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Forum Discusses Women in Ministry

By Robert O. Smith
Managing Editor, *The Concord*

"Women who are called to ministry and motherhood face many challenges." That's what was said on the flier advertising the Mission & Ministry Forum of Nov. 29, "Can You Be Pregnant and Still Preach?"

Organized by Luther's department of Cross-Cultural Education and the Global Mission Institute, the forum, attended by about 15 students was addressed by a panel of three women whose experiences speak to these concerns.

The panel members included Mary Bosell, an MDiv Senior with children at home; Mary Hess, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership, whose two children were born during graduate school; and Pastor Hollie Holt-Woehl, whose two sons were both born premature, one during her senior year at Luther and the other during her first call.

While the circumstances of parenthood have been different for each of these mothers, each has been challenged and blessed by the work they have been called to do—both as mothers and as ministers in the church.

The conversation varied from telling stories of encouragement to questions regarding specific rules and policies of the ELCA regarding maternity leave.

Bosell opened by sharing a story from her Junior year of study. "As I was walking down the hill from an orientation meeting, some people behind me were saying, 'I'm so glad I don't have to do this with children. Can you imagine? That would be so awful!'"

Hess discussed her experiences as a mother and graduate student through her master's and doctoral programs. Noting the presence of a childcare co-op at her school

and that her husband, a librarian, shifted his hours to meet the demands, Hess said that, for her, childcare had been the issue hardest to work out.

She also had some advice for parents who are finding it impossible to meet all



Women, Parenting, Ministry — On Tues., Nov. 20, students were invited to take part in a discussion on the realities of women and ministry. The panel included, from left, Pastor Hollie Holt-Woehl, MDiv Senior Mary Bosell, and Dr. Mary Hess.

of the demands that have been placed upon them. "You have to recognize that you'll do your life in more serial ways, not simultaneously," she said.

Hess spoke further on the importance of an active spirituality in her experiences of parenting. "The thing you must know about parenting is to pray," she said. "With our experiences of loss of control and sacrifice, prayer has sustained me in the midst of life."

Hess' areas of research interest speak to her own experiences as well as those of others. "I am very interested in this institution being a place that values and welcomes parents," noting her research interests in the interaction between popular culture and Christianity.

According to Bosell, that sort of institutional character can be shaped as ministers are encouraged to be strong 'self-advocates' in relation to their faith, their families and their vocation.

"What do you want most out of life?" she asked the group. "What gives you joy?" Those are the things that will help you be a better parent as well as a better pastor.

While Bosell encouraged looking out for oneself by clearly articulating one's values and priorities, she also encouraged a strong sense of relationship.

As she wrote in her handout: "Note the etymology of the word 'compromise.' It means 'promise with.' When you have someone outside of yourself to hold you to what you both decide is most important, you are given the strength and resilience to keep your promises."

It was that sort of clergy self-care that Holt-Woehl wished to communicate to the group. "If they're not supportive of your commitment to your family, you don't have to go there," she said, speaking of candidates' interviews in the call process. "Tell them, 'This is a priority for me.'"

Often, there is a sort of split between clergy and laity, with neither understanding the basic needs of the other. "You are real person in the real world with the same relationships," said Holt-Woehl of parish dynamics. "These are the wisest words I've ever heard: 'Anybody can pastor these two congregations. Only you can be a mother for your sons.'"

Holt-Woehl thinks that parenting provides a good analogy for parish ministry. "Having a child helps set your priorities," she explained. "If you love parenting, you'll

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Finally revealed! The secret code to the riddle of the Bible Exam!

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Opinion

Before It's Too Late: An Imaginative Message from a Hijacker to Luther Seminary

By Magdi Gendi

Ph.D. Candidate, Old Testament

Isaiah 56:3-8; Matt. 28:16-20

Since I do not know you and you do not know me, I'll address my letter to whom it may concern:

Let me introduce myself: I was born and raised in a remote village in the Middle East. I grew up in a poor family or you can consider it middle class. I didn't have a good opportunity in education. The only chance for me was with small group, and it was religious teaching.

It was too late when I discovered that it is the most fanatic teaching. They kept telling us that only we have the perfect teaching. Thus, we thought that our interpretation was the only valid and right interpretation, and we considered any other interpretation to be wrong—even if the most educated Muslims scholars did it.

