become a pastor but..." Professor Sorum, the PSI coordinator, along with the rest of the faculty at WLS will find a way to make it happen. Where there is a will, there is a way. We do not want to lose anyone who has the desire to become a pastor. Professor Sorum explained this well when he wrote in the PSI's mission documents, "The program of the PSI allows our church body the flexibility required to make the most of every opportunity to take the gospel of Jesus to a broad spectrum of cultural communities not only in North America but in the world."⁵¹ One of the only disadvantages it possesses is the lack of personal interaction with other brothers in the faith. Professor Sorum said, "Pastoral ministry is about relationships, and that includes relationships with fellow pastors. At Martin Luther College, a person has the opportunity to build the kind of relationships that last a lifetime. Students at MLC have the opportunity not simply to learn subject matter, but to study with professors who model and confess the faith they are teaching."⁵² Although this disadvantage is an important one, the pros to

⁵⁰ When we say "non-traditional" students, we are speaking of individuals who did not attend Martin Luther College or Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

⁵¹ Pastoral Studies Institute, The Mission, Vision, and Core Values of the Pastoral Studies Institute of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary" [conclusion], (Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary), <http://www.wls.wels.net/psi/mission-vision-and-core-values-pastoral-studies-institute-wisconsin-lutheran-seminary> (accessed November 1, 2014).

⁵² Allen Sorum, interview by author, November 2014, Mequon, WI.

this program far outweigh the cons. Therefore, if there is a man you know looking to try something new in his life, do not hesitate to suggest the full-time public ministry.

Again, if the answer to the question above is that we should continue along the same method of training we are doing right now; we should look at the staff ministry program at Martin Luther College as possessing more worth to our synod than it holds right now. For the background of the subject, I will allow Doctor Lawrence Olson, Director of Staff Minister, explain,

The staff ministry program was launched in 1993, and the first person graduated in 1996. Sadly in January 2003 the Conference of Presidents (COP) encouraged the Board for Ministerial Education (BME) to recommend to the synod in convention that MLC be directed to phase out its staff ministry degree program in an orderly fashion. Fortunately, the program was reaffirmed by a study committee mandated by the Synod in convention. The study committee, chaired by Pastor Joel Leyrer with Dr. John Isch as the research consultant, submitted its report in March, 2004. The BME and the COP accepted the committee's recommendations to continue staff ministry as an undergraduate degree program, to lift the moratorium that had been placed on enrolling new students, and to encourage district presidents to share information on staff ministry with congregations in pre-call assessment meetings.⁵³

It is understandable that the COP was concerned about the program in 2003. Their concern then is also my concern now: why are we training people for positions that do not exist? Their solution was that we need to create positions for them in our church body; my solution is that we need to do this same thing but on a grander level. After all, the individuals who study for this ministry are excellent in what they are trained to do. The training of the staff ministry program is described as:

Staff ministry is a form of public, representative ministry. An individual is given a call by a group of believers to carry out church work on their behalf. While pastors are trained for the broadest scope of ministry and for theological leadership, teachers are trained in Christian classroom education. Professional training for service in staff ministry includes knowledge and skills in the following areas: evangelism and assimilation, youth and family ministry, member

⁵³ Martin Luther College Governing Board, "Staff Ministry Program: A Review" (response to an Informal Request, New Ulm, MN, September 26, 2013).

care, parish education, and administration. The call itself defines the particular duties and responsibilities of a specific staff minister.⁵⁴

To me the work of a staff minister sounds a lot like the work of a pastor outside of the theological leadership. In a survey, I ask Dr. Olson if he would consider the tasks of a staff minister to be “pastoral work.” He responded,

One way to think about the work of a staff minister is to think of a “pastoral assistant.” That term is used in other church bodies, at least one WELS congregation has used it for their staff minister, and I sometimes use it myself in explaining what a staff minister is. So, in much the same way that a physician and a physician’s assistant both are involved in the practice of medicine, a pastor and a staff minister both do “pastoral” work in the broad sense of the word.⁵⁵

As you can see, staff ministers are prepared to do a great deal of the work that a pastor does. There was a survey done in 2003 that verified this. This survey asked the staff ministers themselves, the pastors that worked alongside them, as well as a lay member of the congregation to evaluate the staff minister’s work. The results showed just how much work a staff minister does; and in fact that they do it very well. The question was asked, “Are staff ministers contributing to the advancement of the gospel in their congregations?” The overwhelming answer was absolutely. The layperson’s rating in regards to this question was higher than either the pastor’s or the staff minister’s ratings. This suggests that the layperson consistently saw the staff minister performing better than did either the staff minister or the pastor, which in turn implies great satisfaction with the work of the staff minister. (See appendix E) One layperson commented,

