11-27-2000

The Concord

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KOCH RECEIVES ELCA FUND FOR LEADERS IN MISSION SCHOLARSHIP

Luther Seminary Press Release

St. Paul, Minn. - This fall, Luther Seminary student, Paul Koch was one of eight students nationwide awarded a full-tuition scholarship from the ELCA Fund for Leaders in Mission program. The program is a church-wide initiative to identify and prepare future leaders for the ELCA. The scholarship totaled more than $52,000. It is the first time the fund has awarded such scholarships.

Recipients from each of the eight ELCA affiliated seminaries were chosen based on their potential for leadership in the church and their financial need.

Koch is a first-year student from Golden Valley, Minn., and a member of Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. He entered Luther Seminary’s master of divinity program after graduating from Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Ind. The master of divinity degree is required for ordination in the ELCA.

The fund’s long-term goal is to provide full tuition to every qualified ELCA seminary student committed to ordained or lay ministry. “Support for the preparation of leaders has long been a priority of the people and ELCA congregations,” said Cynthia Halvorson, Fund director, ELCA Foundation. “The Fund for Leaders in Mission is a creative effort to build on this tradition of support with a commitment of tuition assistance and a resounding ‘yes’ of affirmation and encouragement to those who want to respond to the call to serve.”

The cost of seminary education in the ELCA has steadily increased since 1950 and so has student indebtedness. According to Halvorson, such debt often prevents seminary graduates from accepting calls to smaller or struggling congregations because they are unable to repay their loans on the smaller salaries that those congregations can afford. “The Fund addresses this concern by reducing debt loads and allowing graduates to more freely serve where they are called,” she said.

“I am grateful, honored and humbled by this distinction,” said Koch. “It frees me from some of my financial burdens and allows me to spend less time with a campus job and more time on studies.”

Images from Family Day at Luther Seminary

more photos may be found on pages 7 & 8
Student Perspective
Open and Shut? A Word on Communion
By Delias Herbel, M. Div Middler

During my tenure as a student at Luther Seminary and especially this fall semester, I have been engaged in conversations concerning "open" versus "closed" communion. In the course of these conversations, a recurrent theme has been brought to my attention — "open" communion by ELCA members and others who uphold the position entitles these same members to partake at churches which do not live an "open" communion. My following response is not directed at any one of the people with whom I had these discussions. They were enlightening dialogues and I value each of them. I am not intending to personally attack anyone with whom I had this discussion. Rather, I wish to examine this topic because the aforementioned theme appears to be so widespread within the Luther Seminary community. Therefore, I appeal to you as a fellow seminarian and an Eastern Orthodox Christian. I do not pretend to be able to explain fully the Orthodox perspective, so I will not even try. I intend only to present my understanding as an Orthodox Christian.

The Orthodox Church, as many or all of you already know, does not practice "open" communion as it's understood by such bodies as the ELCA, the Presbyterian Church USA, the Disciples of Christ, et. al. When encountering the Orthodox position, I have often heard Christians from these traditions respond by asking who we, as Orthodox, think we are to judge someone in such a fashion. Indeed, who are we to judge? We are all still a little lower than angels and each of us must stand before our Lord. I wish to respond to this objection and I pray I do so in humility. My present response is twofold. First, the Orthodox practice is an act of grace intended for good Church order and not for condemnation. Second, there is a communal, liturgical experience necessary for full union in the Eucharist and a strong individualistic approach by anyone does not veto a worshipping community's approach on the issue. Orthodoxy, when She remains true to Herself, does not believe Christians outside of the Church are automatically condemned. Our strong insistence upon apophatic (negative) knowledge which forces us to rely upon revelation does not allow this. We don't know God or His purposes except through revelation. Therefore, it's not our business to know or even try to know who is eternally destined for heaven and who for hell.

What we do know is this: there are certain penitential and liturgical expressions of the Church requires of us in order to approach the Eucharist. This is because the Church does not wish for anyone to partake unto his or her condemnation. The Orthodox Church understands the Eucharist to be the Sacrament of sacraments and something extremely Holy. Therefore, the Eucharist is to be approached penitentially so that we do not partake unto our condemnation but for the forgiveness of sins and unto life everlasting. To guide us in this, the Church provides Vespers, Matins, Confession, daily prayers, and much more in anticipation of Divine Liturgy. Living as a unified Body which participates in these services and sacraments prepares us for the Eucharist.

