Seminary News

Hess, Lose Join Luther Faculty

From Luther Seminary Press Releases

Dr. Mary E. Hess and Dr. David J. Lose are the newest additions to the Luther Seminary faculty. Hess will serve as assistant professor of education leadership. Lose will serve as the assistant professor of homiletics (preaching studies).

Before joining Luther Seminary, Hess was an adjunct instructor and post-doctoral research fellow at Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Mass., where she directed its Religious Education and the Challenge of Media Culture project.

Hess received her bachelor of arts degree in American Studies in 1985 from Yale University in New Haven, Conn. She received her master of theological studies degree in 1992 from Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass. In 1998, she received her Ph.D. in religion and education from Boston College.


Prior to joining Luther Seminary, Lose served as pastor of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Princeton Junction, N.J., and as a teaching fellow and visiting lecturer at Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J.

He received his bachelor of arts degree in English and psychology from Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Penn., in 1988. He earned his master of divinity degree in 1993 and his master of sacred theology in 1997 from The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. In May 2000, he earned his doctorate in homiletics from Princeton Theological Seminary.

Lose’s professional experience includes serving as visiting instructor at Warburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa (Spring, 1999) and at New Brunswick Theological Seminary in New Brunswick, N.J. (Fall, 1998). He has also served as pastor for two other congregations in New Jersey (1993-1998) and taught English literature, composition and public speaking at The Culver Educational Foundation in Culver, Ind.

Lutherans Respond To Vatican Document And Letter

CHICAGO (ELCA) — The general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) said Sept. 8 that he is "disappointed" that 35 years of ecumenical dialogue between Lutherans and Roman Catholics apparently were not considered when the Vatican issued a document earlier this week and sent a letter in June to presidents of Roman Catholic Bishops’ conferences around the world.

The Sept. 5 document, “Dominius Iesus”—On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church, states that “ecclesial communities which have not preserved the valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery, are not churches in the proper sense.” In a letter issued June 30, the Vatican said, in effect, Roman Catholics should not use the term “sister church” referring to Protestants. Instead, they should be called “ecclesial communities,” the letter said.

“Dominius Iesus,” was published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of the Roman Catholic Church, and ratified by Pope John Paul II. The letter to the presidents of the bishops’ conferences was also issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

“Lutheran churches, together with other churches of the Reformation, are not ready to accept the categories now emphasized by the congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith nor the definitions and criteria underlying them,” said the Rev. Ishmael Noko, LWF general secretary. “The impact of these statements is more painful because they reflect a different spirit than that which we encounter in many other Lutheran-Roman Catholic relationships.”

“The LWF remains committed to ecumenical dialogue,” Noko’s statement continued. “We believe that ecumenism is not optional but essential to the Church. Temporary setbacks should neither be allowed to cloud nor to darken our vision for Christian unity as willed and prayed for by Christ himself.”

The ELCA affirmed the LWF statement, said the Rev. Daniel F. Martensen, director, ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs. In a brief statement Sept. 7, the ELCA Office of...continued on page 4
A Place Called Home

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

So, what did you do for your summer vacation?

Me, I learned the joy of having a home. Allow me to explain. In November, my wife made a decision: she wanted to join the Army Reserve. I made a decision, too: I decided to swallow the lump in my throat (rising from my stomach at roughly the speed of light) and support her. After all, didn’t she support me when I wanted to go to seminary? Perspective can be a wonderful thing, can’t it?

Since my wife wouldn’t be around the Cities, I decided to leave as well, to do my CPE closer to my family in Nebraska. I spent the summer living with my parents, missing my wife while she spent eleven weeks in Basic Training, and commuting to Sioux City, Iowa to minister to the saints at St. Luke’s Regional Medical Center.

The oddest thing happened when it came time to leave, however. When I left that farm at 18 to go off to college, I was ready to go. Actually, that’s an understatement. Fervent with desire to leave would be an understatement as well; I was all but shaking the farm dust from my sandals when I left for college. But this summer, I was given time to gain some appreciation for what I was leaving behind.

This was the house where I learned to walk, to cry, to sing, to laugh, and most especially, to dream of what could be. On that farm I had defended America with my stick-that-looked-like-a-gun. On that lawn I had won several national championships for my beloved Nebraska Cornhuskers. I was Tarzan, He-Man, Godzilla, Indiana Jones, GI Joe, Turner Gill, Luke Skywalker, and a host of other heroes and villains before I grew away from these childhood games. In that house I fought with my parents and terrorized my younger brothers. Under that roof I read Tom Sawyer and The Warlord of Mars, The Hobbit and Cujo. In that living room I played piano and guitar, I sang and learned my trombone. In that house I dreamed of girls and future marriages and children of my own, who would no doubt be as beautiful and perfect as their loving father. That farm was always, for lack of a better word, home. I knew everything there was to know of the house, the land: the sound of that beat-up, sunburned front door crashing open, the smell of corn, soybeans, and hog manure coming in through the windows in summertime, the feel of the old treehouse out back, the sight of late summer thunderstorms rolling in from the west, the clank of cell feeders crashing shut at night, the taste of sweet corn, fried chicken, mashed potatoes, meatloaf, or maybe just sandwiches and a can of pop on the tailgate of our pickup during planting or harvest. But on August 23rd, I stood alone on that farm and realized that I could never truly call it home again.

