

Trinity Te Deum

The official newsletter for Trinity Lutheran Church

*Rev. Paul R. Harris – 512-453-3835 Church; 512-251-4204 Home
Sunday School and Bible Study 9:15 AM – Divine Service 10:30 AM*

Austin, Texas June 3, 2012 Volume 14, Issue 3

June- July 2012

Of Baby Burps and Carters in Heaven

Recently the observation was made that if a person can't remember by Wednesday what the sermon was about on Sunday were they really listening? I've thought about this before; I may have even written a blog about it. First, I can't tell you by Wednesday what I ate on Sunday, but that doesn't mean the food didn't nourish me. Second, there is the matter of baby burps and carters in heaven.

First the baby burps. Every new parent, at least this new parent, is surprised to learn that even if a baby takes milk and almost instantly spits it back up if it comes up sour smelling the baby has gotten all the nourishment it needs from it. So it is with the Word of God. We think, and this is the error that the contemporary church, the Bible church, the emergent church, and the nondenominational church make hay on, that unless I learn, come away with, something new, better, or different, then I'm not really learning or being taught God's Word. No, unless you come away with the Gospel that creates, nourishes, and maintains saving faith, it doesn't matter how many facts you learn, how much information you retain, or how educated you feel, you're getting nothing from that sermon, that teaching, that pastor.

There *are* facts involved in preaching the Gospel: Christ's keeping the Law and His atoning sacrifice in your place, but the creation of faith is a miracle. It only happens through God's Word and Sacraments. Unless that funny story, that entertaining illustration or that intricate information helps convey these no faith is created, nourished, or maintained. But faith benefits from hearing and receiving Word and Sacrament at the speed of "Amen." When the pastor preaches that you are poor miserable sinner who can in no way save yourself and faith says "Amen!" you've gotten all you can out of that preaching of the Law. When the pastor preaches forgiveness in Jesus' name and faith says, "Amen," it's gift given and gift received in mere moments.

What's to be warned about here is outsmarting God, outthinking God, out reasoning God. This is what we do when we think of the things of the faith are no different than the things of any other learning or knowing. This is where carters in heaven come in. No, not Jimmy Carter but drivers of horse drawn carts. There was a story about one named Hans Pfiem in Luther's day. Carters were thought to have no chance of getting into heaven because they cursed so horribly, but God let in Hans on the condition that he make no objection to anything he heard and saw in paradise. He was to be pleased with it all. This was quite an offer so Hans took it.

The first thing he saw in paradise were people drawing water in a bucket that had no bottom. He thought how utterly foolish this was, but kept quiet. He went on to see two carpenters carrying a thick beam sideways rather than lengthways. The beam was getting caught on everything. How foolish Han thought that was when to walk in single file with the beam perpendicular to their line of movement would be so much easier. But remembering God's warning he said nothing. Finally he finds a cart driver with two teams of horses stuck in the mud. The cart driver detaches one team and ties it to the back of the cart heading the other direction. He then proceeds to whip both teams, so that they pull against the cart. This was too much for Hans, and he exploded with objections.

Hans had violated his terms of being in heaven, so Peter is dispatched to order him to leave. Hans replied, "Why should I leave paradise, when I am not as guilty before God as you are?... You Have denied our Lord

God, and yet you remain in paradise; and am I to be cast out because of a single word? No, surely not!” Peter ashamed withdrew. Then God sends Paul with the same message. Hans indignantly replies, “You persecuted the congregation of God and blasphemed and slandered the Son of God, and nevertheless you remain in paradise. Am I to leave because I have spoken a word or two?” Paul left; he too was shamed. Mary Magdalene and Moses too are sent, but Hans can drive them off with the guilt of their past sins as well. Hans only repents of opening his mouth when he can’t rebuke the small children of being a greater sinner than himself. Thereafter, he promises to have no objections as to how God does things so he can keep heaven (LW, 58, pp. 99-100).