By communing Her members, the Church unifies those who have engaged in such communal activities. The Church does not know and cannot presume to know how members of other Christian groups are expected to be. Orthodox doesn't condemn the other denominations, She simply doesn't claim to be able to know how those denominations are requiring their adherents to approach the Eucharist. This is because the Orthodox Church is not in full communion with these denominations and does not share with them a lived spirituality in the fullest and most complete sense. So, out of concern of having non-Orthodox possibly partake in an unhealthy way, the Church prefers to administer the Eucharist to those who have been chrismated into Her fold and are struggling to live a penitential life within the Orthodox Body of Christ.

This is not to say that Orthodox believers are "spiritually" superior to other Christians. Most of us would have difficulty measuring up to Mother Theresa! And it's highly likely that some Orthodox go to confession and live an outwardly penitential life when needed but don't really let the Holy Spirit cause Christ to dwell within them. The Church doesn't deny that. The Orthodox Church simply says that She has certain conditions whereby one can prepare him/herself for Communion and only those who worship in such ways should dare to approach the chalice. The Church is doing what She can so as not to participate in someone's condemnation. Does this mean that in the process devout Christians of other denominations get turned down who are, perhaps, more "Christian"? Some of my Lutheran colleagues counter with the position that we're all beggars and/or...
Watching for Millstones
Unresolved Clergy Abuse Harms Everyone Involved

By Scott A. Johnson
M.Div. Middler

I didn’t want to write this editorial. I really didn’t.
But sometimes it’s just impossible to let things stand
without saying something. I was just flippin’ around on
the idiot box last week when I happened on an in-
vestigative report centered
on St. John’s Abbey in Collegeville, Minne-
sota. At first I was just interested, then I was
angry, and by the time the report finished, I
was horrified.

It seems that there are some accusations of
sexual abuse against some members of the St.
John’s community, which in itself is nothing
extraordinary. Anyone involved in public
ministry knows how easily a seemingly im-
portant comment or gesture can be interpreted
in the worst possible manner, not to mention
the number of false accusations against clergy
who have done nothing but provide coun-
seling. But this was something much, much
more insidious. The abuse mentioned in this
report alone includes inappropriate contact,
rape, sodomy, and sexual abuse as part of the
sacrament of penance. One particular priest,
Father Richard Eckroth, is named in several
cases of abuse at church-sponsored retreats
to a lakeside cabin near Bemidji. According
to the report, Father Eckroth has not admit-
ted these crimes publicly and has not issued
apologies to those who have levied the accu-
sations against him. (A full transcript may be
found at www.kstp.com/More/#987)

It wasn’t the accusations or even the story
that really got me going about this, though.
As I said, sexually related legal prob-
lems are almost a fact of life for anyone in
public ministry, no matter how upright and
cautious the pastor may be. What really of-
fended me, what continues to offend me, was
the lack of forthrightness on the part of the
abbey itself. When asked about specific cases,
Father Rene McGraw refused to answer. (The
report lists Father McGraw as the spokesper-
son for sex abuse cases involving St. John’s
Abbey; the fact that St. John’s has a design-
ated spokesperson for sex abuse cases is chill-
ing in its own right, don’t you think?) To
be fair, Father McGraw is in a very unfortu-
nate position, and in some ways he is right—

when people are hurting, nothing will ever be
enough to take away their pain. However, I
don’t believe that the answer is to refuse to
discuss specific cases, and I certainly don’t
believe that any priest or pastor who is guilty
of such crimes should be protected. It seems
St. John’s is protecting the priests in ques-
tion; other than those priests, who really ben-
fits from such actions?