By using a staff minister position we were able to become much more organized and removed much of the administration duties from the pastors. It also allowed us to share his time between administration of the church and the school. Since there is a perception that there is a pastor shortage in the WELS, it is less difficult to get a staff minister position approved than an additional pastor in our congregation. The WELS should be promoting staff ministers to handle the music, administration, and business side of congregation operations so the pastors can better use their time for what they are trained to do.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Martin Luther College, “Staff Ministry Certification and Course Requirements” [conclusion], (Martin Lutheran College, 2014), <https://www.mlc-wels.edu/gsce/certificates-and-licensure/wels-staff/staff-ministers> (accessed November 6, 2014).

⁵⁵ Lawrence Olson, e-mail message to author, January 2015.

⁵⁶ John Isch, “Staff Ministry: The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” 2004, 9.

It is obvious that the work of a staff minister and the work of a pastor work very well together. Why then do we still not have a great deal of positions available for them? If the answer to the question is that churches would like a pastor simply because his pay is only a few thousand dollars more than a pastor, I would say this mentality is wrong. Within our synod we have enough positions to make more available for staff ministers. Dr. Olson's recent research showed this. "In 1992 there were 118 WELS congregations with a multiple staff outside of a school; today there are 234 WELS congregations with a multiple staff (more than one called worker, not counting teachers). 171 congregations have two or more pastors, 64 have one or more pastors and one or more staff ministers. 48 congregations have three or more pastors." Staff ministers could replace many positions that pastors hold in order to free up a pastor to serve a congregation or community where no pastor is currently serving. We as a synod can improve at matching God's gifts to the church with the needs of our churches. This is more important than ever right now as more pastors continue to retire than graduate from the seminary. Dr. Olson reflects these same thoughts:

I am a "Baby Boomer," born in 1957, right at the apex of the Baby Boom. My generation has already begun to retire, and our Seminary graduating classes were often double in size, or even more, than that of current and projected graduating classes. My hope and prayer is that our synod's leaders and lay people alike will become more aware of just what staff ministers are trained to do, including the fact that a New Ulm staff ministry grad has just as much training in practical theology, in how to do ministry, as a Mequon grad does, and that more congregations will realize that where a second (or third, or even fourth) preacher is not needed, a staff minister may provide them with the called worker that they need to maintain and move ahead in their ministry.⁵⁷

Four pages ago in this paper I asked the question if we as a synod should continue along the same route or explore new thoughts on how we can train men for the pastoral ministry. Thus far, I have only offered suggestions in moving forward if our training system would remain the same. Now, I would like to explore some possibilities in changing the way we train our pastors.

Starting small, I feel we can improve on our leadership training. The seminary does designate half of a course second semester of senior year on leadership, but is this enough? With the large amount of workshops and programs on this topic the seminary is developing right now for the continued education of our pastors, I would say we do not have enough training early on

⁵⁷ Lawrence Olson, e-mail message to author, January 2015.

in our education. With the way I, as a seminary senior, feel at this point in time, I would say again that the training we have in this regard is not enough. I am greatly looking forward to the next few months when I am enrolled in the class on leadership that our seminary does offer and I hope to glean as much from the topics of discussion as possible. I pray that I benefit from this course greatly so that I am properly prepared to lead in a VUCA world.

I feel it is very important we train our pastors to lead in our volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world. But as of right now my leadership knowledge goes as far as looking to the bible and seeing its great leaders. I know of Moses as the leader of the Israelites, but although he led millions of people for 40 years, the Bible does not call him a leader. Rather, he was called a servant.⁵⁸ He served the Lord God faithfully in his life by obeying his commands and training his children and those who came after him to fear the Lord. Jesus himself is another leader of the Bible who served. He served with his life, he served with his actions, and in so doing he led. Professor Leyrer of WLS wrote a paper on pastoral leadership. In it he said, “The Savior who came not ‘to be served but to serve’ (Mt 20:28) instructed the apostles that their true greatness would be service (cf. Mt 20:26). When Jesus humbly served by washing the apostles’ feet the night before his death, he encouraged them to remember that as an example of the humility that would make them good leaders (cf. Jn 13:12-17).”⁵⁹ Following Jesus example was what the disciples did and is a great way for us to begin looking at leadership as well. Professor Leyrer went on to write, “Pastoral leaders are first of all followers. “Follow me” were Jesus’ first words to most of the men who would lead the early Christian church (Mt 4:19, Mk 1:17, Jn 1:43 et al). To follow Christ is to know him in faith and to seek to grow in that faith. This was the Savior’s design for the apostles.”⁶⁰ But this is where my formal education on leading in a church goes. Again, I look forward to my upcoming leadership class.

