

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, FORT WAYNE
For the Life of the World

Fall 2021, Volume Twenty-Five, Number Three



The Future of Bioethics

Gifford A. Grobien

The Future of Higher Education

Russell P. Dawn

The Future of Parish Ministry

Sean R. Kilgo

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Alvin Toffler, in his 1970 book *Future Shock*, talked about the “shattering stress and disorientation” that comes from “too much change in too short a period of time” and from “information overload.”¹ More recently (2016), Thomas Friedman has shown how cultural adaptation has lagged behind the rate of technological development.² Even more recently (2020), Aneel Chima and Ron Gutman have stated in a *Harvard Business Review* article that “conditions for accelerating change have been building for years . . . COVID-19 and its derivatives laid bare a ‘new normal’ of change, marked by three dimensions:

- ✘ It’s *perpetual* – occurring all the time in an ongoing way.
- ✘ It’s *pervasive* – unfolding in multiple areas of life at once.
- ✘ It’s *exponential* – accelerating at an increasingly rapid rate.”³

We have access to more information at our fingertips than ever before. Not only has the quantity and availability of information expanded, but the pace with which we are expected to digest and respond to this information has also significantly increased. Quantity, however, does not guarantee quality. We are bombarded with conflicting arguments and questionable “facts.” We are expected to work faster and longer and process more information, and there is no indication that this will slow down anytime soon. It is no wonder that we are struggling with burnout in our workplaces, feeling stressed in our homes, and finding ourselves distrustful of the media and public leaders.

How will all of this change affect the Church?

This past year we have been reflecting on and celebrating CTSFW’s 175 years of service to Christ and His Church. This magazine issue looks ahead. What might we be facing in 25 years when CTSFW celebrates its 200th Anniversary? What does the future hold in store?

The following articles will undoubtedly provide fodder for further thought and consideration. I pray that, even more importantly, they serve as a source of encouragement for you. Despite all of the changes, challenges, and uncertainties, Christ is still Lord of His Church. He is faithful and true. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matthew 6:34). We can rest in peace and with



Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

the assurance that our Father in Heaven knows all of our needs and worries and will provide all that we need here and in eternity.

We need not fear what the future holds. But we plan and prepare for what is to come—putting on the full armor of God and teaching the faithful, reaching the lost, and caring for all—so that all may receive the forgiveness and salvation we have in Christ.

May our Lord bless you and keep you in Him,

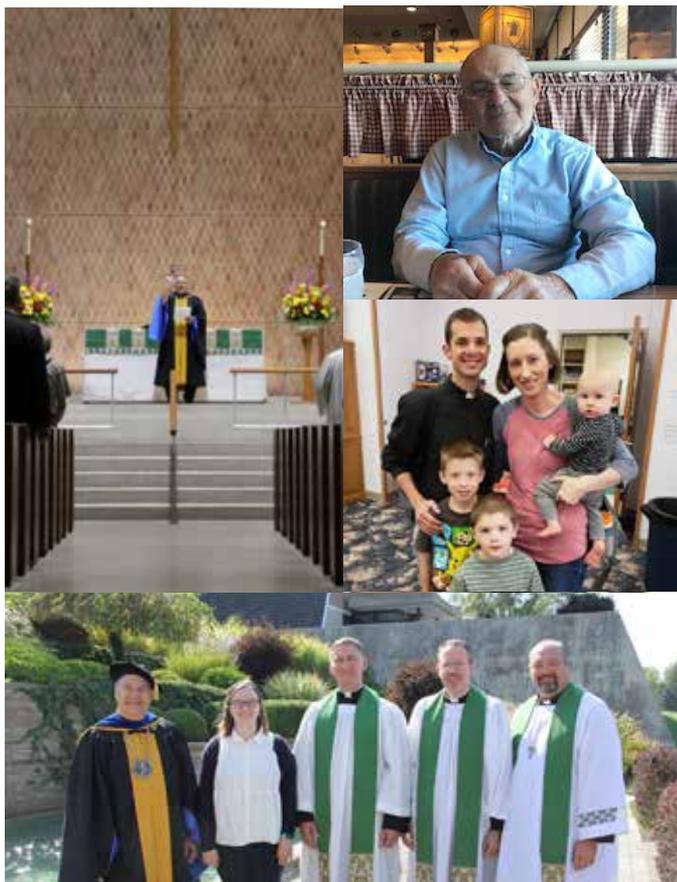
In Christ’s service,

Lawrence R. Rast Jr.
President
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana

- 1 Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (New York: Random House, 1970).
- 2 Thomas Friedman, *Thank You for Being Late: An Optimist’s Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020).
- 3 “What It Takes to Lead Through an Era of Exponential Change,” hbr.org/2020/10/what-it-takes-to-lead-through-an-era-of-exponential-change, accessed September 27, 2021.

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For the Life of the World

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture verses are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

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The Future of Bio



Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Traditionally bioethics has focused on care at life's end and reproductive technologies, but with more recent developments in gene technology, bioethics is moving into all facets of life. It is often useful to distinguish between medical treatments that care for natural life and treatments that seek to move beyond natural limits of life. We can label the former kind of treatments as *care* and the latter kind as *enhancements*.

We usually think of bioethics as the discipline which helps us to make good decisions about human health. While this is one important part of bioethics, Christian bioethics must also take into account the spiritual care and consolation of those who suffer from various infirmities. For, as Christians, we believe and confess that our bodies will not be free of infirmity in this natural life, this side of the resurrection. If bioethics is viewed only as a discipline for making good decisions about health, we will eventually find ourselves in despair at our inability to overcome sickness, debilitation, and death. Along the way, we will find ourselves tempted to take actions regarding human health and life far beyond the faithful and good stewardship delegated to us by God.

ethics

Gifford A. Grobien

From a perspective that thinks bioethics is only about making decisions to promote or prolong natural life, without considering the broader Christian life of faith, humility, and dependent hope in God's promises, we will ironically find ourselves making unethical choices about human health and life.

Traditionally bioethics has focused on care at life's end and reproductive technologies, but with more recent developments in gene technology, bioethics is moving into all facets of life. It is often useful to distinguish between medical treatments that care for natural life and treatments that seek to move beyond natural limits of life. We can label the former kind of treatments as *care* and the latter kind as *enhancements*.

Current interest in enhancements centers on gene therapy. To what extent may we modify genes not only to heal disease but to enhance human traits, characteristics, and performance above and beyond what God has given in creating a human person? One tool in genetic modification is CRISPR (an acronym for "clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats"). CRISPR technology introduces "Cas" proteins (anti-viral proteins originally found in bacteria) into cells. Guided by RNA, which finds a DNA sequence in the target cell, the protein changes the target DNA letter or sequence as programmed. Genes can be turned on or off, or they can be edited to alter the DNA code.

Before dismissing CRISPR as a kind of new eugenics that should be rejected out of hand, we should recognize that real, unprecedented progress in treating disease has been accomplished with the aid of CRISPR. Recently patients have been treated for sickle-cell disease and a related illness, resulting in the production of healthy blood cells rather than the weak or short-lived blood cells characteristic of the diseases. Cancer's

devastating effects are due in large part to cloaking molecules that trick immune system T-cells into marking cancer cells as safe, and therefore allowing them to grow unabated. Recent trials use CRISPR to alter T-cells so that they bypass the deceptive markers in cancer cells and attack cancer. Immune system T-cells are being modified to overlook molecular markers in cancer cells that cause T-cells to overlook the cancer cells as dangerous. Some progress has been seen also in genetically-caused blindness, amyloidosis, and even urinary tract infections.