Having said this, let me acknowledge that
I am fully aware that I may be completely
wrong about the situation. I know there are
members of the Luther community who main-
tain close connections to St. John’s Abbey.
It should be understood (can I make this more
clear?) that this is not intended as an indict-
ment of every member of St. John’s Abbey. I
am sure there are many, many fine priests and
monks at St. John’s with the highest of stan-
dards and the deepest of convictions. Isn’t it
unfortunate how one or two members can lead
to the suspicion of an entire institution? Dur-
ing my undergraduate years at Nebraska, I
witnessed the uproar surrounding several foot-
ball players who had been accused of sexual
abuse. I remember how the entire team was
vilified (and continues to be vilified today)
because of the actions of a small group of
players. I remember how for months no one
would speak of the good contributions Ne-
braska athletes made to the community and
the state. I remember the media bias against
our coach when he allowed one player back
onto the team following extensive psychiat-
ric counseling and evaluation. I know that
television often gives only one side of the
story.

Be that as it may, that one side is all that’s
being told these days. When an institution
handles the number of charges that St. John’s
has handled, one has to wonder what’s go-
ning on within the institution itself. In 1991 St.
John’s founded the Interfaith Sexual Trauma
Institute, an institute designed to address
these kind of accusations. One of the found-
ing statements of the ISTI philosophy is that
“truth-telling and justice-making are integral
to change and healing in individuals and in-
sstitutions.” However, after seeing this report
and digging a little deeper, I’m forced to won-
der just how strongly some members of the
St. John’s community are committed to the
same philosophy.

In The House

By Robert Buck
M.Div. Junior

Our conversation thus far has centered on
my leanings toward “post-denominationalism” and
my accompanying dis-
comfort with our American
denominational structures
in their current form. Yet I
must consider that in spite
of my rhetoric to the contrary, this is what it
really about is my deep reticence to be la-
beled. Maybe it all boils down to the fact that I
simply don’t like to be pinned down.

When somebody asks me what denomi-
nation I belong to I struggle terribly to come
up with an answer that I believe would be
appropriate. Thus far, I truly am not able to
“own” any of the faith traditions in which I
have been immersed in an exclusive fashion.
It seems to me to be a much better approach
to “own” all of them. Perhaps it is most accu-
rate, then, for me to say that I am the adult
child of an Assembly of God family system
who has since spent equal time in the Men-
nonite and American Baptist systems and
now attends a Lutheran seminary. None of
these traditions, taken alone, are an accurate
representation of my faith experience. It is only
when they are considered as a whole that an
approximate representation of my experience
emerges.

So then, someone might ask, what do you
believe? Though I might like to say, “all of
the above,” I’m certain I wouldn’t be allowed
to get away with that. It is inherent in human
nature, it seems, to strive constantly to “pin
down”; classify, categorize, and systematize
which inherently defies all of these ef-
forts. Of course, it would be stating the obvi-
ous to say that divine-human interaction is
complex, and that the faith with emerges out
of such interaction is equally slippery. None-
theless, I think it needs to be said. Much to
my dismay, the older I get, the more shades of
gray I see. The more I learn, the less I know.

That is not to say, of course, that noth-
ing can be known. Faith, mediated by the tra-
ditions in which we apprehend it (or in which
it apprehends us), compels us, by its very
mystery, to seek to know more. This is as it
should be. However, faith, in the end, must

continued on page 4.
brothers and sisters and/or equal before God. Orthodox, too, see themselves as beggars before Christ. In fact, the Syrophoenician woman who told Christ “even dogs eat the crumbs” is often interpreted as an image of the Church. However, it is precisely because the Orthodox Church is always in this position of receiving crumbs, that She is unable to turn to the others in the crowd and judge who gets Her crumbs and who doesn’t. We’ll always be in this position. Either we’re a cell in the body of the Orthodox Church or we’re not.

Because of the brevity of my response, I wish to end the first part by asking a few questions. Why commune with those with whom you do not wish to be in full communion? What of the early Church’s understanding (and Orthodoxy’s continued understanding) of being in full communion by virtue of being in communion with the same bishop(s)? Is there not still validity to this understanding? And is it not arrogant (even if unintentional arrogance) for churches which have left the Orthodox Church (or Roman Catholic Church) to then turn around and demand the Eucharist?