It is interesting to note how much time some universities spend on leadership training. Trinity Western University has a bachelor’s degree in leadership; and in the course of its four years it has 38 credits specified for building leadership skills.⁶¹ Some classes included

⁵⁸ Numbers 12, Joshua 1.

⁵⁹ Daniel Leyrer, “New Testament Pastoral Leadership,” Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary essay file, 4.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 1.

⁶¹ Trinity Western University, “Bachelor of Arts in Leadership” [conclusion], Trinity Western University, n.d.), <http://international.twu.ca/en/leadership> (accessed November 25, 2014).

are Lifelong Learning Strategies in Leadership, Ethical Decision Making, Leadership in Organizations and Small Groups, Methods and Mediums of Persuasion & Positive Influence, and Leading Change. There is an abundant amount of information on this subject. It would be wise for our ministerial education department to enhance our training in it in order to strengthen the leadership in our pastors so they are better equipped to lead souls to Christ. Sanders feels that this training is a necessity.

If the world is to hear the church's voice today, leaders are needed who are authoritative, spiritual, and sacrificial. Authoritative, because people desire leaders who know where they are going and are confident of getting there. Spiritual, because without a strong relationship to God even the most attractive and competent person cannot lead people to God. Sacrificial, because this follows the model of Jesus, who gave himself for the whole world and who calls us to follow in his steps.⁶²

Enhancing the leadership courses could only be the beginning in changing the curriculum at our ministerial educational schools. Another, much larger, addition to our current ministerial education system that could increase the spreading of the gospel would be to add a pastoral track that greatly diminishes the study of Greek and Hebrew. Currently, a degree of this magnitude is in effect in the Pastoral Studies Institute. The PSI calls this a Bachelor of Theology. The students who are enrolled in this program dive deep into Scripture, studying its teachings and truths without the original languages. And yet, they are still fully equipped to go out and preach the good news of Jesus Christ in this world of sin. We can accomplish this same thing in the men who attend Martin Luther College and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. If we would do this the fact would remain that there are differences between those who truly know Greek and Hebrew and those who don't. Professor Fredrich commented on those who struggle with the languages when he said,

But the rest, by such training, at least will acquire a sensorium for the rightness of the results..." I recall hearing President Armin Panning make the same point to our class when we were seminary students. The gist of President Panning's remark was that not all of the products of our system become masters of the biblical languages, but the typical student is hard to dupe with false methods of interpreting Scripture. An appreciation for the historical-grammatical approach has been ingrained in them, and they are not quick to embrace fads and willful interpretations—interpretations that claim spiritual value without accounting for the words and the context. Like Luther, we have to deal with theologians and lay

⁶² Sanders, 18.

people who treat Scripture like a wax nose to be twisted this way and that. Can anyone put a price on training that helps to inoculate pastors against that sort of nonsense.⁶³

I agree with Professor Friedrich that all pastors need to be able to notice and refute false interpretations of Scripture, but I believe there are other ways in achieving these results other than the study of Greek and Hebrew. This new direction in training would delve into Scripture just as hard and just as long as our current Master of Divinity degree. There would be doctrinal courses, New Testament courses, Old Testament courses, and preaching and teaching courses just like that of the system we have in place right now, the only difference would be the in depth use of Greek and Hebrew.

There are certain individuals for each task. The Wisconsin Evangelical Synod certainly needs men who have the capabilities to go back to the original languages. This is why there should never be any discussion of trying to get rid of Greek and Hebrew altogether. The original languages are important and needed to bring to light the meaning of words in their original contexts. Numerous commentaries have been written showing the in depth nature of these languages and how much we can learn from them today. However, that is also why the thought of adding this type of degree is so appealing. A student can achieve great knowledge from the original languages by reading these commentaries. Will they be able to achieve all of it? No. The training that our men go through right now certainly cannot be replaced by simply reading commentaries, but an adequate knowledge of words and how they were used in their original context can be. The reason I find this new approach to be so appealing is that I feel young men are intimidated by the fact they would have to learn Greek and Hebrew which prohibits some from starting on the path to become a pastor in the first place. I would like us to do all we can to send more pastors into the world to share the Word of God.