On the other hand, when CRISPR is used to modify embryonic genomes, researchers have noticed some cases where the trauma to the genome was great enough that cells rejected parts of chromosomes and, sometimes, even whole chromosomes. In fact, a recent review of previous studies suggested that errors in editing occurred more often than previously detected. Besides causing other genetic disorders, such mutilation could also be a risk factor for cancer.

Thus, while some may have moved on to ethical debates over the use of CRISPR, its validity, even as a tool for medical treatment, still comes into question. We should not be surprised if new technologies introduced to serve health care also come under similar concern. Besides the purpose, method, and activity of a bioethical practice or technology, an important question for the future of bioethics is the extent of testing needed really to know the full effects of medical technologies, and the ramifications for moving too slowly or too quickly into a new technology.

When we consider treatments for those in the latter part of life or near the end of life, the distinction between treatment that actually cares for people and that which attempts to go beyond reasonable limits is just as pressing. Here

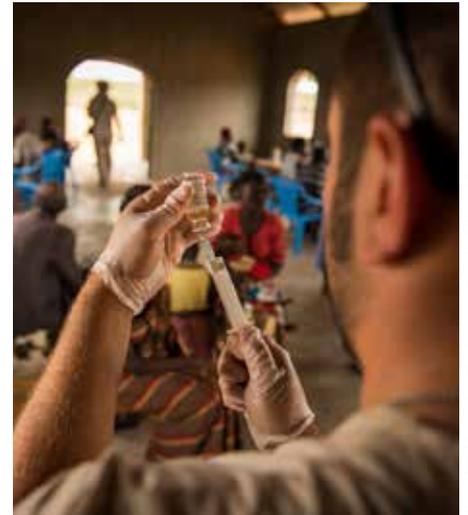
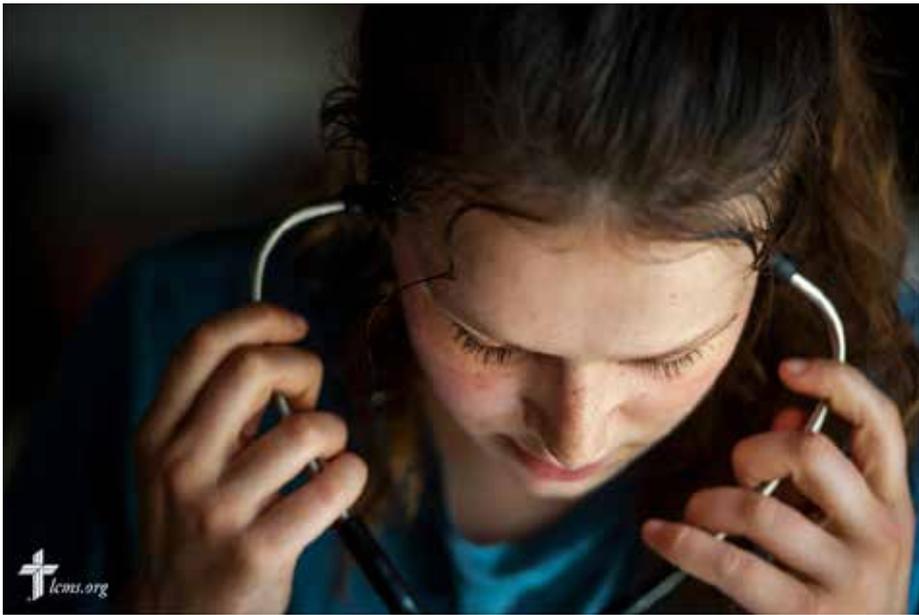


Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

For, as Christians, we believe and confess that our bodies will not be free of infirmity in this natural life, this side of the resurrection. If bioethics is viewed only as a discipline for making good decisions about health, we will eventually find ourselves in despair at our inability to overcome sickness, debilitation, and death. Along the way, we will find ourselves tempted to take actions regarding human health and life far beyond the faithful and good stewardship delegated to us by God.



If we conceive of human life as both biological and the exercise of the human mind and freedom, then what we truly desire is to live a life greater and more fulfilling than can be achieved in this world of existence. As Christians, this is the truly human and faithful perspective that we should strive for. Yes, we have the gift of natural life, in which we love and serve one another and, especially, confess the saving deeds of the Lord in the midst of the world.

one can still speak of enhancements, in the sense of trying to prolong relatively healthy life for years or even decades beyond the norm. Yet one can also consider a third type of treatment, that of artificially keeping a person alive, such as through continuous life support, when the person would otherwise die if taken off life support. Continuous life support should be distinguished from unusual extraordinary means of providing nourishment and hydration, such as through a feeding tube. Nourishment and hydration should never be withheld from a patient, even though the means for providing it may vary, depending on circumstances, and a person may finally no longer desire food or even drink and refuse it. (Such a lack of desire and refusal is not unusual when a person is irretrievably dying, and the person should not be forced unduly to take food and/or drink.)

In considering caring for our mortal life, especially as it approaches its end, a couple questions may help us to sharpen our thinking: has our desire to delay or even eliminate death clouded or undermined faith in resurrection to immortal life after death? Does delaying death suggest a false hope for a “quality” of life in advanced age that is not biologically feasible?

In considering these situations, it’s helpful to think in terms suggested by

Gilbert Meilaender, in *Should We Live Forever? The Ethical Ambiguities of Aging*. On the one hand, we can conceive of life as primarily biological. In this case, living a fulfilling life is living to the capacity of these biological limits, which may or may not be enhanced by more years. Adding years or decades artificially to a life beset by infirmity certainly doesn’t serve biological goals of quality of life. On the other hand, if we conceive of life primarily as the exercise of the human mind and freedom, then biological constraints are much less significant, except to the extent that they hinder the use of the mind, passions, and freedom. In such a situation, extending life, even if physically limited, would seem to make sense, because it would allow more time for intellectual growth, creativity, and relationships.

But if we conceive of human life as both, then what we truly desire is to live a life greater and more fulfilling than can be achieved in this world of existence. As Christians, this is the truly human and faithful perspective that we should strive for. Yes, we have the gift of natural life, in which we love and serve one another and, especially, confess the saving deeds of the Lord in the midst of the world. Death, however, both symbolizes our limits and starkly establishes them. Only by being redeemed from death will we enter into the quantity and quality of life that our heavenly Father intended for us and desires for us. No technology can accomplish this for us, but only the flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus. The single greatest challenge in bioethics is living the natural life God has given us, with faith, thanksgiving, and love, while also recognizing the limits of this life when they come and hoping for the life of the world to come. [▲](#)

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The Future of Higher Education

Russell P. Dawn



Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Education is a tool of cultural transmission. It has ever been such. Proverbs tells us that if we raise our children in the way that they should go, when they are grown, they won't depart from it. That's cultural transmission—passing on the culture, including the faith, from one generation to the next. Education is also a tool of cultural change and has ever been such. Moses taught the Israelites how to live as free children of God rather than slaves of Pharaoh. That's cultural change—bringing the next generation into a culture that differs from that of previous generations.

Cultural transmission and change are perhaps the most important functions of education, for they imbue the learner with the things we believe and value, those we do not, and why. Neither is inherently good or bad, for the quality depends on the existing culture. A good culture ought to be transmitted, and a degraded culture ought to be changed.

