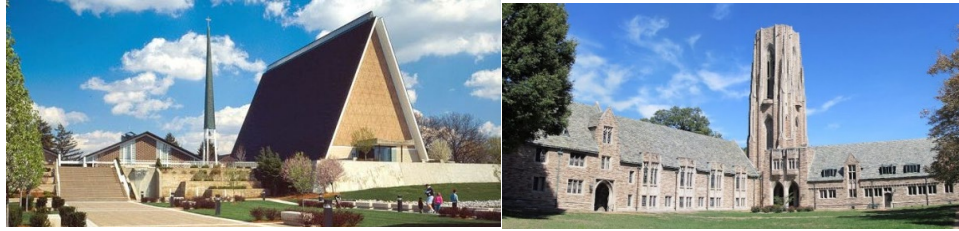


# “The Role of the Seminaries in the LCMS, 1847-2001”

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## Introduction:

- A. “Role” = “function or part performed”
  - 1. Education and formation of pastors, missionaries, and other church workers (purpose)
  - 2. Theological leadership (influence)
  - 3. Supply of pastors (outcome)
- B. Periodization
  - 1. 1847-1887: The Walther-Craemer Years, Establishing the Synod’s Doctrinal Heritage
  - 2. 1887-1931: The Pieper Years, Conserving the Synod’s Doctrinal Heritage
  - 3. 1932-1974: The Disruptive Years, Reshaping the Synod’s Doctrinal Heritage
  - 4. 1974-2001: Resettling Years, Attempting to Restore the Synod’s Doctrinal Heritage

## I. 1847-1887: The Walther-Craemer Years, Establishing the Synod’s Doctrinal Heritage

- A. The beginning of Concordia Theological Seminary
  - 1. Wyneken, Loehe, Sihler
  - 2. Document of Transfer 1847
  - 3. Practical Seminary
- B. The beginning of Concordia Seminary
  - 1. Perry County, MO
  - 2. Stipulations of transfer 1849
  - 3. Theoretical Seminary
- C. The Theoretical and Practical Seminaries Together: 1861-1875
  - 1. August “Onkel” Craemer
  - 2. C.F.W. Walther
  - 3. Goal of purity of doctrine, Lutheran orthodoxy and fidelity to Scriptural teaching at both institutions
  - 4. Practical seminary outproduced theoretical seminary almost two to one.
  - 5. In 1875 the Practical Seminary moved to Springfield, Illinois

## II. 1887-1931: The Pieper Years, Conserving the Synod’s Doctrinal Heritage

- A. Theoretical Seminary Outpaces the Practical Seminary
  - 1. Factors involved:
    - a. Establishment of extensive “system” feeder schools
    - b. Attempts to close the Springfield school
    - c. Enrollment limit placed on the “practical” seminary 1896-1926; only 170 students
  - 2. Continued emphasis on conserving confessional doctrinal heritage
    - a. Both schools stressed systematic or doctrinal theology
    - b. Doctrinal stand considered reason for the continued growth of the Synod
    - c. Both seminaries grew in the 1920s which included facility expansion
- B. Influence
  - 1. Not only in classroom, but beyond
  - 2. Extensive publications

3. KFUE Radio and the Lutheran Hour
  4. Cultural influence during World War I
- C. Great Depression saw an oversupply of theological candidates from both seminaries