The moral of the story is that real sins don’t keep people out of heaven be they ever so serious. Jesus Christ died for deniers, murderers, fornicators, and doubters. All of these the blood of Christ is thick enough and rich enough to wash away. But there is no hope for the man who thinks he is smarter than God. The ways of God are so very far different than the ways of man that the latter is foolish if he thinks they should make sense to him. But the one who goes by God’s Word gets all the forgiveness, life, and salvation he needs from it even though he can’t remember it or retain it as well as he likes.

The irony here is those who don’t come to church or those who come to church one a month, once every six weeks, or once or twice a year don’t worry about getting anything, let alone everything, from God’s Word. They are Hans the carters. They think they know better than God. They think though He commands His Word and Sacraments be used often, there is no problem with their infrequent, irregular, use-it-when-I-feel-like-it “faith.” For those who hold this faith, the pure milk of the Word goes in but it doesn’t come back out sour. No, it stays in them curdling until it eventually has to be tossed away or better yet opens their mouth in repentance.

Energy Drinks Send Thousands to the ER Each Year

ER Visits From Drinking Energy Drinks Jump Tenfold Since 2005, Report Says

By Brenda Goodman, MA

WebMD Health News Reviewed by Hansa D. Bhargava, MD, FAAP

Nov. 22, 2011 -- There's been a big spike in the number of people who need emergency medical attention after they guzzle popular caffeinated energy drinks, according to a new government report.

The report shows a more than a tenfold increase in the number of emergency room visits tied to the use of these drinks between 2005 and 2009.

In 2005, 1,128 ER visits were associated with the use of energy drinks compared to 13,114 in 2009. That number peaked in 2008 with more than 16,000 ER visits linked to energy drinks.

Beverage manufacturers fired back at the statistics, charging that they are misleading since they are being taken out of context.

"Of the more than 123 million visits made to emergency room facilities each year, less than one one-hundredth of one percent involved people who consumed energy drinks according to this report," says the American Beverage Association in a statement.

"Even so, this report shares no information about the overall health of those who allegedly consumed energy drinks, or even what symptoms brought them to the ER in the first place," the statement says.

While 44% of cases involved energy drinks in combination with alcohol or other drugs, the report shows most people who wound up in the ER told doctors they had downed only energy drinks.

"There's been quite a bit of attention paid to those energy drinks that have alcohol with them. What we found was that there are actually more visits for those energy drinks that don't have alcohol," says Albert Woodward, PhD, director of the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in Rockville, Md. DAWN reports, such as this one, are published periodically by the network.

"People may think that the alcohol-caffeine drinks are dangerous, but they may not have any idea that the caffeine-only drinks are also potentially problematic," Woodward says.

Experts who study the health effects of energy drinks called the finding surprising and worrisome.

"I do a lot of my research on combining alcohol and energy drinks and I know that's really risky, but energy drinks by themselves, it's been quite in debate whether they're really all that dangerous," since they're supposed to contain about the same amount of caffeine as a cup of coffee, says Cecile Marczinski, PhD, an assistant professor of psychology at Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights.

But Marczinski said she recently learned that manufacturers don't have to report the total caffeine that's in the drinks. They only have to list what they add. There may be much more caffeine that comes from stimulant herbs like guarana.

"The caffeine in these drinks could be vastly underestimated," she tells WebMD.

Young adults, usually men, were most likely to get into trouble using energy drinks, the report shows.

Furthermore:

More than half of all ER visits linked to energy drinks were in college-age adults ages 18 to 25.

Adults ages 26 to 39 accounted for almost a third of the visits.

Teens 12 to 17 and adults over 40 each accounted for 11% of visits.

Men accounted for nearly two-thirds of all visits.

Marczinski says that's not surprising since the drinks, which come in brightly colored cans and have macho, high-octane names, are made to catch the eye of teens and young adults, who may not yet be coffee drinkers.