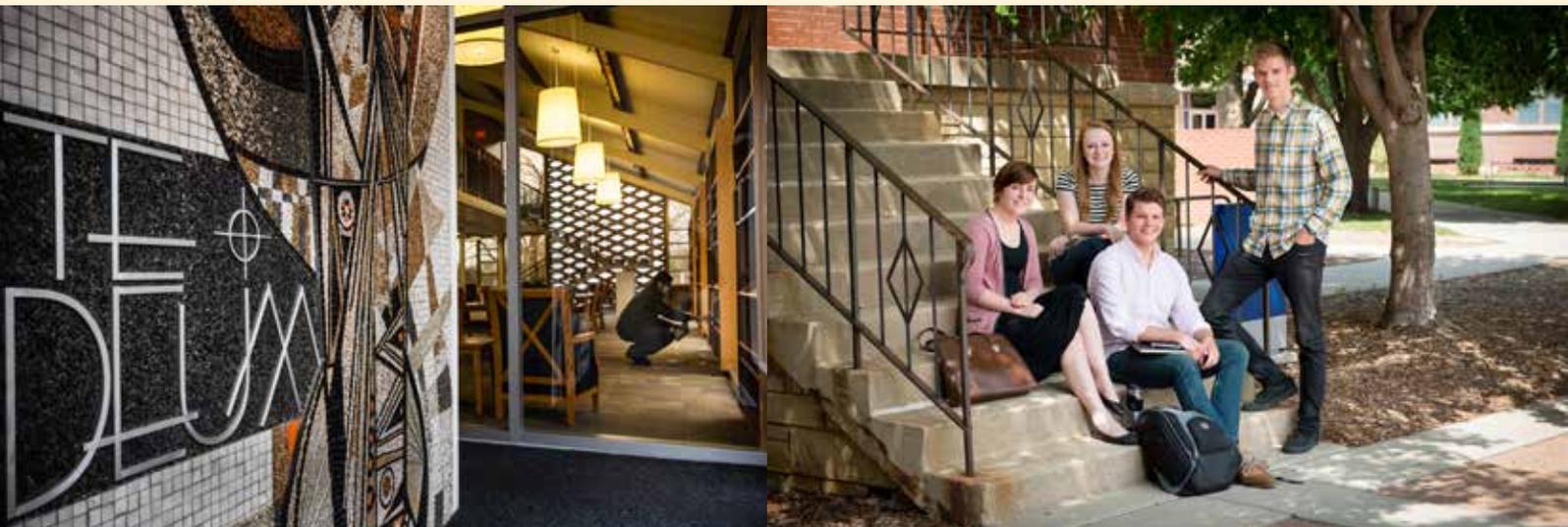
The reverse, however, has often been the case. To illustrate, let's look at some educational tradeoffs we've seen over the last century or so. Have we taught that nature is random because there is no cause, or nature is orderly because it was ordered by God? Have we taught that moral truth is in the eye of the beholder, or moral truth transcends personal preferences? Have we taught that gender is a social construct, or sex is an immutable biological reality? Have we taught that offense is to be avoided at any cost, or the cost of freedom includes having to overcome offense? None of these choices is culturally neutral. Through these and innumerable other choices, secular progressivism has gradually become the cultural norm in education. That has been a massive project in cultural change over many decades, and the outcome is a society that is increasingly godless, immoral, chaotic, and unfree. Cultural change has meant cultural degradation.

American society, with its system of nearly universal schooling, has been particularly ripe for the process of cultural change through education. A relative few have been able to shift

the culture substantially, and higher education has been the key to making it happen. Thousands of like-minded professors have influenced hundreds of thousands of young minds, who have then gone on to influence millions and tens of millions of others. Critical theory is a good case in point. This is the source of the Critical Race Theory (CRT) that's making waves today, but it's older and broader, influencing higher education since the middle of the last century. Like CRT, critical theory seeks to destroy—"deconstruct" is the sanitized term—any possibility that a text or idea carries transcendent Truth within it. The only truth is that which arises in the subjective (i.e., personal or individual) perception of the reader. Even a flawed perception is legitimate if it *feels* true to the individual. This subjectivism has been taught more and more in college, and thereby has increasingly influenced the way school teachers (as well as journalists, artists, writers, and others) have thought about the world around them. They, in turn, increasingly have brought that influence to wider society, especially through schools. Cultural change has been brought about incrementally but inexorably across the generations.

This is where much of higher education stands today. Indeed, the views of the secularists that were radical a generation ago are widespread today. Go back two generations, and what was radical then is now not only accepted but unassailable. And so, the future of higher education seems bleak.

Have we taught that nature is random because there is no cause, or nature is orderly because it was ordered by God? Have we taught that moral truth is in the eye of the beholder, or moral truth transcends personal preferences? Have we taught that gender is a social construct, or sex is an immutable biological reality? Have we taught that offense is to be avoided at any cost, or the cost of freedom includes having to overcome offense? None of these choices is culturally neutral.



It is not. Or at least, it needn't be.

Just as higher education has been an engine of cultural degradation over the last century, it can be an engine of cultural renewal in the future. Indeed, this is already happening, and in some institutions has been happening all along. The effect, however, is not yet great. Hundreds or perhaps thousands of faculty members at institutions dotting the landscape are teaching tens or even hundreds of thousands of students according to Truth. Where their effects are being felt, the fruits are faithfulness, virtue, order, and liberty. That is what renewal looks like—the contrary of godlessness, immorality, chaos, and bondage.

Renewal doesn't look the same as the past—we can't go back, and we shouldn't even want to. God is inviting us into loving service for our real neighbors according to their real needs in the very real, present, and soon-to-become-real future. But neither does renewal ignore the past. In the past we find lessons in wisdom (and foolishness) that can help illuminate the path forward. The future of higher education—if this journey of cultural renewal is to succeed—must be marked by *recognition*, *recovery*, and *resolve*.

By *recognition* I mean a clear understanding of what a proper education, a proper pursuit of Truth, entails. For instance, what axioms—foundational truths that cannot be proven or disproven—do we accept? Do we accept that there is a God to whom we are

responsible? That there is a moral law that transcends our preferences and immediate circumstances? That we naturally tend to violate the moral law? These and other related truths are part of the natural law tradition that can be explored according to reason but cannot ultimately be proven. There are also specifically biblical insights that cannot be proven, for instance, that God is triune, that human beings are made in His image, that we naturally rebel against Him, and that He has redeemed us in Christ.

All of these truths—natural and revealed Truth—are crucial to a proper education. They are the insights that have helped to make societies faithful, virtuous, orderly, and free. They are also widely rejected in modern higher education. The first step in harnessing higher education for cultural renewal is keen *recognition* of what the foundational Truth is and where it has been undermined.

The next step for higher education is *recovery* of Truth, once Truth has been recognized. This may well be the most difficult step of all. Some institutions have already accomplished it, of course, and others may only be a few years away. But still others may need decades to reach the goal. *Recovery* entails remaking the university in the mold of Truth. Faculty members may need to be trained, new faculty brought in, curricula rewritten, and programs of study redesigned. Barriers may include regulatory requirements, expected approaches to scholarly

research, the stigma of being an outlier, and, in general, the immense power of the entrenched culture of academia. *Recovery* of Truth is a slow, costly, uncertain process. It is also of almost incalculable importance.

The final step in harnessing the future of higher education for cultural renewal is *resolve*. Once Truth is *recognized* and *recovered*, it must remain so. *Resolve* is the determination to hold onto the gains, rather than letting them go in the comfort of success or the face of challenges. Cultural renewal will be inevitably slow, and probably intergenerational, so *resolve* must also be intergenerational. The lack of intergenerational *resolve* is why so many institutions that started out Christian have lost most or all of their connection to Truth.