### **III. 1932-1974: The Disruptive Years, Reshaping the Synod's Doctrinal Heritage**

- A. Attempts to close Concordia Theological Seminary
  1. 1935 synodical convention
  2. 1941 newly established Board of Higher Education recommended closing
    - a. Springfield increased academic requirements so not that different from St. Louis
    - b. Springfield produced pastors known for conservative Lutheranism
- B. Concordia Seminary begins to change
  1. Ludwig Fuerbringer
  2. Louis Sieck
  3. Alfred Fuerbringer
  4. Beginning of Concordia Senior College, Fort Wayne 1957
- C. "A Statement" of the 44 in 1945
- D. Bad Boll Conferences
- E. Theological changes at Concordia Seminary
  1. Gospel Reductionism
  2. Historical Criticism
  3. Lutheran union emphasis
  4. Changing perspective on seminary leadership role
- F. Concordia Theological Seminary
  1. Walter Baepler and Jacob Preus sought well-trained conservative theologians
  2. As academic standards improved, the school achieved formal accreditation
  3. 1967 graduates of Concordia Senior College permitted to attend either seminary
  4. No longer a distinction between the "theoretical" and "practical" seminaries
- G. 1969 synodical convention
  1. Just prior, Alfred Fuerbringer retires and John Tietjen is elected Concordia Seminary president
  2. Jacob Preus elected synodical president
- H. Walkout at Concordia Seminary
  1. Concern about false teaching from Martin Scharlemann, Robert Preus, and Ralph Bohlmann
  2. Fact Finding Committee begun 1970
  3. The 1973 New Orleans synodical convention
  4. Concordia Seminary Board of Control suspends John Tietjen January 20, 1974
  5. Moratorium on classes begun January 21, 1974.
  6. February 17-18, 1974 Board of Control declaration
  7. February 19, 1974 Walkout
  8. The "Faithful Five": Bohlmann, Klann, Robert Preus, Scharlemann, and Wunderlich

### **IV. 1974-2001: Resettling Years, Attempting to Restore the Synod's Doctrinal Heritage**

- A. Rebuilding after the Walkout
  1. Scharlemann then Bohlmann named acting; Bohlmann became President May 1975.
  2. Robert Preus named President of Concordia Theological Seminary May 24, 1974
  3. The "Faithful Five" and profs from Springfield provided classes in St. Louis through 1974.
  4. The 1975 Anaheim synodical convention closes Senior College and moves the Springfield seminary back to Fort Wayne, IN
- B. Robert Preus vision for Concordia Theological Seminary
  1. Enhance the academic quality by adding conservative, confessional scholars
  2. Focused on a confessional systematic program

3. Enhance exegetical program, adding Hebrew to Biblical studies
  4. Upholding traditional Lutheran liturgy and reverent worship practices
  5. Develop a graduate program
  6. Emphasis on the formation of confessional Lutheran pastors, missionaries, and theologians
- C. Ralph Bohlmann's vision for Concordia Seminary
1. Differing view of restoring the Synod's doctrinal heritage
  2. Outlined at speech for ALPB 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of "A Statement" of the 44
  3. Promotion of Church Growth Movement at Concordia Seminary and beyond
  4. Promoting the cultural contextualizing of theology and pastoral formation
- D. Ralph Bohlmann becomes synodical president and seeks to unseat Robert Preus
1. In building up graduate programs Robert Preus brought in some faculty who supported the theological direction of Ralph Bohlmann
  2. 1985, Ralph Bohlmann began an investigation. In 1989, the seminary Board of Regents asked Robert Preus to retire and he was removed from office
  3. The issues involved were doctrinal:
    - a. Church fellowship
    - b. Role of women in the Church
    - c. Ministry of laymen and women in the Church
    - d. The Church Growth Movement
    - e. Assessment of working with the newly formed ELCA
- E. Concordia Theological Seminary into the 21<sup>st</sup> century
1. Norb Mueller
  2. David Schmiel
  3. Dean Wenthe
  4. "A Pastoral Response to the Events of September 11, 2001"
  5. Lawrence Rast
- F. Concordia Seminary into the 21<sup>st</sup> century
1. Aspires "to be the world leader in Lutheran ministerial formation, scholarship, and theological resources." (CSL Vision Statement)
  2. Leadership involving contextualizing theology and pastoral formation to emerging cultural trends
  3. More focused on practical theology through contemporary practices
  4. Demonstrated by supporting participation in the Pastoral Leadership Institute (PLI)

**Conclusion:**

- A. More could and should be said!
- B. There have been confessional, faithful pastors formed at both institutions – Thanks be to God!
- C. Lessons learned from history:
  1. Both seminaries should be committed to sound confessional Lutheran education and formation
  2. The Synod needs two seminaries
  3. There is no room for neo-orthodoxy and care must be taken in contextualizing theology
  4. There is no room for rivalry or conceit

May our seminaries together strive to be of "the same mind, having the same love" (Philippians 2:2-3) working toward the same orthodox confessional Lutheran formational goals.

*Soli Deo Gloria*