But she thinks the drinks are more dangerous than coffee, for several reasons. They come in large containers, making it easy to slug several servings in a single sitting. And because they're usually sweet and served cold, they are tempting stand-ins for thirst quenchers like water or sports drinks.

"So it is easier, I think, to consume more of an energy drink than any other caffeinated food or product," Marczinski says.

Caffeine Overdose Symptoms

The report didn't gather data on the specific symptoms that sent people to the hospital. Most were simply classified as adverse reactions.

But ER doctors say they're probably similar to a typical caffeine overdose.

"Those symptoms include a fast heart rate, elevated blood pressure, maybe a fever, agitation, moodiness, confusion, and perhaps difficulty with fine motor control," says Tamara R. Kuittinen, MD, director of medical education in the department of emergency medicine at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City.

Those effects may be amplified if a person has already taken another medication or drug.

The report showed that 27% of people who landed in the ER after using energy drinks were also taking another pharmaceutical, often a stimulant medication like Ritalin.

In about 16% of the cases, alcohol was also a factor. In 10% of the visits, energy drinks had been used in combination with illegal drugs.

Caffeine in energy drinks can mask feelings of intoxication. Previous studies have found that bar patrons who mix energy drinks and alcohol are three times more likely to leave highly intoxicated and are four times more likely to drive drunk.

Adults ages 18 to 25 were most likely to get into trouble combining energy drinks with other substances.

The lesson for college students about to cram for final exams is "pace yourself," says Kuittinen. "Nothing beats getting at least seven hours of sleep a night."

Besides, overdoing energy drinks probably won't help. "Your thoughts are going to be disorganized. You're going to be hyper-jittery and just wired," and that's not likely to lead to a better grade, she says.

True Lutheran Worship

Pastor Stirdivant; 07/21/2010
ACELC Position Paper

We Should Not Be Ashamed of True Lutheran Worship

The Worship Issue

Has your church fought over the "worship issue"? Have you talked to anyone who has insisted that a dramatic change needs to be made in a Lutheran congregation's worship service or else it will die? When you talk about worship, you're not talking about an incidental matter, but an essential one.

What I think has happened, at least in the Missouri Synod, is that over many years—several generations—Lutherans who at first (through no fault of their own) were merely ignorant of their own worship heritage and theology have gradually become ashamed of it. After briefly tracing this move from ignorance to shame, my aim will be to help you identify this attitude of embarrassment and replace it with a sense of genuine, Godly pride in the Divine blessing that is true Lutheran worship.

Deep in the heart of this shame is a shift in emphasis. Two essential parts of Christian theology became set at odds against each other. "What you believe" was forced to give complete right-of-way to "how you live." Doctrine and morals (also doctrine and missions) at least, according to the Bible, work well together. The Gos-

pel that you believed and preserved pure with all your heart was the actual power behind your new life in the Holy Spirit, and it was the motivation to spread His Word to others. Does it work that way today? Yes!

However, it became clear that Christians who believed different, even opposing, doctrines were nevertheless living by the same moral standard in their everyday lives. What you could easily see at first glance were fellow believers in Christ doing very much the same things the same way: caring for their neighbors, feeding the hungry, raising their families, going to church, etc. You had to look much closer into the details to find the differences in what Christians believed. To be sure, it is difficult to evaluate a doctrine and compare it to God's Word. Let the seminary graduates fiddle around with that, many people began to think, because we're tired of doctrinal controversy. In fact, people became ashamed of it all. It is much easier instead to see how a person acts. So what if a "brother in Christ" refuses to baptize a baby? At least that person prays every day, reads his Bible, and does so much that is good.