By the grace of God working through those whom He calls to such service, the future of higher education can be bright. By recognizing Truth, recovering it in our institutions, and maintaining it with intergenerational resolve, higher education can be harnessed for cultural renewal. Through all the changes in higher education that occupy our daily concerns—demographic shifts, online modality, demand for new programs—it's the transcendent Truth that must define our future. Otherwise, higher education will be neither higher nor an education. 📖

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The Future of Par



Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Our Lord has given certain tasks to His Church. She is to baptize all nations, teach all things, preach sound doctrine, proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins, absolve the penitent, and administer His body and blood to the saints of God. She is to hold herself captive to every word which proceeds from the mouth of God.

Try to imagine life in the year 2046. It's rather hard to do. If we've learned anything from the science fiction novels, movies, and shows of the past, there isn't a single one of us who can imagine what such a world will look like. After all, 25 years ago, no one would have imagined the amount of power one wields within the palm of their hand in a smart phone. Fifty years ago, no one would have imagined that the globe would be connected by a World Wide Web of information. And 100 years ago, no one would have imagined electric cars becoming not only a reality but also more and more commonplace.

ish Ministry

Sean R. Kilgo

It's hard enough to imagine what the world will look like in 25 years; how much more difficult is it to imagine what the future of parish ministry will look like? After all, many pastors, in the last two years, have found themselves doing things they never thought they'd have to do. But is this possibly all a distraction from what the future of parish ministry actually has in store for us? Perhaps, in order to get a picture of what the future of parish ministry will look like, we need to first turn our gaze backward to the Scriptures, and see what our Lord has instituted for the work of the ministry.

Our Lord has given certain tasks to His Church. She is to baptize all nations, teach all things, preach sound doctrine, proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins, absolve the penitent, and administer His body and blood to the saints of God. She is to hold herself captive to every word which proceeds from the mouth of God. She is to be a holy ark, floating through this world of sin and decay and death, preserving the faithful and bringing them into the eternity of the resurrection.

That's what our Lord gives us to do. And, God be praised, it is a task which is timeless. It doesn't matter whether the year is 146, 1046, or 2046, we are given to preach the same words, teach the same doctrine, and give the same gifts, for they come from the Lord who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

We confess this truth in the preface of the Large Catechism, that the Lord continues to serve us day by day with the same gifts and same words: "For inasmuch as God Himself is not ashamed to teach these things daily, as knowing nothing better to teach, and always keeps teaching the same thing, and does not take up anything new or different, and all the saints know nothing better

or different to learn, and cannot finish learning this, are we not the finest of all fellows to imagine, if we have once read or heard it, that we know it all, and have no further need to read and learn, but can finish learning in one hour what God Himself cannot finish teaching, although He is engaged in teaching it from the beginning to the end of the world, and all prophets, together with all saints, have been occupied with learning it, and have ever remained pupils, and must continue to be such?" (LC Preface 16).

And while there will possibly be a myriad of external changes to what the Church's gathering looks like, and while there will possibly be changes in the administrative functions within the Church, we rejoice that the substance and form of the Church's worship remains unchanged as it has for thousands of years.

It is as the Church sings: "Change and decay in all around I see, O thou who changest not, abide with me." And because of the Lord's promise to us He does just that. He has not left us nor forsaken us. He will never abandon His beloved bride, the Church.

So, what will the future of parish ministry be? At its core it will be exactly as it has been in the past. Perhaps we will check in with our shut-ins via video chats, but we will still go to them with the Lord's Word and the Holy Sacrament. Maybe we'll have a direct line into hospitals to see how our sick or injured member is doing, and yet we will still go and visit them, pray with them and their family, and bring them the Sacrament.

We may get instant notices any time someone in our church has a child, and yet we will still bring that child in our arms to the font and clothe them



Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

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The heavens and earth will pass away, the grass will wither and the flower will fade, fads in the world will come and go, technologies will arise and disappear in our usages, but the Lord's Word and His gifts will never fade, will never change, will never be taken from us, and will never cease to be our chief aim in ministering to the saints of God. Even if the world should begin attacking the Church, and they were to "take our life, goods, fame, child, and wife," even if we are jailed, persecuted, or even killed, our ministry stays the same. Because our Jesus stays the same, and through that ministry the kingdom remains ours, no matter the date or circumstance.

in the blood of Christ with the waters of Holy Baptism. Confirmation may utilize various online learning formats, but we will still gather these children of God around the hearing and praying of the Scriptures and eventually to the altar to begin a lifetime of receiving the medicine of immortality. People may come up with new and novel ways of sinning, and yet we will still bring the proclamation of the Law and the comfort of the absolution to bear on that sin, regardless of its name.

Who knows, pastors might be driving hover cars with special "pastor" emergency lights to let them get to where they're going in a timely manner (one can dream). And yet, the reason for wherever they're going will be the same as the reason we go today, and the reason the Church has always gone: to bring the Word and gifts of Christ to the saints of God in order to comfort their consciences and bring them into everlasting life.

Luther reminds us of this wonderful reality in the Large Catechism where he notes: "Everything, therefore, in the Christian Church is ordered to the end that we shall daily obtain there nothing but the forgiveness of sin through the Word and signs, to comfort and encourage our consciences as long as we live here" (LC III 55).

And there's certainly things that none of us can imagine which await us as we journey forward. Yet, in the midst of it all, we know exactly what we will be doing in 25 years, in 50 years, in 100 years, indeed, in every year until our Lord's glorious return.

We will be baptizing, teaching, preaching, absolving, feeding, caring, and rejoicing. We will continue to float through the world in the safety of the Lord's ark. We will continue to be brought to faith and sustained in that faith by the work of the Holy Spirit. We will continue to be joined to Christ in a wonderfully mysterious way. And none of that will stop until the new heavens and the new earth are brought about in the Lord's return.

The heavens and earth will pass away, the grass will wither and the flower will fade, fads in the world will come and go, technologies will arise and disappear in our usages, but the Lord's Word and His gifts will never fade, will never change, will never be taken from us, and will never cease to be our chief aim in ministering to the saints of God. Even if the world should begin attacking the Church, and they were to "take our life, goods, fame, child, and wife," even if we are jailed, persecuted, or even killed, our ministry stays the same. Because our Jesus stays the same, and through that ministry the kingdom remains ours, no matter the date or circumstance.

So, whatever the world may hold in store for us in 25 years, we can face it boldly and without fear, for we have the same gifts, the same Lord, the same Spirit, the same Word, and the same faith, all of which will take us through those gray and later days and into the golden evening brightening in the west. 🏰

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WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

What Is a Human Being?

Scott E. Stiegemeier

What is a human being? This might be the defining theological question of our times. It literally stares us in the mirror. Our culture is riddled with an inadequate anthropology. We don't know what we are, and the evidence is everywhere. Confusion about what it means to be human is the root of many troubles.

The meaning of the body is of particular concern. We objectify our bodies, treating them like malleable containers for the soul, "the real you." It is as if the body is a means to an end instead of being an integrated part of your identity. This disordered view of the body degrades marriage, sex, and family. It results in medical atrocities which become ordinary and unremarkable. It becomes part of a utilitarian calculus that disposes of the lives of people on the margins. Only God's Word is the corrective lens through which we may see the reality.

In the beginning of Scripture, we read that God created humanity in His image and likeness, male and female. Every human being is honorable because we are the subject of God's creative intentions and the object of God's love in the garden and from the cross. When Jesus rose from the dead, He was found in a garden, bringing us back around to our original blessedness. Our glory does not originate within us, of course. We are simply the moon reflecting the sun and God is our Light.