⁶³ Joel D. Friedrich, "Our College Pastoral Training Curriculum: A Channel of Blessings from Our God." *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, 106:1 (Winter 2009): 34-44, 4.

CONCLUSION

In short, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few” (Matthew 9:38). God has given us the task of preaching the good news to those who have not heard it and to those who need to continue to hear it. There will never be a day during the existence of the earth when the preaching of the gospel will not be necessary. Therefore, there will never be a day when we will stop analyzing new ways to reach people with this life-saving message. Reevaluating how we go about bringing the gospel to the world means that we love the people of the world and want to serve them the best we can. WELS has been doing a wonderful job with its ministerial education system, but with the great need of the gospel being spread and the upcoming problem of lack of pastors, WELS can benefit from reevaluating the system we have.

I do not believe that any fellow student of mine has ever thought some of the thoughts I laid out in this paper would be possible. One of the purposes of this paper is to make them aware that it is possible and that in so doing we would not be doing anything wrong. We would not be disowning the Bible. Our Lutheran heritage stands on the essence of the Word of God, not the material in which it is written.

After all is said and done in regards to this paper, I have to admit that this paper has been accomplished with a bias attitude on my part. I am senior this year at the seminary and I cannot wait to be able to tell people about the Word of God on a full-time basis. I have longed to do this ever since I preached my first sermon and was able to look into the eyes of the worshipers and see how they longed to be there and hear the Word of God. However, I am not the most intellectual student there is. Therefore, to get the other side of the spectrum, I would recommend someone who is gifted in languages to pursue this same topic.

In the end, we want to remember it is not anything we do that will bring people to faith in Christ but rather the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God. Therefore, no matter how hard we try to send more workers out into the world, even if we have the most thriving seminary in all the earth, if it is not God’s plan, it will not happen. WELS Board for Home Missions said this well.

Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.” (Proverbs 19:21) While Home Missions is working to put together a strategic planning document which looks to expand and enhance gospel outreach, we realize the Lord blesses how and when he chooses. We understand that while we can have cutting edge strategies, it is only the Lord and the power of His Word which will pierce hearts with the truths of his Word. While we can plan and

implement those plans, we know that all results rest in our Lord's power and purpose.⁶⁴

However, God has told us that his Word won't return to him empty. And so we are confident that as we instruct more pastors to go out into the harvest field with the Word of God that more souls will hear what Jesus Christ has done to save them from their sins and in so doing God will work.

We have been given the greatest gift of all, free and full forgiveness which Christ Jesus won for us. Just as we live with this confidence of this gospel blessing, we also know that this treasure is not something to hoard for ourselves. This gift needs to be shared, it needs to be spoken of boldly, and it needs to be revealed through the word. May God bless us as we do so.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Home Mission's Strategic Plan, 5.

⁶⁵ Keith Free, "Board for Home Missions," *Wisconsin Lutheran Synod: Report to the Twelve Districts* (May 2014), 83.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Enrollment (1863-2013)

The enrollment numbers listed below were gathered from a variety of sources. In the 1903 *Catalog* of the seminary, Director Adolf Hoenecke listed the initial enrollment year of every student who had attended the seminary to that point. For those who completed the course of study he also listed (in most cases) the year that he was examined and ordained. Some of the information is incomplete and nowhere does Hoenecke offer a year-by-year opening enrollment and graduate numbers. As a result the enrollment numbers listed from 1863-1893 are an educated guess based on the information Hoenecke provided in 1903. In his 1963 centennial history of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Immanuel P. Frey provided enrollment numbers from the 1893-1894 school year through the 1962-1963 school year (*Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 60, no. 3 [July 1963]: 199-200). The Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary office has also compiled enrollment numbers since the 1928-1929 school year. The numbers below represent a best enrollment estimate for each year. When the Wisconsin Synod reopened its seminary in 1878, some students remained at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. The enrollment numbers from 1878-1882 represent the total number of Wisconsin Synod seminarians at the Milwaukee and St. Louis campuses with the number of those remaining at St. Louis in parentheses.

Wauwatosa, Wis. (cont.)