What helped most at that moment was the knowledge that I was returning to my real home. A six-hour drive was all that stood between the future I had chosen and the past I could only take as memory. As my parents’ child I felt an urge to wallow in the past I knew, but as the grown man I would like to be, I was pulling away from those memories and straining to be set free to create new ones.

I hope that when you consider your place here at Luther Seminary, you feel the same way I do. For whatever reasons, God has called us to be here, in this place, in this time. Luther has its warts, to be sure, but for better or worse, this is home for me, because it is here that God is leading me. In his song Hard to Get, Rich Mullins said “I can’t see how You’re leading me, unless You’ve led me here, to where” I’ve lost enough to let myself be led.” I imagine some of you are feeling lost at the moment, or at least that disquieting feeling in the pit of your stomach that is a foreshadowing of the headaches to come. You’re fresh from college, returning to academia after careers and other pursuits, or maybe you’ve returned to Luther to complete a doctorate. You’re living in the Fertile Crescent, in Stub, LDR, or Bockman, or you’re commuting. You’ve put your life on hold to come do this thing you feel God is calling you to do, and maybe you’re asking your family to put their lives on hold as well. For whatever reasons, you’ve decided to make Luther home for now, and I hope you’re feeling it was the right decision.

This is my hope for the academic year before us, that we might find Luther Seminary a place to call home. You and I have been led to this place, sometimes by a faith we barely understand and sometimes by a call we cannot fully appreciate. Let us make our home a place to speak and listen, a place to sow and reap, a place to die to pretensions and to be raised up in integrity and faith. I want to invite you to the table, to gather around the feast our Lord has prepared for us and to be strengthened for the journeys that lie ahead. Let’s start our conversation, shall we?

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In Our Mailbox

M.Div. concurrent intern Gayle Highness saw an opportunity to proclaim the gospel in the context of a local debate occurring on the editorial pages of The Forum of Fargo-Moorhead. The controversy arose after torrential rains caused flooding in Fargo on Monday, June 19. Coincidentally, the area Wiccann community had staged a community event the preceding weekend. A local man known for taking strong stands based on his religious convictions started the debate with an editorial connecting the two events. Gayle’s contribution to the public debate appeared in The Forum July 21.

I have read with interest the letters responding to Martin Wishatsky’s editorial suggesting the June 19th storm in Fargo was a result of God’s judgment against the community for the “Pagan Hands Across the River” event the preceding weekend.

I am not writing to agree or disagree with that position, but rather to lift up another aspect of God’s mysterious ways. I don’t know exactly what God had to do with that storm. But I do know for sure that, as the storm raged outside, God was at work inside my parents’ Fargo home, bringing comfort and peace to our family as my mother’s life slipped away. My mother, Blanche Cossette, entered the last stages of terminal illness that Monday morning and Hospice of the Red River Valley put her on 24-hour nursing care. I don’t think you’ll find anything closer to an angel on earth than Paul, the Hospice nurse who ended up pulling a triple shift because no one else could get to our house to relieve him. God was at work through the heart and hands and voice of this gentle man as he massaged my mother’s feet with lotion, swabbed her mouth with cool water, tirelessly monitored her vital signs, read to her from a prayer book and soothed her spirit with kind and encouraging words.

God was with my Dad and my brothers and sisters as we too turned holding Mom’s hand and assuring her that all would be well. As the thunder crashed outside, we recalled how our parents told us the angels were bowling when we were kids. So my sister said, “The angels are up there building your mansion, Mom. I think it’s going to be a big one!” Though Mom could no longer respond verbally, she opened her eyes and seemed to say, “I know. It’s OK.” Mom passed away peacefully at 11 a.m. Wednesday, June 21.

Sometime God speaks out of a whirlwind (Job 38:1) and sometimes in a still, small voice (1 Kings 19:12). God may very well have been speaking to us in the June 19 storm, but God also speaks to us with promises of hope in the storms of our lives. We have but to open our eyes and ears and hearts to receive the Word. Praise be to this mighty and loving God!”

Gayle Cossette Highness

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the Bishop and the department pointed to sections of the Augsburg Confession, a foundational document of the Lutheran church, and the ELCA Constitution, which offer the ELCA’s definition of “church.”

“We recognize no deficiency in our self-understanding as “church,”’ the ELCA statement said. “Issues raised by Dominus Iesus will be discussed in our ongoing Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue.”

On October 31, 1999, the LWF and the Catholic Church signed the “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” in Augsburg, Germany. Noko said the signing of the document nullified centuries of conflict between Lutherans and Catholics, and was an important milestone in the history of Christian unity.

“In the Joint Declaration, a clarifying note states that the word ‘church’ is used in the declaration to reflect the self-understanding of the particular churches, without intending to resolve all the ecclesiological issues related to them,” Noko said. “This approach is also helpful in the wider ecumenical relationship between churches.” The LWF plans to study “Dominus Iesus” carefully and will discuss it with Roman Catholic representatives, Noko added.

Re-Imagining Millennium Gathering

Join women and men of faith and vision from across the country for Re-Imagining 2000, Oct. 26-28, at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

A Re-Imagining Gathering is a joyous meeting of people who seek change in the church and the world. Participants will encounter challenging theology, dynamic ritual and warm hospitality.

Gathering 2000 speakers are: Kathy Black on preaching and healing, Dolores Williams on theology; Rebecca Walker on Third Wave feminism, Thandeka on economics and religion, Mary Daly on eco-feminism, and Chris Smith on community building.

For registration information, call 612-879-8036; e-mail: reimaginer@aol.com, or visit the web site: www.reimagining.org.