These last two questions lead into the second part of my response. I wish to begin this part by quoting from Dr. David W. Fagerberg, a past instructor of mine at Concordia College Moorhead, who said, “borrowing from a common inventory of symbols does not prove the same liturgy is taking place, any more than serving food at both a wake and a wedding proves the same social event is taking place.” He also said, “liturgical theology is inadequately conceived if liturgy is treated as a branch of aesthetics and not the root of theology.

I raise these two quotations because they get at the heart of what I wish to say in this second part. An Orthodox liturgical life creates a community that subsists as a cohesive whole which, if viewed in a subversive manner by an individual, is incapable of truly sustaining that individual and does an injustice to the community.

What I mean is this: in order to truly understand how Orthodoxy works, one must become Orthodox (or at least a catechumate). Attending one Divine Liturgy does not give a person the right and/or knowledge needed to partake of the Eucharist. Orthodoxy is a lived Community—a lived Body. Even having the benefit of Luther Seminary’s (or any other seminary for that matter) analytical theological perspective does not mean a person is qualified to consider him/herself part of the Orthodox community he or she is visiting. Just because a person can look at incense, icons, candles, etc. and listen to a sermon based upon one of the Gospels, does not mean that person can then equate Orthodox with Lutherans, with Episcopalian, with Presbyterians, ad infinitum. There is something the unseminary-educated Orthodox believer knows that the most highly educated non-Orthodox does not. Grant that educated person as many Ph.D.’s as you wish and my point still holds.

I’m not going to do Orthodoxy an injustice and pretend to define what it is, I’m just saying I know what it is on Sunday—and I call it the incarnation of the work of the Holy Spirit (who makes Christ present) in the Orthodox Body of believers as well as the Eucharist. As I said, this doesn’t define it, but it does locate it in the Trinitarian working of the Holy Spirit through the Orthodox Church.

Therefore, a non-Orthodox walking into an Orthodox Church and trying to partake of the Eucharist is looking at the Church in a subversive manner and is not benefiting from the encounter. He or she is looking at the Church in a subversive manner because he or she is saying no matter what the Orthodox Church proclaims about Himself, he or she is His/his own council, his/her own pope, and, therefore, can undermine anything Orthodox says about Himself in order to satisfy his/her own individual desire for the Eucharist (an act which would be usurpative).

This need not be an act intended to be arrogant or usurp anything. Indeed, from the people I’ve met here at Luther I would say it’s probably never intended that way. Nonetheless, what I am speaking of is not the intention, but the behavior. And a behavior which tells a community that no matter what it says about itself, the community is wrong and not to be respected, is an extreme form of individualism that is a form of arrogance (even if unintended).

For Lutherans, sola fide, sola scriptura, and sola auto are the marks of good theology. To those who wonder why sola auto has been added, it has been because anytime an individual proclaims him/herself to be his/her own council and pope to the extent that he or she can override even communities to which he or she does not belong, sola auto is at work. In Orthodoxy, there isn’t sola anything.

No one is saved alone and no one communes alone and no one determines when or where to commune on his/her own.

In conclusion, I appeal to you not to try to force an “open” communion agenda upon a community trying to live as a community. We do not practice “closed” communion so we can judge your eternal destiny. Nor is Orthodoxy something which can be systematically analyzed so as to be saying the same things as Lutherans. Our Liturgy is different. Our theology is different. At present, our communities are different. I ask that you respect this when visiting our Church or any other which practices “closed” communion (such as the Roman Catholic Church). I understand and respect that we’re all beggars. Therefore, please don’t place the individual over a community to which the individual does not belong, lest the beggar become not only chooser, but usurper.

In the House — continued from page 2

not ultimately be about knowing. This is not the essence of faith. Indeed, it seems to me that what drives my faith isn’t my answers, but my questions. It is what I don’t know and may never know that moves me along the path of faithfulness. As much as it may be necessary due to our limited intellectual abilities to explain God to ourselves in terms we can understand, God, more often than not, defies explanation. God breaks loose on us, and if we’ll admit it, what do we do then?