1894-1895	35
1895-1896	37
1896-1897	35
1897-1898	34
1898-1899	25
1899-1900	23
1900-1901	33
1901-1902	41
1902-1903	38
1903-1904	30
1904-1905	29
1905-1906	29
1906-1907	33
1907-1908	35
1908-1909	42
1909-1910	50
1910-1911	56
1911-1912	63
1912-1913	59
1913-1914	57
1914-1915	51
1915-1916	47
1916-1917	46
1917-1918	46
1918-1919	57
1919-1920	61
1920-1921	57
1921-1922	49
1922-1923	49
1923-1924	55
1924-1925	56
1925-1926	42
1926-1927	40
1927-1928	41
1928-1929	53

Thiensville, Wisconsin

1929-1930	67
1930-1931	66
1931-1932	72
1932-1933	67
1933-1934	60
1934-1935	64
1935-1936	53
1936-1937	62
1937-1938	56
1938-1939	69
1939-1940	68
1940-1941	69
1941-1942	60
1942-1943	60
1943-1944	65
1944-1945	73
1945-1946	65
1946-1947	53
1947-1948	48
1948-1949	45
1949-1950	57
1950-1951	57
1951-1952	68
1952-1953	85
1953-1954	92
1954-1955	112
1955-1956	102
1956-1957	98

Mequon, Wisconsin

1957-1958	87
1958-1959	84
1959-1960	82
1960-1961	82
1961-1962	74

Mequon, Wis. (cont.)

1962-1963	97
1963-1964	117
1964-1965	135
1965-1966	140
1966-1967	147
1967-1968	153
1968-1969	171
1969-1970	193
1970-1971	208
1971-1972	203
1972-1973	224
1973-1974	222
1974-1975	244
1975-1976	261
1976-1977	243
1977-1978	244
1978-1979	242
1979-1980	231
1980-1981	243
1981-1982	237
1982-1983	231
1983-1984	234
1984-1985	222
1985-1986	218
1986-1987	228
1987-1988	218
1988-1989	207
1989-1990	193
1990-1991	168
1991-1992	152
1992-1993	141
1993-1994	159
1994-1995	160
1995-1996	166
1996-1997	167

Mequon, Wis. (cont.)

1997-1998	152	2006-2007	177
1998-1999	149	2007-2008	175
1999-2000	155	2008-2009	168
2000-2001	151	2009-2010	159
2001-2002	165	2010-2011	143
2002-2003	182	2011-2012	128
2003-2004	185	2012-2013	133
2004-2005	188	2013-2014	122
2005-2006	182		

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Graduates (1863-2013)

As with the enrollment numbers above, there is some speculation involved in counting the number of graduates from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary since 1863. In the early years especially students of the seminary received calls and were ordained even before formal graduation ceremonies had taken place. Some graduates, like Professor John P. Meyer (1896), show up in their class graduation photos even though they were already serving in parish ministry by the end of the school year (Meyer was ordained and called in 1895 according to Hoenecke). Others were ordained and called after only one or two years of study at the seminary. As a result the numbers below represent a best estimate for the number of graduates each year. In the case of the earliest years (1863-1903) it is more accurate to state that the numbers represent when candidates for ministry from our seminary were presumably ordained as listed by Director Adolf Hoenecke in the 1903 *Catalog*.

1864	0	1876	6	1888	8	1900	10	1912	23	1924	18
1865	1	1877	0	1889	10	1901	6	1913	18	1925	16
1866	0	1878	2	1890	4	1902	8	1914	21	1926	17
1867	0	1879	1	1891	11	1903	18	1915	18	1927	13
1868	4	1880	5	1892	3	1904	12	1916	15	1928	10
1869	5	1881	3	1893	13	1905	8	1917	16	1929	14
1870	1	1882	12	1894	5	1906	10	1918	14	1930	17
1871	1	1883	8	1895	10	1907	10	1919	13	1931	20
1872	3	1884	3	1896	16	1908	8	1920	13	1932	26
1873	1	1885	6	1897	8	1909	15	1921	23	1933	18
1874	3	1886	12	1898	13	1910	15	1922	21	1934	25
1875	3	1887	8	1899	10	1911	12	1923	12	1935	17