We thought that we had the perfect truth. Therefore, anyone who is not following us was against us—even if the person is a Muslim. Our goal was to establish the Islamic empire through out the whole world. This was our greatest Jihad.

I remember when I was a teenage boy and how life was miserable and without any purpose. During that time, a group of fundamentalists asked me to join them to establish justice and Islamic Empire. It was a great idea.

It made my life meaningful, especially as we see America and the western world living in luxury and evil. What we saw through the American media was just sex, violence, gangsters and money. Everything was immoral. We did not see anything good through the media. We did not know that there are good nice people like Luther Seminary community. We have not experienced "Minnesota nice." For us, America was the big evil.

During one of our meetings a few years ago, we

decided to attack America. We said, "Let us attack America's symbols, and if we die, we will be martyrs for the sake of Allah."

Our leaders convinced us that we would get into heaven where we would have 70 virgins and a river of wine and a river of milk. We decided to use planes as flying bombs.

We hijacked the planes. We did not care about the fear and crying of children or women; we did not care about the innocent civilian people who would be killed. Our goal was to achieve our mission, dreaming of the Paradise full of women, wine and milk.

We did not listen to Islamic teaching, which says, "If you kill one innocent person 'without justice' it is as if you kill the whole world." We did not listen even to any human sense. We became deaf, dumb and blind. We hit the buildings and thousands of people died instantly. Hundreds were injured and thousands lost their income—not only in America but also throughout the whole world.

When I opened my eyes in the other world, it was not a paradise. It is horrible, and it is indescribable. It was too late to discover that we received the false teaching, that we were deceived.

It was too late to discover that we could destroy some cement blocks or steel beams, but in no way destroy the American spirit. On the contrary, after the attack, America became more united than ever, the people took care of each other and the worship places were full.

I'm writing to you this message for many reasons:

First: To let you know that we were deceived, or brainwashed. I'm not trying to find an excuse, but this is what happened. It was the only the religious teaching we have got. It was too late to discover that this is not real Islam.

Second: to let you know that not all Muslims

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Letters to the Editor

To Greet or Not To Greet: Continued

10/16/01 — Why Wednesdays?

Christian worship isn't just a gathering of individuals, each with their own personal relationship with God. I am sorry that the greeters get in the way of your worship time. Perhaps it would be helpful to think of greeters as a way that we are reminded that our faith is not just personal, private religion and that we are baptized into a community of saints. so... Come to chapel and shake

hands with a saint!

BEN RANSTROM

M.Div. Senior

Thanks to all of you who submitted your comments. Remember, log on to www.luthersem.edu/concord to access "The Concord" online and find the most convenient way to submit your letters and comments. As always, comments are also accepted in our mailbox in the Olson Campus Center, #702.

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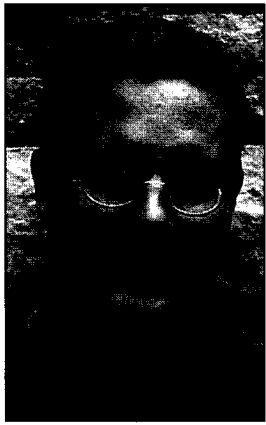
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The Concord reserves the right to publish, edit, or disregard all submissions.

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Re-visioning Our Strategic Plan



The prayer-desk has disappeared from our offices. Luther, however, had one. The exegetical preacher must be grounded in the Scriptures.... Before we meet men, we should meet Christ. Before we decide something, his decision should have confronted us.
—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

"I'm feeling really good about all of this theological stuff I'm learning about. I think I'm actually grasping what there is to grasp," he said. "But let me ask you a question.

"When do we actually learn about how to lead a congregation? When does that come in the program?"

I answered quickly: "It doesn't."

At most, that's my perception. I'm not there yet. I don't have the hindsight so many who have gone before us now presumably enjoy. But they don't know either!

Maybe internship? If you're lucky! A lot of us learn congregational leadership in a negative way—by consciously noting how *not* to follow their supervisor's example.

Seminarians are beginning to realize what's going on (to quote Marvin Gaye). There's an uneasiness among students. And a quick glance around indicates that we at

Luther aren't alone.