Fine, you say, but what do you believe? Well, that’s a question I keep coming back to, and each time my “answer” changes. When it comes to faith, of course, the truth that I just can’t seem to avoid is that faith is relational. I can’t avoid this truth because Jesus just won’t go away. What is compelling for me about Christianity isn’t my intellectual assent to those pieces of doctrine that mark the difference between orthodox and heresy. I am compelled by Christ. Literally, he moves me, sometimes gently, sometimes in a whirlwind that shatters my carefully constructed belief structures and scatters that which I would hold on to in place of Him. Truly, I believe in Christ. I can do no other.
Come, Thou Long-Expected Community

Ah, Advent is upon us once again. As you can see from the title of this article, I’ve taken the liberty of adapting an Advent hymn (or at least its title) for my purposes. Obviously, I’d like to call attention to community. Well, first I should probably let you know that I’m not here to tell you that I have some kind of special insight that will lead to our establishing the ideal community here at Luther. The only thing I seek to do is just share some of my observations, and you are free to draw whatever conclusion you’d like. These are just the ruminations of a nice girl from New Jersey, although as I write that I would like to point out that there is a Biblical precedent of wise people coming from the East. But enough. On to more pressing matters...

In my time at Luther, it’s been brought to my attention several times that the cafeteria seating arrangements are vexatious to some in our community. Particularly, what I’ve heard is that the Center Table is reserved only for Bockman residents and others are not welcome. (For those of you wondering which is the “Center Table,” it is the infinitely expandable rectangular table in the center of the cafeteria.)

Now I must confess that indeed I am a Bockman resident myself, and during lunch, dinner and those rare occasions I manage to schlep myself over for breakfast, you will in fact find me at the Center Table. And I’m not ashamed of being a Bockmanite, either. Where else could I share a bathroom with at least ten other women or be awakened by an early morning fire alarm due to some experimental popcorn cooking techniques? Not to mention our new, improved, post-fire kitchen and our fabulous tunnel/shelter, among the many other perks of Bockman life.

My first introduction to the Center Table came when I was a summer Geeking. My first day here I was feeling rather shy, but at the same time I also wanted to meet new people so I sat at the Center Table. I watched in amazement as more and more tables were added on and soon there were about thirty people — all technically sitting at the same table. Soon I was conversing with others at the table, and I remember that night feeling oh-so-relieved that just about everyone else felt as nervous about Geeking as I did. From then on I’ve been a Center Table regular.

It didn’t occur to me then or now that others would feel intimidated by the usual crowd of mostly Bockmanites at the Center Table. But as a Center Table regular I’d like to say that everyone is welcome to sit there if they so choose. If you would like to join us any time, please by all means DO. If you feel a little shy about it, maybe you could sit towards the end and maybe chew quietly so as not to draw too much attention to yourself until you warm up to the idea. Or you could just find an empty chair and if necessary say to the people sitting nearby “I don’t think I’ve met you yet; my name is (insert name here).” If you feel like you need permission you can tell them Lesley sent you, but I am not in any way responsible for the reception that may or may not get you! You might find it’s a more eclectic crowd than you had thought — you know, sometimes even professors will join us! So please, come. We’ll make room.

I’ve had enough CPE (five units, by the way) to know that often the issue is not the issue. Meaning that while I’ve heard hurt feelings expressed about cafeteria seating arrangements, I know that those hurt feelings likely come from feeling unwelcome in a community, which is particularly hurtful when it’s one’s own community. I’m sure all of us know that feeling — for me it takes me back to feeling left out on the playground or being chosen last for a team in elementary school. And when I get that feeling even now at the ripe old age of 27 it still makes me want to announce “I’m taking my marbles and I’m going home!” much as I did back in elementary school. In fact, don’t be surprised if you do hear me use that line — it’s been known to happen before.

But rather than take our marbles and go home, maybe it would be better to ask ourselves how we could be more welcoming and thus make this a more welcoming community. Is the cafeteria a starting place? Perhaps. I know that I will be interested to find out.
Notes from the Parish Nurse

By Lydia Volz
Luther Seminary Parish Nurse

In November we celebrate All Saint's Day and hold the Great American Smoke Out. God's Word encourages us to "...honor God with your body" (1Cor. 6:15, 19-20). Today I want to share some thoughts on Tobacco.