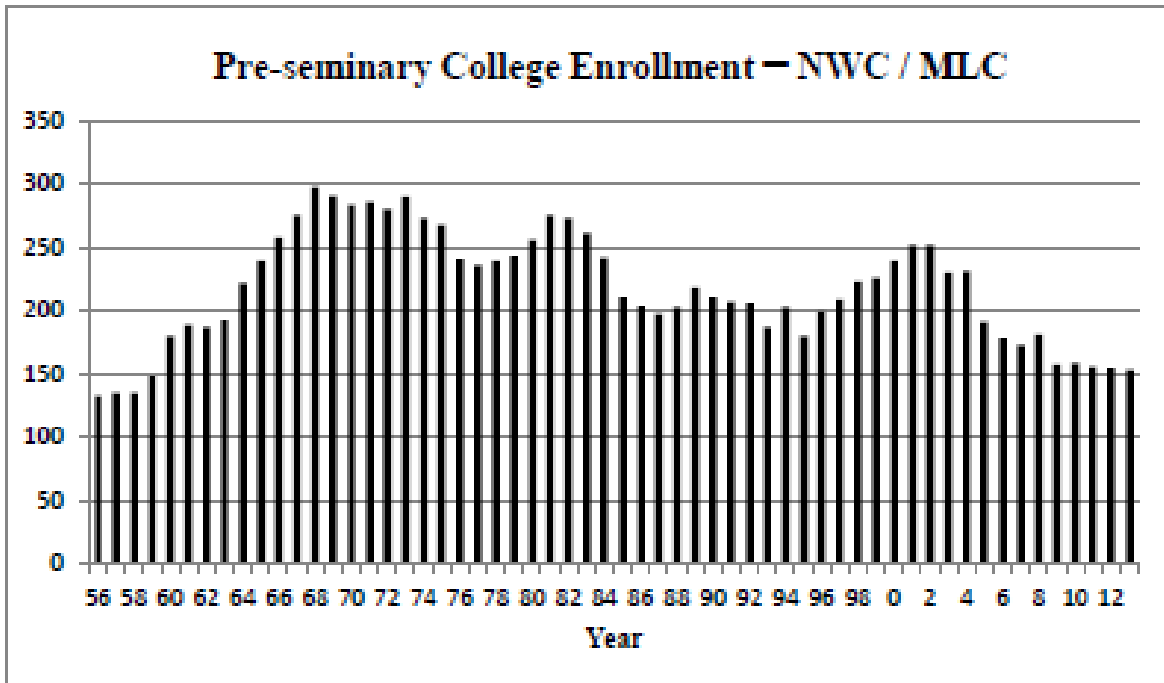
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Graduates (cont.)

1936	13	1956	25	1976	61	1996	33
1937	26	1957	30	1977	58	1997	46
1938	12	1958	34	1978	63	1998	41
1939	20	1959	23	1979	51	1999	34
1940	22	1960	17	1980	51	2000	37
1941	23	1961	25	1981	55	2001	31
1942	26	1962	18	1982	60	2002	34
1943	19	1963	20	1983	50	2003	37
1944	16	1964	15	1984	59	2004	39*
1945	23	1965	32	1985	56	2005	54*
1946	21	1966	28	1986	47	2006	43*
1947	24	1967	36	1987	50	2007	41*
1948	16	1968	32	1988	54	2008	42*
1949	10	1969	39	1989	56	2009	42*
1950	14	1970	33	1990	59	2010	47*
1951	17	1971	45	1991	43	2011	43*
1952	19	1972	42	1992	37	2012	30
1953	18	1973	55	1993	36	2013	43*
1954	18	1974	44	1994	35		
1955	31	1975	48	1995	30		

* includes
PSI graduates

Appendix B

Pre-seminary College Enrollment – NWC / MLC



NWC Enrollment

1956 – 133
 1957 – 135
 1958 – 135
 1959 – 148
 1960 – 180
 1961 – 189
 1962 – 187
 1963 – 192
 1964 – 222
 1965 – 239
 1966 – 258
 1967 – 275
 1968 – 298
 1969 – 291
 1970 – 284
 1971 – 286
 1972 – 280
 1973 – 290
 1974 – 273
 1975 – 268

