10-30-2000

The Concord

Luther Seminary

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.luthersem.edu/student_newspapers

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.luthersem.edu/student_newspapers/7

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Archives & Special Collections at Digital Commons @ Luther Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Newspapers by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Luther Seminary. For more information, please contact akeck001@luthersem.edu.
ELCA Bishops Address Ordination Standards, Possible CCM Exceptions

CHICAGO (ELCA) — The ELCA Conference of Bishops agreed with a recommendation to the ELCA Church Council from the ELCA Division for Ministry that a proposal that would allow the bishops to grant exceptions to the church’s ordination standards be declined. The proposal was made in reference to the ELCA’s policy that ordained ministers who are homosexual in their self-understanding are expected to abstain from homosexual sexual relationships.

The bishops also said rejection of the proposal should not be seen as an indication that the ELCA is “stepping away from its commitment to engage this church in a continuing, discerning conversation regarding the place of gay and lesbian persons in the life of the ELCA,” including discussion of gay and lesbian people living in committed relationships and the question of ordination of people living in such relationships.

The proposal originated with St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN, and was directed to the Church Council by the St. Paul Area Synod Council. In April the council asked the Division for Ministry to prepare a response, which was shared with the bishops this month for their advice. The division’s board will consider the bishops’ advice as it completes its response for the council meeting next month, said the Rev. A. Craig Settlage, associate executive director, ELCA Division for Ministry.

St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church is seeking an exception for Anita Hill, a lay minister who has served the congregation for several years and was to complete a master of divinity degree this year, a requirement for ordination in the ELCA. On behalf of the congregation, the St. Paul Area Synod Council petitioned the ELCA Church Council to amend “Vision and Expectations,” a document the council adopted in 1990 which laid out ordination standards.

The St. Paul Area Synod proposed that the Conference of Bishops be empowered to grant exceptions to the ELCA standards for ordained ministers. The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, bishop of the St. Paul Area Synod, told the bishops the synod council “wants a process and is not advocating a position” on the issue. “Part of the synod council’s struggle now is not to disconnect from this vital mission center (St. Paul-Reformation) that wants to be part of this church. They (the synod council) are asking for a process to be established. If not the Conference of Bishops, where will this be heard?”

The bishops agreed with a Division for Ministry draft report, prepared as a possible response to the St Paul Area Synod, which said there is no basis in the ELCA Constitution for the Conference of Bishops to have the authority to grant exceptions to the ordination standards. Such authority could only be granted by amending the ELCA’s governing documents, the report said.

The bishops affirmed a recommendation of the Division for Ministry, which said the proposal from the Saint Paul Area Synod would make the Conference of Bishops a “court of appeals” for all candidacy committee decisions, undercutting the committees’ constitutional responsibility and altering the role and authority of the conference. Other constitutional issues would have to be addressed, the bishops said.

“The proposed resolution would not be consistent with this church’s understanding...” continued on page 2

Family Day To Connect Lutheran Students, Staff, Families

Friday, November 10th is Family Day at Luther Seminary this year. “Serving the Promise of Our Mission,” the title of Luther Seminary’s new five-year plan, will also be the title of this year’s Family Day, and will provide the focus for the majority of the day’s activities.

Several Luther faculty and staff will be included in these activities. Diane Jacobson, Professor of Old Testament, will preach in Chapel, Seminary President David Tiede will address students and their families during a lunch provided for the event, and Craig Koester, Professor of Bible and New Testament, will give an afternoon presentation on the Bible Tutor program in Northwestern Hall, Room 100. In addition, tours of the campus will be offered through the Seminary Relations office.

Families of Luther Seminary Juniors and Middlers are invited to attend and enjoy the festivities, but students are reminded to please ensure that all RSVP’s are received by November 1st, as space is extremely limited, especially for the lunch program. Seminary Relations staff members reported over 30 “unannounced” attendees at last year’s lunch program; there will not be enough room for the same number of “unannounced” guests this year. Students with questions should call Laurie Mandy to in Seminary Relations at ext. 448.

Ecumenical student reflects ‘In the House’

Consistently Inconsistent

Notes from the Parish Nurse: FMS and Influenza
In the House

Robert Buck, M.Div. Junior
Contributing Columnist

The Concord is still seeking writers, reporters, cartoonists, and other contributors. If you would like to contribute, even if you would only have material for one issue, please contact The Concord! concord@luthersem.edu

The Concord is a student publication and reflects no official position of Luther Seminary or of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The Concord is published bi-weekly and is distributed free of charge on the Luther Seminary campus and are most often available in the Olson Campus Center. Mail subscriptions are available — contact our offices for more information.