For the practical realities of ministry, we are encouraged by our structures to seek outside sources of information. Concerns such as stewardship, evangelism, and community activism are not explicitly taught in our curriculum.

They come up in a variety of tangents, but aren't these things central as well?

It is not uncommon for leaders to go resource shopping on the Internet.

I've spoken to Directors of Christian Education who have told stories about sifting through materials produced through our denominational outlets only to finally reject them as inadequate. These dedicated servants then give up ... or strike out to blaze their own trails.

One I know found a VBS curriculum produced by an independent, fundamentalist organization. Through several long hours of revision and prayer, she finally crafted something she could feel comfortable teaching and her pastor could approve as theologically acceptable.

What's going on? What are we—the educated designates of their church—giving them?

It's that sort of questioning that fed this institution's quest for the "Serving the Promise of our Mission," the strategic plan of Luther Seminary. As President Tiede states in his summary of the plan, "Before Christianity was the religion of the empire, while its bishops were still pastors in congrega-

tions, the name of the game was teaching, proclamation of the Gospel, and healing."

Is that the name of our game now? Are we really anywhere near the same field?

It is true that we have completed the shift from the past emphasis on academic theology as the center of our seminary training. As a community, our theological acumen ain't what she used to be (to reference Lady Suffolk—*look it up*).

Our focus now would seem to be on preaching the grips and grabs and that other amorphous reality, pastoral care and counseling.

But this new focus doesn't address the question brought by my friend: when does the part come when I learn about leading a congregation?

Our shift to an emphasis on pastoral care has centered on the individual, not the congregation. While this important—indeed *crucial*—work, it does not address our "felt needs" in this other arena.

One reason for that may be the unconscious focus on the C.Y.A. method of pastoral care: cover your (*ahem*) rear—at all costs, at all times.

We have been trained on how to establish and maintain "proper" borders and boundaries. Most often, these are conceived negatively: don't let them get too close to you; don't offer touch if you think it might be perceived negatively (or, God forbid) too posi-

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Women, Parenting, Ministry

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love parish ministry; if you hate parenting, don't even think about it."

Two books recommended during the course of the discussion were Roy Oswald's *Clergy Self Care: Finding a Balance for Effective Ministry* and Marva Dawn's *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly: Ceasing, Resting, Embracing, Feasting*.

Some other observations from the Mission & Ministry Forum:

- There has always been a sense that the pastor's life is lived in a glass house. In some ways, this is different for women since people look at a woman's relation to her family more than a man's.

- There seems to be a lack of role models for young mothers in seminary. Mothers in full-time parish ministry are a relatively new situation. During the discussion, it was noted that, until recently, the women in this vocation were often either determined singles or mothers with older children.

- Some noted the possibility of parishioner discomfort with the idea of their pastor as a sexual being. This observation is made clearer by the presence of pregnant pastor in the pulpit.

The organizers of the event—Amy Fondroy Eich, MDiv Junior, and Rebecca Piper, MDiv Junior—brought copies of the ELCA

guidelines for Family Leave as well as the seminary's guidelines regarding "special circumstances on internship."

Lydia Volz, Parish Nurse, announced the presence of a new ministry at Luther, "Blessed Expectations," a program designed to help new mothers by inviting them into a mentoring relationship with more experienced mothers. The coordinator for "Blessed Expectations" is Carrie Smith, a seminary spouse and leader for La Leche League International (a breastfeeding support organization) who is also training to be a doula (labor support person).

Notes from the Parish Nurse

By Lydia Volz

Luther Seminary Parish Nurse
in Partnership with Lyngholmsten

In this season of Advent, the preparation for Christmas may cause anxiety and stress as well as happy anticipation.

This is the time of year when many people use brain-altering substances to either enhance their enjoyment of the occasion, or to relieve stress and anxiety. For most of us it is a matter of choice, but for some it may become a necessity. In medical terms, they are substance dependent.

Scientists have learned that one neurotransmitter, dopamine, plays an important role in substance dependence. Dopamine activates channels in the brain that register feelings of arousal, reward and satisfaction. Substances that influence dopamine levels are nicotine, marijuana, alcohol and amphetamines and may cause dependence as we seek to duplicate pleasing reactions. As pathways continue to be ingrained by the addictive substance, a cure is not possible.