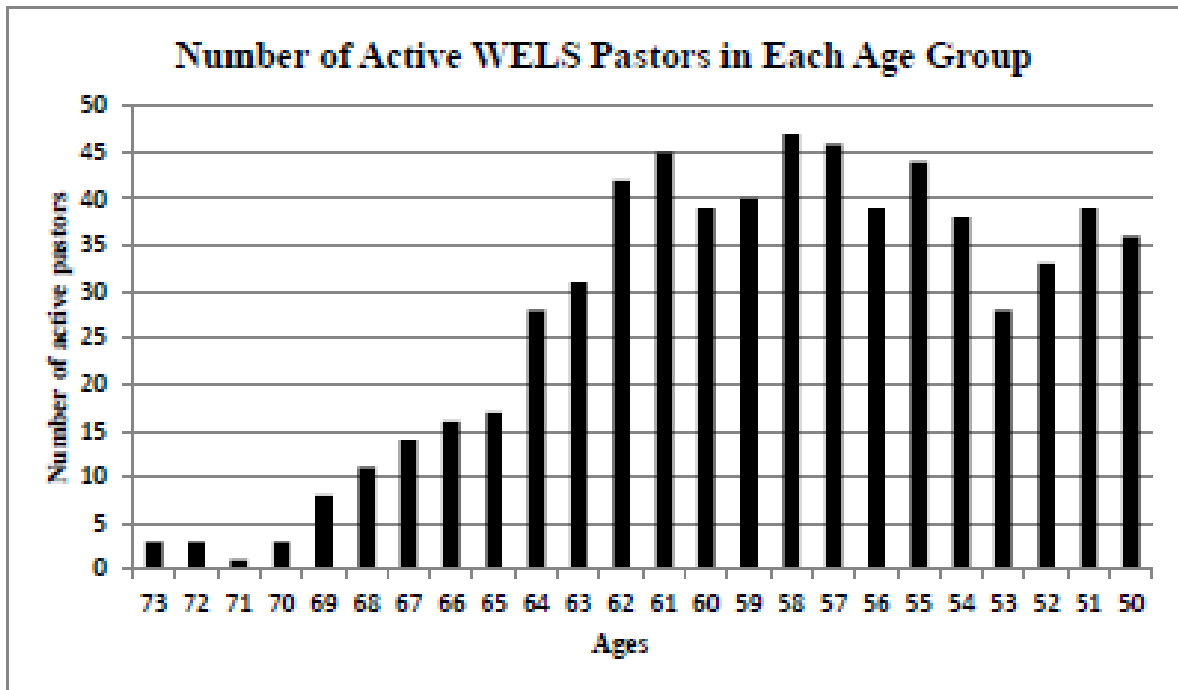
1976 – 241
 1977 – 236
 1978 – 239
 1979 – 243
 1980 – 256
 1981 – 275
 1982 – 273
 1983 – 261
 1984 – 242
 1985 – 210
 1986 – 204
 1987 – 198
 1988 – 203
 1989 – 218
 1990 – 211
 1991 – 207
 1992 – 206
 1993 – 187
 1994 – 203

MLC Pre-seminary Enrollment

1995 – 180
 1996 – 200
 1997 – 209
 1998 – 223
 1999 – 226
 2000 – 239
 2001 – 252
 2002 – 252
 2003 – 230
 2004 – 231
 2005 – 191
 2006 – 178
 2007 – 173
 2008 – 181
 2009 – 158
 2010 – 159
 2011 – 156
 2012 – 155
 2013 – 154

Appendix C

Ages of Active WELS Pastors (as of September 2013)