Not everyone sees it that way, however. Not everyone thinks that human beings are the pinnacle of creation. The modern secular materialist says that a man is nothing more than a featherless biped who can do math. Thank you, Charles Darwin. We are just specialized combinations of atoms. If that is true, then a human being has no inherent worth. One will then only be honored and respected for traits such as rationality, volition, and productivity.

In the 19th century, Friedrich Nietzsche said that human beings possess no natural dignity, no glory on the basis of being human, and that Christianity has harmed the world for elevating the worthless masses. Nietzsche famously proclaimed that God is dead. If there is no God, then no one bears His image and respect for human life becomes a fantasy. Nietzsche is an apostle of this godless age.



Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Holy Scripture shows that human beings are the height of God's creation, but Princeton philosopher Peter Singer calls this "speciesism." To him, privileging human life over the lives of animals is a form of bigotry akin to racism or sexism. There is nothing inherently dignified or special about merely being human, he tells us. Singer too is an apostle of this age.

Who is endangered by a distorted anthropology? The vulnerable and the marginalized most of all. The disabled. The poor. The immigrant. The racial

and ethnic minority. The kid with Down Syndrome. The grandmother with dementia. The other. Actually, it endangers you and everyone you know.

In the face of such threats, divine love means we will serve our neighbor and defend his life. To paraphrase Martin Niemöller speaking of the Nazis:

When they came for the Gypsies, I said nothing because I am not a Gypsy. When they came for the Jews, I said nothing, because I am not a Jew. When they came for the disabled newborns, I said nothing because I am not a disabled newborn. Then when they came for me, there was no one left to speak.

It is not about culture wars; it's spiritual warfare for which we are well-armed.

Only the Church can bring sanity to the world's madness with our message that human beings are God's offspring imbued with glory by the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Awakening to this reality will change your self-perception and how you behave toward others. When you see your neighbor in God's light, it will be unthinkable to abuse or exploit him. Our theological anthropology is illuminated by our Christology. The Incarnate Lord alone can show us what it means to be human. We see the face of God in Christ Jesus, but He is also the definitive revelation of humanity, the Second Adam, and perfect image of God. The eternal Son of God became a man and remains a man. In Him, we can see what we are and what we will be. Let's preach Jesus and thereby save man. 

The Rev. Dr. Scott E. Stiegemeier (scott.stiegemeier@cui.edu) serves as the Assistant Professor of Theology at Concordia University Irvine.



176th Academic Year Beg



By God’s grace and to His glory alone, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), held its Opening Service on Tuesday, September 7, 2021. President Lawrence R. Rast Jr. thanked the faculty, staff, students, families, and friends—gathered both in person and online around the world—and welcomed them “as we begin our 176th academic year, which is really a testimony, not to the people who’ve come before us, but to the faithfulness of God and the manner in which He will continue to love and support you—our new students, our current students, our new staff and faculty. Through the various expressions of pilgrimages in your lives, He is faithful.”

LCMS Indiana District President Daniel Brege executed the commissioning and installation of newly appointed diaconal staff, Deaconess Katie Aiello as admission counselor; the installation of newly appointed ordained staff, the Rev. Chad Schopp and the Rev. Brian Stark as admission counselors; and the installation of newly appointed faculty, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions the Rev. Todd Peperkorn. May our Seminary and entire Synod pray

for God’s guidance as these dedicated servants work to teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all.

LCMS President Matthew Harrison was on hand to celebrate and offer words of encouragement and support. “I want to thank this Seminary for everything that it means to the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Confessional Lutheranism around the world. There is no seminary in the world, no Lutheran seminary in the world that has a bigger

global footprint than this institution, and we are, indeed, very pleased with it.” He went on to say, “Jesus comes to have mercy . . . He will be blessing you. That’s what He comes to do, and may He bless your work.”

We ask that our brothers and sisters in Christ from across the country and around the world join Dr. Rast and the entire CTSFW community in our fervent prayer: “O God, through the Holy Spirit, You illuminate the minds and sanctify the lives of those whom You call to the work of pastors and deaconesses. Bless the Seminary and the academic year which we begin in Your name . . . Bless those who teach and those who learn, and so renew and increase in us the gifts of Your Spirit, that we may be built up in our most holy faith, strengthened for every duty, and enabled to render You and our fellow men true acceptable service, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.”

As Dr. Rast announced in the Lord’s blessing over His people, “May the true faith flourish among us, the fear of God, and the love of the brethren; may the voice of prayer continually be heard here, the voice of rejoicing and salvation, the voice of praise, and the invocation of the most glorious and honorable name of the triune God, henceforth and forever.”



ins at CTSFW



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.

1. 2021 incoming class students lining up for Opening Service
2. First-year students singing during Opening Service
3. President Lawrence R. Rast Jr. proclaims the opening of the 176th academic year
4. The Rev. Dr. Daniel Brege commissions Deaconess Katherine Aiello
5. Seminary students and families participating in the service
6. LCMS President Matthew Harrison shares encouraging words during the service
7. President Rast, Deac. Katherine Aiello, the Rev. Chad Schopp, the Rev. Brian Stark, and the Rev. Dr. Todd Peperkorn



EVENTS SCHEDULE

Mark your calendars or register today!

For more information, please visit our website at www.ctsfw.edu/Events or call (260) 452-2100. Please check the events webpage for current information as events are subject to change.

OCTOBER

Prayerfully Consider Visit

October 14–16

Information and registration: ctsfw.edu/PCV
Contact: Admission@ctsfw.edu or (800) 481-2155

Continuing Education: The Divine Service in the Old Testament

October 18–22

Information and registration: ctsfw.edu/CE/Fort-Wayne-IN
Contact: CE@ctsfw.edu or (260) 452-2204

175th Anniversary Thank You Celebration

Sunday, October 24

See ad on next page for full details.

The Changeless Word in a Changing World: Post-Pandemic Ministry

Monday, October 25

Information and registration: ctsfw.edu/Changeless
Contact: LeeAnna.Rondot@ctsfw.edu or (260) 452-2204

Christ Academy: College

October 29–31

Information and registration: www.ctsfw.edu/CAC
Contact: ChristAcademy@ctsfw.edu or (800) 481-2155

NOVEMBER

Luther Hostel: Here I Stand—Conscience and Confession: 500 Years After the Diet of Worms

November 3–5

Information and registration: ctsfw.edu/LutherHostel
Contact: (260) 452-2204

Good Shepherd Institute: Christ the Shepherd, Tender, Caring

November 7–9

Information and registration: ctsfw.edu/GSI
Phone: (260) 452-2204

Organ Recital

Sunday, November 7, 4:30 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

Evening Prayer with the Seminary Schola Cantorum

Sunday, November 7, 7:30 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

Vespers and Organ Recital with Steven F. Wente

Monday, November 8, 4:30 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

NOVEMBER

Hymn Festival with Seminary Kantorei and Choir

Monday, November 8, 7:30 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

Seminary Guild

Tuesday, November 9, 1:00 p.m.

Information: ctsfw.edu/SemGuild or (260) 485-0209

DECEMBER

Advent Candlelight Evening Prayer

Saturday, December 11, 4:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

Seminary Guild

Tuesday, December 14, 1:00 p.m.