Readers are encouraged to submit articles and letters to the editors for publication. All submissions should include the author's name, telephone number and, if a student, class standing. In addition, all submissions to The Concord should be prepared in typed, hard copy form as well as on disk if the item is so prepared. It is preferable that documents be in PC format. All submissions should be delivered to our mailbox in the Olson Campus Center (703) or at our office, Gulfison 10.

The Concord reserves the right to edit, edit, or disregard all submissions. "Letters to the Editor" submissions should be limited to 200 words or less while "Guest Columnist" submissions should not exceed 850 words.
Consistently Inconsistent?

A sword or a Nerfball?

Scott A. Johnson M.Div Middler
Managing Editor, The Concord

Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12 RSV)

There are days when I wish I could just get done with seminary, find a nice, small congregation with a prairie dog mentality (build your hole deep and camouflage it well), jump in, and pull the lid of ignorance and apathy right over my head. I'm assuming most of you know those days as well. It seems to me that those days bring a lot of questions that remain unanswered, and those are the days when the Gospel seems to be the sword of Hebrews rather than the warm fuzzy we often think it should be.

Today seems to be one of those days. What I'm wondering today revolves around a lot of things, but primarily my question is this: can the ELCA as a denomination honestly say it is giving a sharp, clear witness to ANYTHING right now? What in the world are we for? Against? Is there anything of substance in this denomination right now?

I received several news releases from the annual Conference of Bishops meeting this week, and the two that are combined and printed on page (INSERT PAGE # HERE) are what got me thinking along these lines this week. If you haven't read them, do so now, so that we can talk about this. (pause given for assigned reading, like seminarians don't have enough assigned reading anyway, right?)

Now here's my question: what kind of witness are we giving the world right now? On the one hand, in relation to the possible ordination of practicing homosexuals, the Conference of Bishops says that there is no constitutional provision that allows them to grant exceptions to ordination standards. On the other hand, in relation to CCM, synod bishops are the ones who would grant exceptions to ordination standards, according to their recommendation to the Church Council. What gives?

Of course, one must admit that there is a subtle difference here. The bishops addressed an actual proposal regarding homosexuality, and they actually advised the ELCA Church Council regarding the practice of ordination in the light of CCM. In addition, for many people the question of homosexuality goes far deeper than ordination procedure (although it might be argued that for CCM opponents, the question of the historic episcopate goes far deeper than ordination procedure as well). But the problem still remains:

"The bishops agreed with a Division for Ministry draft report, prepared as a possible response to the Saint Paul Area Synod, which said there is no basis in the ELCA Constitution for the Conference of Bishops to have the authority to grant exceptions to the ordination standards."

"The Conference of Bishops said three points are important when considering the possibility of an ordination without the presence of a bishop:
- that the decision be "a pastoral decision of the synodical bishop informed by the guidelines developed by the ELCA Division for Ministry in consultation with the Conference of Bishops;"
- that the synod bishop "consult with the ELCA presiding bishop to consider the ecumenical implications" of such an action; and
- that the synod bishop "receive the advice of the synod council under the guidelines."

Excerpts from ELCA News press releases regarding the recent Conference of Bishops gathering

in one situation, the bishops take no responsibility for exceptions to ordination standards, while in the other they are given primary responsibility for exceptions.

This marvelous inconsistency is, in my opinion, not acceptable. If there is to be a national understanding of the ELCA with any kind of substance, there must be consistency in understanding the roles and functions of administrative leaders. If we're going to grant the authority and power of granting exceptions to bishops, the presiding bishop, the Church Council, candidacy committees, or the Luther League of First Swedish Lutheran Church in Lutefisk Falls, Minnesota, does it not behoove us to do it across the board, even if that means ruffling some feathers? What message is sent by saying no, there can be no exceptions in one situation and yes, there can be exceptions in another, considering the procedural similarities of the respective questions?

I know I'm being impatient in some respects. Deal with it. I'm 26 and I'm going to be over $50,000 in debt when I graduate from Luther Seminary — I'm a little concerned about channying my future (and the futures of my wife and family as well) to a church that can't seem make up its collective mind on anything remotely questionable.

I also want to say that this should not be the exclusive job of the Conference of Bishops, to set policy for the ELCA. Matter of fact, I think we ask too much of bishops already; we spread them so thin that it would be impossible to ask them to do anything more for this church. The ELCA can and should look to its bishops for leadership, but that should not ever be the exclusive location of leadership. Leadership is the responsibility of every member of the ELCA, and perhaps if we all took it a little more seriously the ELCA might have a better idea where it is going. Unfortunately, there are times when the Gospel is a sword that pierces to the heart of things, separating those things we hold most dear and warding us to the core. It seems, however, that much of the ELCA is preaching an even more unfortunate Gospel these days, a Gospel that has all the cutting and piercing qualities of a Nerfball. Problems like the current debates over ordination, homosexuality, and CCM are not going to go away, and perhaps, painful as it may be, the time has come for the Gospel to do a littlecleaving among us. I for one hope that if it does happen, the cleaving can be done with a sharp, fast sword, so as to leave as little blood on the floor as possible. God help us, but I fear that if we continue down the road of inconsistency much longer, we may find that this road leads to the land of irrelevancy as well.
To the Editor:

Robert Buck’s article in the most recent issue of The Concord (“Reflections on being an ecumenical student at Luther Seminary,” Oct. 9, 2000) was great! I look forward to reading more. I have long been unsatisfied with the term “ecumenical students” but find it preferable to always referring to a group of students as “non-ELCA.” My biggest concern with it is that it somehow implies that ELCA students are NOT ecumenical. Based on the definition Robert gave in his article, I would hope we all are “ecumenical,” that we all inhabit the household of God and welcome others.

Last year, students communicated concerns to me about grouping all non-ELCA students as “ecumenical.” Many appreciated having opportunities to share with other students who were, to some degree, strangers in a foreign land. Others felt that the very classification itself was distancing. Technically, the “ecumenical student” group at Luther Seminary includes other Lutherans such as Missouri Synod, Wisconsin Synod, Lutheran Brethren, and Lutheran International students. Some of them are confused that they are part of the “ecumenical” group and some are downright angered or insulted by it. It reminds me of an old, old film clip on inclusive language where an Asian woman is being told that the greetings in church (“Welcome, brothers in Christ.”) and the hymns (“Rise up, O men of God” and “Faith of our Fathers”) all include her even though she is a woman. The last frame is the woman standing red-faced outside a door labeled “MEN.” She says, “I’m NOT included!” With a term like “ecumenical” as it is used here, how do we know who is included and who is not?

One of the things we need to do is to have more conversations about what it means at Luther Seminary to be ecumenical (and I’m not just referring to those of us who are non-ELCA now). How can we meet each other at the lowest common denominator we can find among us but out of the strength of our individual heritages and a common mission to serve Christ? The Ecumenical Concerns Committee would like to hear any ideas any of you might have. And we hope to hear more from Robert in future issues of The Concord.

Jean Justice, Coordinator of Ecumenical Student Enrollment, Luther Seminary

Dear Romans,
How are you?
I don’t really have much to say.
Just behead yourselves and have faith in God.
love from Paul.
P.S. Say hello to Priscilla and Apule...

St. Paul’s first draft.

ECUMENICAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT AT LUTHER SEMINARY FALL 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32 MDIV (8% of all MDIV)</td>
<td>40 MA &amp; MSM (25% of all MA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 PhD, MTJ, GRSP (40%)</td>
<td>26 DMIN (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Non-Degree (22%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nineteen percent of the total student body at Luther is ecumenical, a total of 148 students, not including ten Consortium students and two Visiting Scholars.

Thirty-eight different denominations are represented at Luther Seminary.

The denominational breakdown of ecumenical students is as follows:

- 21 Lutheran International
- 15 Missouri Synod Lutheran
- 14 Presbyterian International
- 12 Presbyterian (USA)
- 12 United Methodist
- 6 American Baptist
- 6 General Baptist
- 5 National Baptist
- 3 Synod of God (Pentecostal)
- 4 Episcopal
- 4 Evangelical Covenant
- 4 United Church of Christ
- 3 Christian & Missionary Alliance
- 3 Roman Catholic
- 3 Greek Orthodox
- 3 Protestant International
- 3 Non-denominational
- 2 African Methodist Episcopal
- 2 Baptist International
- 2 Evangelical Free
- 2 Lutheran Brethren
- 2 Anglican International
- 2 Southern Baptist
- 1 Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- 1 Christian Independent
- 1 Reformed, Church of God
- 1 Evangelical Congregational
- 1 Evangelical Methodist
- 1 Full Gospel Korean International
- 1 Jewish
- 1 Wisconsin Synod Lutheran
- 1 Mennonite
- 1 Muslim
- 1 Reorganized Luther Day Saints
- 1 Roman Catholic International
- 1 UCC International

Copyright 2000 The Door Magazine. Used by permission.
that ordained ministers are to have the same rights and be held to the same standards, no matter where they are called,” the bishops advised, citing the Division for Ministry draft report. “Candidates approved for ordination under the proposed resolution would not truly become pastors of the whole church because their mobility would be seriously hindered or nonexistent.”

The bishops also noted previous actions of the churchwide assembly and church councils on related matters, and said six churchwide units, synods, congregations, seminars and other institutions of the ELCA are to engage in an ongoing conversation on issues involving gay and lesbian people and the ordained ministry.