Doctrinal Purity

And so, any belief that was once considered a dangerous doctrinal error on the part of any certain Christian group was quickly softened into a mere divergence in opinion or alternative interpretation. Those who strove to preserve the pure truth of the Bible and defend it against error were soon labeled as "legalists." Since morality was becoming more important, when someone claimed to have pure teaching, it sounded as though they were claiming to be morally perfect. This conclusion was actually false; nevertheless, many were convinced that doctrinal purity was merely a figment of the theologian's imagination and an impossibility on earth. It so on became fashionable to look past doctrinal differences in order to garner helpful hints from other church bodies. If Baptists or Methodists used something that worked for them, why shouldn't Lutherans give it a try? Embarrassed and ashamed, Lutherans more and more tried to downplay those features of the pure, unadulterated confession of the Christian faith that were different from other churches.

In came the Church Growth movement, a marketing strategy borrowed from the business world that promised larger church attendance, especially by young people, and greater financial prosperity for struggling congregations. The movement's flagship tactic was a fundamental change in approach to worship known by names such as: contemporary, informal, seeker-oriented, blended, alternative, and evangelical. The change itself was for Lutherans to design a worship service that somebody else wanted. The logic was something like: since we need more people to attend our worship services, we need both to cut out those parts of the Lutheran Divine Service that we think are keeping them away, and add what we hope will draw them in. Everything non-Lutheran looked successful, like the various forms of decision theology, emphasis on morality and sanctification, and emotional, spontaneous worship elements. It ended up being decided—even in the minds of lifelong Lutherans—that true Lutheran worship was boring, irrelevant, and antiquated. Non-Christians, and former members who have dropped out of church, and people who (we surmise) are too young to understand theology need something else on Sunday morning (or Saturday night) to keep their interest. People who like true Lutheran worship would eventually die or go away. In short, the conclusion of the Church Growth movement was devastating: whatever faithfully expressed Biblical, Lutheran doctrine was bad and had to go; whatever was not Lutheran provided the hope that it might just work.

Clear and Bold Lutheran Teaching

However as Lutherans, we have many things for which we ought to thank God daily. We benefit from the bold stand for truth that Luther and other Reformers (both clergy and lay people) asserted so many years ago. They faithfully and tirelessly studied and taught the Bible, following its clear and pure meaning, without adding anything or taking anything away. They revived the glorious Gospel message that Jesus paid the full price for our sins, and that we are declared completely forgiven without having to fulfill any requirements on our part.

The Lutheran reformers were not inventors, but rather discoverers of what God had provided all along in His holy Word. What a blessing the Lutheran confession of faith has brought to our sin-sick world!

True Lutheran teaching articulates what the Bible teaches in plain, understandable words. You cannot get a simpler or clearer summary of the most important doctrines of the Bible than you have in Luther's Small Catechism. And since worship is the primary activity that puts into practice what the Church teaches, then true Lutheran teaching should reside at the heart of true Lutheran worship. Anyone who visits a Lutheran church for a worship service should expect to hear what the Bible says about the most important spiritual issues we face as human beings. Topics like: sin, judgment, forgiveness, Jesus' death is a payment made in our place, the assurance of our victory in His resurrection, our need to repent every day, our growth in faith and the Holy Spirit, our certainty of going to heaven, God wants to save all True Lutheran Worship people; these are the type of things that the Bible talks about the most. A true Lutheran worship service addresses the proper distinction between Law and Gospel on these and all other doctrines of Scripture.

Worship Form

There are not a few people from other Christian churches who are weary of shallow emotional manipulation in their services. They are picking up on the error when they hear that they need to trust in human works for anything in their Christian life. They are starving for forgiveness, but all they are getting are laws, guidelines and examples for their Christian life. What they need is precisely what we have in the Lutheran Church! We shouldn't deny it to them, much less to our own members.

Worship is doctrine put into practice—true doctrine is expressed in true worship. Although it seems to start a lot of arguments needlessly, still, Lutherans worship God rightly because we believe rightly. The snide question of “Do you think there are only Lutherans in heaven?” has no place here. Is genuine, Biblical faith in Jesus Christ the proper “worship in Spirit and in truth,” (John 5)? You bet! Following the rubrics does not in itself make us Christian. No true Lutheran ever suggests that.