Information: ctsfw.edu/SemGuild or (260) 485-0209

JANUARY 2022

Choral Vespers

Sunday, January 16, 4:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

Lenten Preaching Workshop

Monday, January 17, 8:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Information and registration: ctsfw.edu/PreachingWorkshop
Phone: (260) 452-2204

Symposia Series

January 18–21

Information and registration: ctsfw.edu/Symposia

Vespers

Tuesday, January 18, 5:00 p.m. in Kramer Chapel

Epiphany Choral Evening Prayer—Kantorei

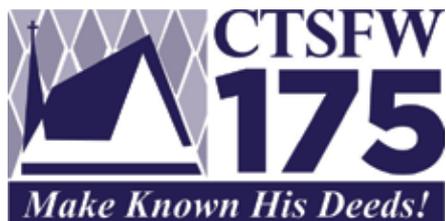
Wednesday, January 19, in Kramer Chapel, 5:00 p.m.

Symposia Vespers and Organ Recital

Thursday, January 20, in Kramer Chapel, 4:00 p.m.



Services and lectures will be livestreamed online at ctsfw.edu/DailyChapel or facebook.com/ctsfw. Some services may be open to the public. Please check our events website for the most current information.



175th Anniversary Thank You Celebration Sunday, October 24, 2021

Concordia Theological Seminary
6600 N. Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825

3:00 p.m. Celebratory Vespers Service

IN KRAMER CHAPEL

Enjoy a special celebratory service with recognition of our dedicated fieldwork pastors.

4:15 p.m. Movie: "Make Known His Deeds!" 175 Years of Teaching the Faithful, Reaching the Lost, and Caring for All

IN SIHLER AUDITORIUM

Join us for a short movie presentation sharing the impact you have made through CTSFW.

5:00 p.m. Oktoberfest Dinner

KATHERINE LUTHER DINING HALL

We invite you to enjoy a meal with our CTSFW community.

If you will be joining us for this complimentary dinner, follow the registration link at ctsfw.edu/175th or contact LeeAnna Rondot at (260) 452-2204 or LeeAnna.Rondot@ctsfw.edu.



If you are unable to join us in person for these events, the Celebratory Vespers Service and the movie will be livestreamed online for you to join us virtually. You may watch them at ctsfw.edu/DailyChapel or facebook.com/ctsfw.

COVID-19 Information

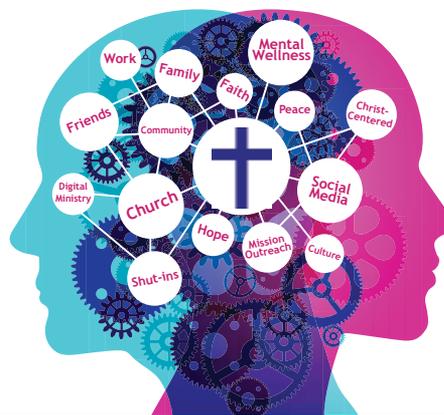
The recent rise in COVID-19 cases within the United States due to the Delta variant would seem to confirm that the coronavirus is going to be with us for the foreseeable future.

Guests to campus who have not been vaccinated are encouraged to wear a protective face covering over both mouth and nose when having close contact with others.

For additional information please contact LeeAnna Rondot at (260) 452-2204 or LeeAnna.Rondot@ctsfw.edu.

The Changeless Word in a Changing World: Post-Pandemic Ministry

Monday, October 25, 2021



Exploring ministry opportunities in the following areas:

- Technology and the church
- Mental and emotional wellness
- Cultural challenges

For more information or to register please visit ctsfw.edu/Changeless or contact LeeAnna Rondot at (260) 452-2204 or LeeAnna.Rondot@ctsfw.edu.

This single-day conference on the campus of CTSFW is hosted by:

THE Lutheran
Foundation

CTSFW
CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

Good Shepherd Institute

22nd Annual Conference | November 7–9, 2021

Christ the Shepherd, Tender, Caring

The 2021 Good Shepherd Institute conference centers on our namesake: Christ, the Good Shepherd. As the world continues to adapt to post-pandemic life and as a cancel culture seeks to dismiss the Church and her witness, we need more than ever to hear the caring voice of the Good Shepherd.

Beginning with Choral Vespers on Sunday evening at 7:30 p.m. and concluding with lunch on Tuesday, the conference will include following plenary sessions:

- *Hear the Word That Christ Has Spoken*—Charles Gieschen
- *Come, O Living Christ, Renew Us*—Todd Peperkorn
- *Christ, Whose Kingdom We Proclaim: Lessons Learned from the Life and Legacy of Carl Schalk (1929-2021)*—Barry Bobb
- *Christ in Every Congregation: Intentional Planning for Worship*—Paul Grime and Kevin Hildebrand

The conference will include practical sectionals, beautiful chapel services, a Monday late-afternoon organ recital by Steven Wenthe, and the annual hymn festival. For more information and to register, visit ctsfw.edu/GSI or call (260) 452-2204.

Train Them Up: Nourishing the

By Rebecca S. Ahlersmeyer



Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

It's a familiar passage, often quoted, often inscribed on Christian bookstore gifts for Baptisms, confirmations, and teachers. It's amazing how much meaning and responsibility is packed into one little verse.

I recently had the chance to chat with the Rev. A. Brian Flamme (and his son, Noah) about how this passage has inspired his life—from encouraging people, both young and old, to his own calling to ministry. When it comes to this high calling of nourishing the future leaders of our Church, it's always of interest and inspiration to discover what recipes have worked for others.

A Little Church in Roswell

Senior Pastor Rev. Flamme has been at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Roswell, New Mexico, for four years and, together with his team, has intentionally cultivated a theologically-rich environment for his community. When he spoke of raising Jason (10),

Noah (7), and Caleb (4), together with his wife (and Noah's teacher), Jen, the joy on his face was more than apparent, especially discussing how they weave faith throughout their lives from day to day. "At home, it's hard to maintain a regular schedule of devotions, but it's important to come together in prayer, to support each other as Christians."

Arming Your Children for Service

In many ways bringing up a career in ministry with your children may feel a bit like considering military service. In your time and wisdom, you may have seen the hardships pastors and deaconesses have faced. Can we ever truly prepare our children for the trenches? *We can* pray to see them

through God's eyes—a vision of how your encouragement could become a life's work that will ripple outward into eternity. Pastor Flamme said he's honest about the challenges and doesn't "sugar coat it" with his kids—and "pastors' kids see a lot of what others don't know." The magnitude of the vocation can be intimidating and even a little scary, but it comes down to small, everyday acts of mercy, courage, and sacrifice—things we would all agree are desirable and worthy of support and promotion. Such encouragement can only serve them well on any path they choose.

Are You Raising a Pastor or Deaconess?

The truth is, no one apart from God is totally sure of a child's trajectory, even the child him or herself. Noah (who graciously sacrificed some of his lunch hour, polished and professional, complete with tie) talked about considering the ministry, especially when he encouraged a friend to be baptized. Rev. Flamme laughed when he recalled that he was also seven when he had the same experience with a friend and first thought of becoming a pastor. In the

Future Leaders of Our Church



meantime, creating an atmosphere of joy in worship and service does unspeakable good and helps create a vision. Noah spoke of the enjoyment he gets from singing beloved hymns in daily chapel with gusto, hearing and discussing Bible stories (such as his favorite, which he didn't just choose "because his name is Noah too"), and how it fills his heart even more than Minecraft (even much, much more).

See It, Say It

How many times have you seen a thoughtful and gifted child at work or play in your congregation? How many times have you sought them out? Affirmed them? Encouraged them? For so many of our servants in the church, all it took was someone planting a seed. "You'd make a great pastor." "You'd make a great deaconess." Five little words, that take mere seconds, that could change the course of someone's life and the very Church itself forever. As Rev. Flamme put it, "If someone has gifts, say so. Encourage them to pursue work in the church. And it's not just for young men and women—it's for older people as well. A little encouragement goes a

long way." You never know the effect your words may have on someone. The Holy Spirit is powerful and able to grow even the tiniest of seeds. Next time you see this special person, say something. Write a note to do so on your fridge, your calendar, your hand. Set a reminder on your phone. Be the person who lives eternally in someone's memory as the encourager who opened the door to a sacred vocation, a divine calling.