The use of tobacco is the leading cause of death (more than 400,000 deaths/year in the U.S. are directly related to the use of tobacco). On the death certificate, heart or lung disease may be listed, but the actual cause of these diseases is often tobacco use. Of those who begin smoking, 75% will be addicted. Researchers note that nicotine is as addictive as cocaine and heroin. 80,000 women this year will be diagnosed with lung cancer with lower survival rates than with breast cancer. Smoking is implicated in cancer of the lung, cervix, larynx, esophagus, bladder, pancreas, kidney and stomach, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, emphysema, osteoporosis and even premature wrinkling. Quitting smoking can improve your health right away. 12 hours after you stop, harmful carbon monoxide is gone from your body. One day after you stop, the risk of heart attack starts to decrease, the next day, your taste buds begin to function again...and this is just the start of a healthier life! Quitting smoking can also put change in your pocket! At smoking 2 packs a day, the cost over 30 years is $43,800! (American Institute for Preventative Medicine).

Steps to Stop Smoking
- Pray and commit the process to the Lord
- Make a list of your important reasons to stop.
- Analyze your smoking: when do you smoke and who are you with?
- Stay out of smoking situations, especially at first.
- Accept help from friends and family, doctors and others. They can help to hold you accountable.
- Visit with ex-smokers and find out what worked for them.
- Diffuse cravings with exercise, activity or visits with non-smoking friends.
- Stay with your program. Plan for success and thank God for the results.

Additional resources are available from the American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org) or the American Lung Association (www.lungusa.org). Students may also contact the Parish Nurse x537.

The December 7 forum, 12:30-1:30 p.m., will feature Dr. Pat Casello who will speak on behavioral choices and emotional responses regarding diet, exercise and stress management.

Flu Shots Update

The good news is that over 100 at Luther Seminary received their shots on October 25. The bad news is that the supply ran out because of an unanticipated demand. The Lyngblomsten Community Health program decided against reordering because the backlog of orders extended to August and the cost had doubled.

Fairview Community Center is offering flu shots on November 18 from 9-12 a.m. Cub and Snyder pharmacies have also had flu shots available.

Ways to protect yourself and others:
- Avoid large crowds
- Wash hands often and well
- Drink plenty water, get sufficient sleep, eat more fruit and veggies

Flu symptoms include:
- Fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, sore throat, cough. If you experience these, go to bed until the fever is gone and force fluids.
- Flu is spread by the influenza virus spreading from an infected person to the nose and throat of others.

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Dr. Stefan Reder speaks during a lunchtime conversation at Luther Seminary in October. Dr. Reder is president of the Lutheran Seminary of Novosaratovka, in St. Petersburg, Russia. He was in Minneapolis to speak to several Twin Cities churches about the ongoing work at his seminary.
Airline tickets, vacation packages and more

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really do much of anything. All of this happened because I just happened to be where I was when I was — and none of it would have happened if I hadn’t locked those keys in the van in the first place.

The whole chain of events left me with a sense that I was in just the right places at the right times, as if there were some higher plan operating beyond anything I could have planned on my own. (Locking the keys in the van is never part of any of my plans.) Instead of being upset about the inconvenience of the whole situation, I felt strangely blessed.

As an added treat, I was even able to have an impromptu lunch date with my husband. We used to have them occasionally, back in the days when we were both working. But we haven’t had one since … well, since our first child was born. We both had a great time.

And it got me thinking about that verse in Romans. You know the one: “we know that in all things God works for the good …” God does work for good in all things — even misplaced car keys.
More Images from Family Day at Luther Seminary

Handmade cards and handmade postcards in one. The card is first sent like any other greeting card. But your recipient pulls off the front and returns it as a postcard!

Juniors, keep in touch with family. Middlers, write to your friends on internship. Seniors, keep in touch with your internship site.

Why trust your most important notes to anything else — especially when they are specially priced for seminary students at $2.50 each and $9.00 per four-pack?!!

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Then give Nate Loer a call 646-2668.