It's not that we worship according to a strict legalistic liturgical rule set out in the Bible, but rather we realize that our doctrine calls for a worship form that accurately and reverently portrays our crucified Lord Jesus as the one and only payment for our sins. Impure worship injects something into the church's liturgy that reflects false doctrine. Jesus is then not portrayed solely as Savior, and His forgiveness is deemphasized. Does God use His Word to create faith even when one's worship is impure and that Word is peppered with human falsehood? Graciously, He does, but not to provide excuses. No one can say whether a baptized Christian who is worshipping in a certain way is going to hell. That's not the point. I ask, when you know the truth, what's keeping you from telling it?

Participating with the Saints in Heaven

Lutherans have no need to be ashamed of true Lutheran worship. In answer to our contemporary world where all the attention is on “getting the job done,” true Lutheran worship is eminently practical. That means when God gathers us together in His name, His work is done in the best possible way. When we sinners hear His Word and sing it in hymns and the liturgy, Christ's Gospel forgiveness covers us and the Holy Spirit renews us so that, by grace, we are the true, holy people of God. Our moral life that we live in accordance to God's Law follows in its proper place, resulting from His grace and responding to His forgiveness. It cannot come through coercion or guilt or fancy programs, but our new life is powered by God's Gospel Word of forgiveness. And even though all this Divine activity is hidden, it is powerful and effective. We ought not to despair if someone should tell us that true Lutheran worship will not bring in lots of people or money. Our Lord did not want us to worry about those things—He will provide the people and the resources in His time, for congregations to use as stewards. Rather, Jesus gave a simple command to His

Church when He told Peter three times, “Feed my sheep.” (John 21) The baptized people of God are spiritually fed each week when they hear His Word, confess their sins, receive the Lord's forgiveness in the Gospel, and consume Christ's Body and Blood in Holy Communion. Don't believe anyone whenever they say that these gracious gifts are not enough for the health and growth of the Church. If we are forbidden to invent doctrines, then we shouldn't have to invent worship either.

We should not be ashamed of our hymnals, either. Questions like, “Is following the hymnal the only way to worship?” are silly. Of course, hymnals are put together by human beings and so need to be extensively evaluated especially regarding their faithfulness to God's Word. Once a hymnal has been carefully developed over the course of several years, it can become a valuable tool for a congregation that is committed to true Lutheran worship. A Lutheran church that faithfully uses any Lutheran hymnal should count it a privilege to be unified in true Lutheran worship with Christians all over the world, and from all generations. Why? Because true Lutheran worship is tied to the true, (that is, Lutheran) confession of faith—the manifestation of pure preaching of God's Word and the right administration of the Sacraments. Wherever these have gone out into the world, true believers receive God's forgiveness and rejoice. Think of the Christians in Siberia or Sudan who are following the Liturgy in a form very similar to ours. These Christians should remind us of the treasure we have in true Lutheran worship, that it is heaven literally breaking into our world. True Lutheran worship participates in heaven, but at the same time prepares us for heaven, when all the multitude of believers will join in perfect worship, for that is when we'll see God Almighty face to face. Nothing to be ashamed of there!

Rev. Mark B. Stirdivant

Associate Pastor, Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Kansas City, Missouri

Rev. Mark Stirdivant may be reached by e-mail at hollowleg@kc.rr.com

Trinity Lutheran Church

1207 West 45th Street

Austin, TX 78756

512.453.3835

www.trinityaustin.com

Trinity Te Deum is published bi-monthly.

Deadline for all articles is the 15th of the odd months. All articles must be approved by Rev. Paul R. Harris. Articles with no author are written by him.

A Brief Analysis of the Specific Ministry Pastor Program

The Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program is one of six alternate route¹ pastoral ministry programs offered by Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne offers two alternate route programs: Certificate and SMP.