A Real Possibility to Consider

Pastor Flamme doesn't shy away from bringing up the ripe harvest field and the need for workers regularly with his congregation. He speaks of the need for pastors. "Just like the call to the disciples. Jesus wants some of your boys to also be fishers of men. It's a real possibility to consider."

For those considering Christ's call, Rev. Flamme has several pieces of advice. "Talk to your pastor. Talk to mature people in your congregation. Receive feedback and be willing to accept it. Seek counsel. Sometimes we think too little or too highly of ourselves."

I Would Not Be the Pastor I Am

Pastor Flamme was also eager to encourage supporters of the Seminary. "It's money well spent. I would not be the kind of pastor that I am, with the understanding of the Gospel that I have, unless I had the Seminary—with the professors, the chapel experience, and the brotherhood that I formed with my fellow seminarians there. So without the help and support of other faithful Christians around the country, working to keep the Seminary open, I certainly wouldn't be where I am today."

Very Optimistic About the Church's Future

Rev. Flamme is "very optimistic about the Church's future." He noted

that kids not born into a Christian culture have exciting prospects and possibilities, becoming "stronger, holding onto necessary things." In the shadow of the pandemic, "it's easy to set back the things Jesus called us to do," but he had encouragement from "brother pastors, a brotherhood working together." A Church united in Christ cannot fall. If He is for us, who can be against us?

Now Is the Time

Now is the time. Speak God's encouragement. Believe Him when He calls. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19a). "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 15:15b). "Let the oppressed go free . . . break every yoke" (Isaiah 58:6b).

Train them up in the way they should go. Nourish the future leaders of our Church. Heed God's calling in your life. The Lord will take care of the rest. 🏰

Rebecca A. Ahlersmeyer
(Rebecca.Ahlersmeyer@ctsfw.edu)
serves as the Communication Specialist at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.



Newly Appointed Faculty



Todd A. Peperkorn

Assistant Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions

The Rev. Dr. Todd A. Peperkorn is a 1996 (MDiv) and 1999 (STM) graduate of CTSFW. He earned his BA in history in the pre-seminary program at Concordia University Nebraska (CUNE) in 1992. He recently completed his DMin in preaching at the Aquinas Institute of Theology in St. Louis. For the past 10 years, he served as senior pastor at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Rocklin, California. Prior to that, he served as pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Kenosha, Wisconsin, for 12 years, and as an admission counselor at CTSFW for three years. The author of several books and articles in the areas of mental illness, preaching, and American church history, he also brings several decades of parish experience to bear on forming pastors. His wife, Kathryn neé Brandt, (CUNE '93, Ball

State MMus, '99), is a Lutheran music teacher and singer. They have four children: Renata is a junior and Isabella a freshman at Concordia University Nebraska; Richard is a sophomore at Concordia Lutheran High School; and Beata is in eighth grade at St. Paul's Lutheran School.

Newly Appointed Diaconal Staff



Rose E. Adle

*Assistant Director of
Diaconess Formation*

Deac. Rose Adle earned a BA in Spanish from Valparaiso University in 2003. She graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 2006 with an MA in diaconess studies and

systematic theology. Her diaconess internship was on the mission field in Caracas, Venezuela. She has been teaching online diaconess classes for CTSFW since 2010. She and her husband, Scott, live in Collinsville, Illinois, with their six children, James, Maria, John, Joel, Eudora, and Grace. Scott is a pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and School, where Rosie is active in a variety of children's and women's care settings.



Katherine F. Aiello

*Diaconess Admission
Counselor*

Deac. Katherine Aiello graduated from CTSFW this past spring. In 2018, she earned a BS in exercise physiology from Concordia University Wisconsin. Last

year, she completed her diaconess internship as a diaconess admission counselor at CTSFW and a children's ministry director at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne. There she also directed a tutoring program, youth Sunday school, and youth group activities. She and her husband, Gabriel, were married in 2019 and currently live with their seven-month-old daughter, Clara, in Muncie, Indiana, where Gabriel is serving his vicarage.

Newly Appointed Ordained Staff



Chad C. Schopp
Admission Counselor

The Rev. Chad Schopp is a 2013 graduate of CTSFW. He earned a BS in geology from University of Alaska Fairbanks and worked as a geologist for the federal government and in an underground platinum-palladium mine. He served in the United

States Army as an infantry officer and had two combat tours in Iraq, the second of which interrupted his training here at the Seminary. He served a dual parish in the North Wisconsin District and as a missionary/church planter in the Montana District. He and his wife, Tami, became Lutherans together in 2001. They have three sons, two of whom are grown; their youngest, Brayden, is a freshman at Concordia Lutheran High School.



Brian T. Stark
Admission Counselor

The Rev. Brian Stark is a 2007 graduate of CTSFW. He earned his BA in history from Purdue West Lafayette in 1996, and worked in sales for Penske Truck Leasing prior to enrolling at the Seminary in 2003. His 14 years in parish ministry included

pastorates in Defiance, Ohio, and Holton, Kansas. His wife, Angie, is a speech language pathologist working with children from birth to age three, as well as elderly patients in nursing home facilities. They have been blessed with four children: Grace, Ethan, Phoebe, and Gabriel.

ALUMNI NEWS



The Rev. Gino Marchetti, a candidate for the PhD at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, has been selected to receive the Martin-Chemnitz-Stipendium by the Roman Institute of the Görres Society (Das Römische Institut der Görres-Gesellschaft), an internationally-recognized scholarly society located in Vatican City, that exists to promote scholarship on a variety of theological and churchly topics. Marchetti will do research on the interactions of Martin Chemnitz, one of the authors of the Formula of Concord, with the Council of Trent, the Roman Catholic Church's official response to the Lutheran Reformation. A major factor in his selection for this prestigious award was a demonstrated competence in the languages required for this task. According to the stipend, Marchetti will be living in Vatican City for a year with access to the Vatican Archives and

many other world-class libraries. His research is intended for publication in his doctoral dissertation.

Besides being a moving force in the writing of the Formula of Concord, the last of the Lutheran Confessions, Martin Chemnitz is well-known for his magisterial work, *Examination of the Council of Trent*. This four-volume work was translated into English by longtime Seminary professor and academic dean Fred Kramer, who engaged in this work when the Seminary was in Springfield, Illinois. Pastor Marchetti's research will contribute to the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Council of Trent, a document in which the Catholic Church defined its doctrine over against the Lutheran Reformation. St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Warsaw, Indiana, where he serves as pastor, has granted him a leave of absence to which he will return upon completion of the assignment.

The Future of Phi



Photos: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

The future of philanthropy and good stewardship begins with you and me right now. If you haven't yet done so, please pray about and consider leaving a significant portion of your wealth, no matter how small or how large it may be, to the work of the Church. If you have a heart for training pastors, leave money to our seminaries. If you have a heart for Christian higher education, leave money to our universities. If you have a heart for proclaiming the Gospel in an ever-changing world, leave money to our LCMS International Missionaries or LHM. The list of giving opportunities is nearly endless.

What do cows and grain have to do with the future of philanthropy? For us to look forward, it is well for us to look all the way back to the book of Genesis and the time of Joseph. That's where the cows and grain come in. As you recall, Pharaoh had dreams about seven skinny cows and seven fat cows, seven stalks of full-headed grain and seven stalks of withered grain. Pharaoh knew not what to make of these dreams. But Joseph, the interpreter of dreams, knew the precise meaning. They meant seven years of abundance for Egypt and seven years of famine.