Relapses are common, requiring lifelong treatment.

One example of a potentially addictive substance is alcohol. One glass of wine for a woman (a lower % of total body water leads to a higher blood level) and two for a man, drunk with a meal, can be beneficial for digestion and the circulatory system. More than that interferes with sleep and sexual function, increases the risk of major organ disease and cancers of the throat, stomach, colon and breast. Continued overuse can lead to dependence and associated emotional problems.

How do you know if you have a problem with substance abuse or dependence? Consider the following questions carefully:

- Do you have a pattern of trying to cut back or stop using a substance, but then restarting it?
- Have you noticed that you are using more of the substance than you used to?
- Are you feeling guilty about using the substance?

The Mission of the Master

Continued from page 2

are terrorists. One fifth of the world's population is Islamic. The majority are nice and good people. Also, not every Arab is Muslim and not every Muslim is Arab.

Third: Muslims like Christians, like Hindus, like Buddhists, like Jews, Muslims are like any other religious group—they need to hear the good news. They need to hear that “God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” They need not only to hear but also to experience your love, your passion in your daily life. Didn't your Master say, “By this every one will know that you are my disciples, if you have love to one another”?

Fourth: Nobody is excluded from God's mercy. Didn't you hear just few minutes ago the Prophet Isaiah saying that the eunuch and the foreigner who choose to love the name of the Lord, the Lord will give them eternal name and shall not be cut off? Therefore, Please do not take other Muslims by our coward and sinful act. Didn't Paul Write in his letter to the Romans that “there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call upon him. For, “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

“But how are they to call on one in whom

they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?”

Here at Luther, you are called and sent. You are called to love the Lord and to love not only your neighbor but also your enemy. You are called to serve the Lord through serving the people.

You are called to be faithful, not to be successful. You are sent not only to St. Paul or maximum to Iowa or Chicago, but also to Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and Latin America.

Didn't your master say in his great commission; “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations (America, Egypt, Sudan Argentina, Afghanistan, etc.), baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit?”

Dear friends, the September 11th tragedy soon will be a history lesson, but the people in Macedonia are still pleading and calling upon you to come over and help them.

Will you respond to the mission that God has assigned to you? Will you respond for the need of other people to hear the good news? Or you are waiting until it is too late?

Remember, the Lord has promised to be with you always to the end of the age.

• Do you depend on the substance to relieve stress or help you get through it?

If you answered ‘yes’ to any of the questions, it may be helpful to talk with someone about your substance abuse. The Dean of Students, Chaplain or Parish Nurse would be happy to work with you.

May your Advent be filled with joyful expectation and the Peace that only the Christ Child brings.

Journey Toward Wholeness: Reclaiming the Healing Ministry of Jesus

Mark your calendar for an all-day conference on Saturday, January 19, 2002 sponsored by Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. Dr. Ken Bakken, a nationally known educator, author and physician will speak of physical, emotional and spiritual healing from the perspective of both physicians and pastors.

Registration before January 6 is \$30.00.

Editor's Words

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tively; don't presume to know more about therapy than you do, or else you'll *really* screw someone up.

Like everything else, C.Y.A. has developed in response to experiences in actual ministry. It has become a necessity.

But the fallout is predictable, isn't it? We're afraid to do much of anything. We're shell-shocked.

It's been made clear to us that we are limited in our abilities for counseling and that we're *nowhere* near as theologically astute as previous generations of pastors.

As leaders and pastors-in-training, we've been captured by the myth of our own incompetence.

In many ways, we're just like the little girl—when her parents get to go upstairs to the room with stained glass windows and burlwood pews and all the singing while she's put downstairs with the chipping paint and screeching sing-along tapes—who figures out that *they* get to be with God while *she* isn't big enough yet.

There's not a whole lot to do in that situation. So not much gets done.

Remember that Director of Christian Education I mentioned earlier? She's getting something done.

Maybe she has something to say to us as we try to grasp what it means to lead a congregation as a congregation. She had been confronted with Christ's decision.

Now *that's* a strategic plan!