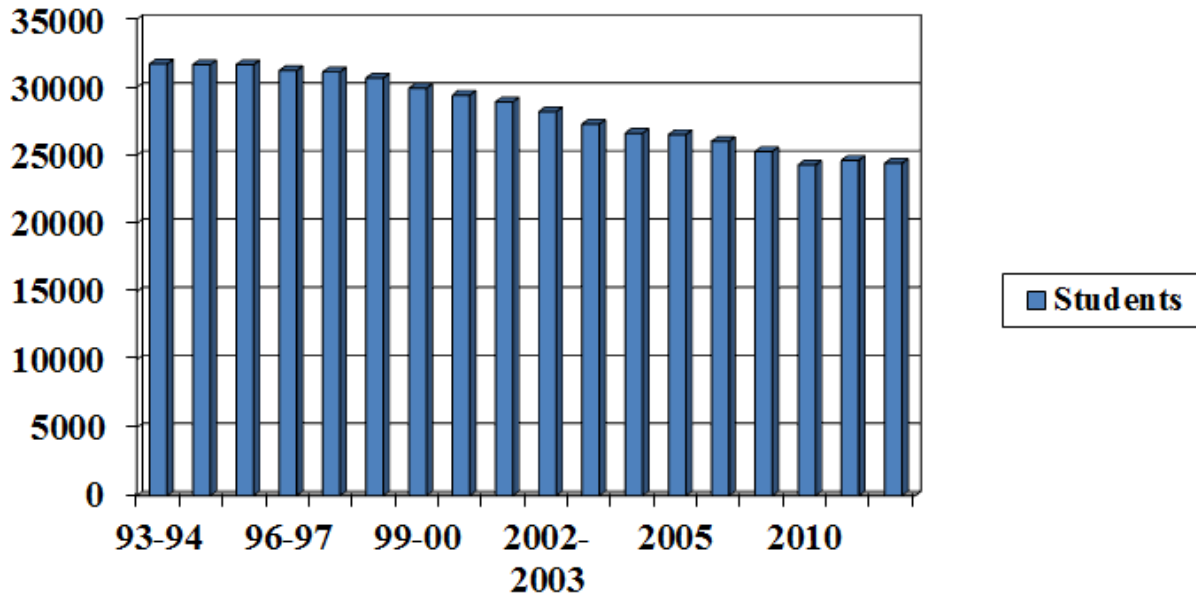


Number of Active WELS Pastors in Each Age Group
Listed by Birth Year and Approximate Age (as of September 2013)

1940 (73) – 3	1952 (61) – 45
1941 (72) – 3	1953 (60) – 39
1942 (73) – 1	1954 (59) – 40
1943 (70) – 3	1955 (58) – 47
1944 (69) – 8	1956 (57) – 46
1945 (68) – 11	1957 (56) – 39
1946 (67) – 14	1958 (55) – 44
1947 (66) – 16	1959 (54) – 38
1948 (65) – 17	1960 (53) – 28
1949 (64) – 28	1961 (52) – 33
1950 (63) – 31	1962 (51) – 39
1951 (62) – 42	1963 (50) – 36

Average number of pastors ages 54-62 = 42 per year

LES Enrollment in the WELS



Appendix E

SURVEY PROCEDURES A staff minister database had been compiled from the Staff Minister Service Inventories and Progress reports filed by staff ministers and kept at the Synodical Headquarters in Milwaukee. From this list of 117 persons, 87 were identified as serving in a congregation. The remainder of staff ministers serve as residence directors, director of corporate giving, executive director of a parachurch organization, home manager, director of admission, or a gift planning counselor. These non-parish staff ministers were not included in the survey and analysis because their work is quite different from the parish staff minister and the training and background of these persons varies considerably. The committee felt that including only parish staff ministers was more in keeping with the intent of the BME resolution. (WELS Staff Ministry, 2004)

Table 4 Ratings of Pastors, Laypersons, and Staff Minister Self-ratings On Various Responsibilities of Staff Ministry

Item	Pastor Ratings	Lay Ratings	SM Self-rating
Doctrinal soundness	4.15		4.17
Distinguish Law & Gospel	4.00		4.20
Evangelical	4.16	4.63	4.25
Flexible	3.87	4.29	4.10
Culturally sensitive	4.07	4.32	3.95
Zeal for outreach	3.80	4.37	4.02
Team player	3.87	4.32	4.24
Equipping lay youth leaders	2.91	3.77	3.04
Nurturing home/school cooperation	3.44	4.08	3.48
Leading youth ministry activities	3.26	4.00	3.46
Teaching adults	3.43	4.14	3.90
Teaching youth	3.54	4.28	3.80
Teaching children	3.79	4.29	3.79
Equipping lay to teach	3.10	3.66	3.21
Coordinating curriculum	3.33	4.00	3.36
Personal witnessing	3.96	4.38	3.65
Prospect visits	3.45	3.97	3.48
Visit inactive members	3.41	3.55	3.11
Equipping lay evangelism workers	3.14	3.69	2.98
Home visits members	3.83	3.73	3.79
Shut-in visits	4.03	3.81	3.90
Hospital visits	3.71	3.95	3.68
Informal support	3.90	4.41	3.91
Formal counseling	3.49	3.95	3.20
Training others in caring	3.11	3.55	3.07
General planning	3.46	4.02	3.74
Program development	3.42	3.92	3.70
Personal time management	3.43	3.75	3.38
Recruiting	3.29	3.58	3.31
Coordinating volunteer ministry	3.24	3.70	3.45

Scale: 1=weak
 2=Fair
 3=Average
 4=Good
 5=Excellent