The SMP program was adopted in convention in 2007 to replace the Distance Education Leading to Ordination (DELTO) program, and to provide one umbrella under which other alternate route studies administered by various districts across the Synod could be gathered. The SMP program is intended to provide ordained pastors to congregations and/or mission settings which cannot support a full time pastor or missionary. In addition, the reso-

lution adopting the SMP program added "such categories as church planter, staff pastor, and others as needs arise." The resolution also asserted that SMP is needed because of our Synod's resolution to plant 2,000 new congregations by 2017.²

While the intentions of the SMP program may be laudable, there are serious concerns over how districts and congregations are using the program, the criteria by which men enter the program, and the standard by which they are educated. The following chart, derived from the 2011-12 seminary catalogues, allows for a very basic analysis of SMP, Certificate, and Master of Divinity program requirements.³ The Certificate route is included because

SMP (alternate)	Certificate (alternate)	Master of Divinity (regular)
<u>Application Requirements:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LCMS member two years. • Adequate post-secondary work. 	<u>Application Requirements:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LCMS member two years. • Bachelor degree. 	<u>Application Requirements:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LCMS member two years. • Bachelor degree.
<u>Entry Level Competence:</u> ⁴ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Testament • New Testament • Doctrine 	<u>Entry Level Competence:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Testament • New Testament • Doctrine • Greek 	<u>Entry Level Competence:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old Testament • New Testament • Doctrine • Hebrew • Greek
<u>Course of Study:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sixteen Online Classes (48 credits) • Periodic cohorts (residential seminars) 	<u>Course of Study:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 103 credits Saint Louis. • 95 credits Fort Wayne. 	<u>Course of Study:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 111 credits Saint Louis. • 139 credits Fort Wayne.
<u>Vicarage:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon entry into program. • At location of membership. • During the first eight classes. <u>Ordination:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes place after the first eight classes. 	<u>Vicarage:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One academic year. • After completion of first two years of classes. • Worth eighteen credits. <u>Ordination:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes place after vicarage, unless more course work needs to be completed. 	<u>Vicarage:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One academic year. • After completion of first two years of classes. • Worth eighteen credits. • Return to seminary for fourth year of studies. <u>Ordination:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes place after fourth year.
<u>Academic Degree:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None, a certificate is issued. 	<u>Academic Degree:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None, a certificate is issued. 	<u>Academic Degree:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master of Divinity.
<u>Restrictions:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot hold an elected or appointed office. • Cannot serve as circuit counselor. • Cannot serve as a voting delegate to a national Synod convention. • Cannot supervise a vicar. 	<u>Restrictions:</u> none.	<u>Restrictions:</u> none.

This comparison demonstrates significant differences in requirements for men preparing to serve in the Pastoral Office. The primary difference between the Certificate route and the Master of Divinity is the requirement of Biblical Hebrew and the theological classes involved in the study and application of that language.⁵ SMP has no post-secondary education degrees required. It omits Hebrew and Greek. It requires less than half of the academic work. Vicarage, a critical time of a seminarian's preparation, is, for all intents and purposes, omitted. Ordination into the Pastoral Office takes place after a mere two years. While the SMP is encouraged to continue his studies into the traditional route and he is to be supervised as long as he remains an SMP, there is no guarantee he will continue his studies, and the viability of long-term supervision is questionable at best.

How can a man who has received less than half of the training of certificate route, and no training in the Biblical languages, be "able to teach,"⁶ or "hold fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict"?⁷ While the Biblical languages certainly are not the sole criteria for determining the viability of the program, not having that sort of training certainly binds a man to whatever English translation he prefers, and he will never know or understand the depth and width and height that the Holy Spirit provides through the Biblical languages. Are we laying hands on too hastily⁸ in ordaining men after a mere two years, or eight classes, of instruction? How does ordaining a man into the Pastoral Office with a mere eight classes (24 credits) under his belt and no Biblical languages really square with Augsburg Confession articles V⁹ and XIV?¹⁰