In other news, the Conference of Bishops also suggested the presiding bishop and synod council be consulted should a candidate for ordination in the ELCA wish to be ordained without the presence of a synod bishop. The bishops offered the advice as the Church Council considers the possibility of exceptions to ordination procedures which are required as part of “Called to Common Mission” (CCM). The agreement was adopted in August 1999 at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly and in July 2000 by a general convention of the Episcopal Church.
**Notes from the Parish Nurse**

**Lydia Volz**  
Luther Seminary Parish Nurse  

*Are you looking for support from people with issues/problems similar to your own? Or do you want to provide support to people with issues like your own?*

The Community Health Committee would like to help those of you who answered “yes” to connect with each other. Currently we are in the process of facilitating support groups for those interested in finding others with issues similar to their own. If you are dealing with issues of physical or mental health and would like to be part of a campus support group, please contact Liz Engel 651-644-0915 or Dick Young 651-641-3317 (on campus Ext. 317). Your call will be treated confidentially.

**October Events and Concerns**

**Fibromyalgia**

You may have seen or heard the word, but do you know what it is? Many of us on this campus do! FMS (fibromyalgia syndrome) is one of those invisible syndromes that make people wonder if they are going crazy—or if there is really something wrong with them. Symptoms vary from person to person, but most people hurt all over—without any apparent reason for the pain. Sleepless nights, overreactions to almost anything—bosses do not like employees with FMS. Various and sundry other syndromes seem to ride along with FMS-TMJ, IBS, CFS—and a virtual alphabet soup of others!

There are several people on campus who experience FMS on a daily basis. The good news is, there is help available — information, medication, aquatic therapy, life-style changes. If you are interested in a support group or one-to-one discussion, please contact Liz Engel, Community Health Committee.

The Mission and Ministry Forum on November 2, 12:30 - 1:30 will feature a representative from the Arthritis Foundation who will speak on fibromyalgia.

**Influenza**

Influenza is caused by a virus that spreads from the infected persons to the nose and mouth of others. Symptoms include sore throat, chills and fever, cough, headache and muscle ache. Influenza vaccine can prevent influenza. It is made from killed viruses, so will not cause the disease. The vaccine is specific to targeted viruses and is updated every year.

People who are at risk for complications or in contact with those who are at risk should get the vaccine. This includes persons over 65, persons with a weakened immune system and health care workers. Students and staff at schools should also get the vaccine to prevent outbreaks of influenza.

Flu shots will be offered on campus after chapel on October 25 and November 8. Lyngbomsten has received an ample supply. The shots will be administered by Sandi Krohn, the Parish Nurse Coordinator. The shots will cost $10. This is covered for international students.

**Parish Nurse Ministry Overview**

This relatively new ministry at Luther Seminary is a holistic approach to health care, bringing together aspects of faith and healing through education, counseling and assisting members of the seminary community. The parish nurse ministry includes a number of roles, which are usually defined as follows:

- **Clarifier of faith/health relationship**
  "May the God of peace...sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit, soul and body be kept sound and blameless"...I Thessalonians 5:23 "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? You were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." I Corinthians 6: 19-20

- **Personal health counselor**
  As personal health counselor, Lydia Volz is usually in her office on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The times are regularly posted in This Week. The parish nurse is available to discuss health issues, assist with finding health resources, assess need for medical attention by taking blood pressure, temperature etc.

- **Health educator**
  The Lifetime Health program was introduced this fall at the Senior Retreat. Dr. Dan Halvorsen, a physiologist at the University of Minnesota was the featured speaker. The purpose of the Lifetime Health Program is to increase an awareness of healthy lifestyles and provide the individual with tools to increase the level of healthy living for themselves and those they will be serving. Two more seminars are scheduled for Luther Seminary seniors and their spouses on the first Monday of November and December from 5-6:30 p.m.

In February, cholesterol screening will be offered and a blood pressure check. Each student will be given the opportunity to fill out a health risk assessment tool followed by a wellness exam by an MD.

The first Thursday of each month’s Mission and Ministry Forum has a health and wellness focus.

- **Facilitator / coordinator of volunteers and support groups**
  The Sharing Group for Healthy Living meets on Wednesday from 3-4 p.m. followed by a half hour neighborhood walk. The discussions focus on the disciplines of diet, exercise and stress control enabling the participants to bring their lives into balance. The individual concerns may differ, but the goal of each is to be good stewards of the gifts of mind, and spirit.

**Liaison with community health organizations**

Referrals are made to various health agencies when indicated by the specific needs of a student. Students from different specialties are invited to speak at Mission and Ministry forums.

---

**Write-Me-Back™ Cards**

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. Middders, 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?!?!

*• • •*

Check out our designs (including one with Hebrew!):

www.geocities.com/writebeginback_cards

Then give Nate Loer a call 646-2868.