The SMP program was adopted as a way to meet expressed needs of pastoral ministry apart from current residential models. Its authors claim a desire for "missional pastoral leadership driven by the depth of theological integrity that remains a hallmark of our church and its ministerium."¹¹ The SMP program, as it currently stands, hardly lives up to this purported high standard. It seems there is more of an enthrallment with context, culture, and relevance, combined with perceived emergencies and needs, which only end up undermining and demeaning the Pastoral Office on the whole. And while there are examples in our Synod's history of various alternate routes, these were the exception rather than the rule. The SMP program itself needs to be guided into a higher standard comparable to that of the Master of Divinity. The Scriptures, the Confessions, and the history of the church and the LCMS, give us ample examples of characteristics and training for the Pastoral Office. Perhaps this can be addressed more fully at another time.

Here is a thought to ponder from a secular standpoint: If educational and professional standards were lessened and diminished for medical doctors, one could only imagine how that would affect the standard of medical care a patient would receive, not to mention the drastic effects

on medical research. Why would we expect anything less from the training standards for the Pastoral Office and the impact that will have on our doctrine and practice and the care of souls?

We must insist on maintaining high standards of education, not less.¹²

Rev. Douglas S. Thompson

Master of Divinity, Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis
Pastor, Saint Paul Lutheran Church
Park City, Montana

[Editorial Staff Note: Pastor Thompson is a preacher's son whose father served Trinity Lutheran Church in Cedar Rapids, IA, which had a membership of just under 2,000. Pastor Thompson vicared at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Billings, MT, which has two pastors and nearly 700 members. Billings is a metropolitan area. His first call was to St. Paul Lutheran, Beach, ND and St. Peter Lutheran Church, Belfield, ND. He thus has experienced a full range of congregation sizes as well as geographic settings and understands what Biblical and Confessional pastoral ministry really requires and is.]

- 1 Certificate (formerly called colloquy), Cross-Cultural Ministry Center (CCMC), Center for Hispanic Studies (CHS), Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP), Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT) and Deaf Institute of Theology (DIT)
- 2 Resolution 5-10B Convention Proceedings 2007, 63rd Regular Convention, the LCMS, Houston, Texas, July 14-19, 2007 [Saint Louis: 2007], p. 133-136.
- 3 While exceptions are allowed for in the admission process, the basic information presented in this chart is the general rule.
- 4 Incoming students are required to show entry level competency in these areas through previous studies or course work offered by the seminaries, and competency exams administered by the seminaries.
- 5 Lack of any Biblical language study is a critical issue in any preparation for the Pastoral Office. It would be best if men seeking the Office enrolled in the traditional residential Master of Divinity program which is proven in providing highly qualified men for the Pastoral Office.
- 6 1 Timothy 3:2
- 7 Titus 1:9 (New American Standard Bible)
- 8 1 Timothy 5:22
- 9 That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake (Concordia Triglote, p. 45).
- 10 Of Ecclesiastical Order they teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he be regularly called. (Concordia Triglote, p. 49).
- 11 Resolution 5-10B Convention Proceedings 2007, 63rd Regular Convention, the LCMS, Houston, Texas, July 14-19, 2007 [Saint Louis: 2007], p. 133.
- 12 The SMP program is really only one aspect in a broader story of alternate routes into the Pastoral Office. Concordia Seminary in St. Louis offers three other alternate routes which require no more than SMP: Center for Hispanic Studies (CHS), Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT) and Deaf Institute of Theology (DIT).



June 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 Dell Diamond 7 PM	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Pastor						
On						
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Vacation						
24	25	26 7 PM: Voters Meeting	27 No Bible Study	28	29	30

July 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Installation Of Officers, SchlitterAustin	2	3	4 No Bible Study	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Pastor						
At						
15 Candidate Weslie Odom Ordination/ Installation	16	17	18 10 AM: Galatians 7:15 PM: Revelation II	19	20	21
Ordination						
22	23	24 6:30 PM: Elders	25 10 AM: Galatians 7:15 PM: Revelation II	26	27	28
29	30	31				