Egypt was about to face a deathly obstacle and needed a plan. So, Joseph suggested retaining some of the grain during the abundant years to provide for the people of Egypt during the lean years. This brilliant plan catapulted Joseph to prominence. But more than that, it saved the lives of thousands of people, including, as you recall, Joseph's own estranged family.

It seems that we live in a time where cows and grain well symbolize

what we are facing as a nation. With Baby Boomers entering and nearing retirement, we are in the midst of a huge transfer of wealth from one generation to the next. The wealth that is being transferred is very large, but it is not infinite. Most Baby Boomers will be past retirement age within the next 10 years. We are facing our own financial feast then famine. The window of generosity and philanthropy will close, and it is possible that we will have to wait two

Philanthropy

Bart Day

generations until that window opens once again.

So, what might Joseph suggest we do? One way of looking at it would be to discover and plan ways that all the entities of The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) work together (as Joseph persuaded the Pharaoh to do) to coordinate and pool resources so that we are all ready for the figurative famine that is to come. In other words, let's get together and think strategically about how we gather goods into our storehouses collectively instead of individually. The future of philanthropy ought to have us working together toward a common goal rather than separately toward individual goals. How can all of Synod's entities—from the local congregation, to each district, to our universities and seminaries, to Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) and the LCMS Foundation, to Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM) and the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML), and every other entity of Synod in between—thrive together for the sake of the whole Church?

I remember my dad saying that if every member of the church tithed—that is, gave a true 10 percent of their income—we wouldn't need our government's Social Security or welfare. When we work together as good stewards, in faithful response to what God has done for us in Jesus Christ and for the sake of our neighbor, it is the new creation breaking into this broken world. Lives will be changed as the Gospel is proclaimed and the Sacraments are administered according to Jesus' institution. Coordinating and pooling resources together for the sake of the

Gospel not only today, but also into the future, will provide more opportunity for many to hear the Good News.

The famine is coming. So, how do we capture gifts now that will provide resources well into the future? Perhaps the solution is to put together one endowment fund that will benefit any and every entity of the church that shows a need, plan, and strategy for wisely using these stewarded resources. But on an even more granular level, we ought to begin now to prepare, encourage, and educate Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z how to be good stewards of all that the Lord provides. We at LCEF are working on creating and updating resources and materials that will do just that. StewardPath and Consecrated Stewards are two such resources. If you are interested in learning more about these, please contact your LCEF district vice president.

Let me be even more clear: the future of philanthropy and good stewardship begins with you and me right now. If you haven't yet done so, please pray about and consider leaving a significant portion of your wealth, no matter how small or how large it may be, to the work of the Church. If you have a heart for training pastors, leave money to our seminaries. If you have a heart for Christian higher education, leave money to our universities. If you have a heart for proclaiming the Gospel in an ever-changing world, leave money to our LCMS International Missionaries or LHM. The list of giving opportunities is nearly endless. If you need help in thinking through the best ways to do this, the LCMS Foundation can help you.

As we look to the future, there

are many opportunities for each of us to leave dollars in perpetuity for the support of Christ's Church on earth. With the wisdom of Joseph, who long ago saved a nation, we can be a significant part of bringing many people to salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. You and I can be a significant part of seeing to it that even our own church family will move beyond financial famine to abundant resources for proclaiming the Gospel. There is no reason that, with the help of the Lord, the Church today cannot move from skinny cows to fat cows, from withered grain to full-headed grain. 🏡

For more information on estate planning or how you can support the preparation of future church workers, please contact us at Advancement@ctsfw.edu or call us at (877) 287-4338.

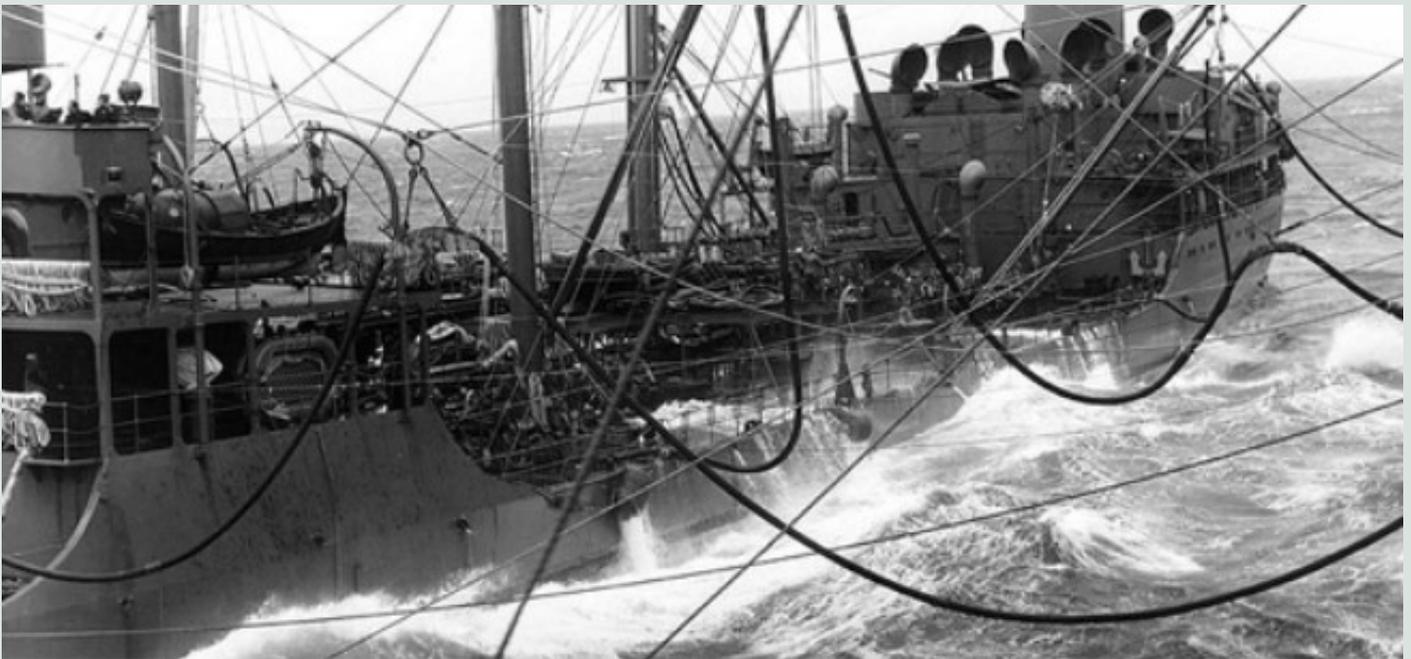
*The Rev. Bart Day
(bart.day@lcef.org)
serves as the President
and CEO of Lutheran
Church Extension Fund.*



Sine Qua Non—Without Which It Could Not Be

Larry D. Wright

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the Word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.” Heb. 11:1–3



Above: WWII fleet oiler during the refueling process

On September 1, 1945, General Douglas MacArthur was one day away from boarding the battleship USS Missouri along with other admirals, generals, military officials, and authorities of notable stature. Some may be quick to note that the aforementioned date is the day *before* the signing of the surrender which would end World War II—and you would be correct. But on September 1, a fleet oiler ship came alongside the Missouri to top off her 2.5 million gallon fuel oil tank. Aboard this refueling ship was Mr. Albert Ruhlrig, who received the paperwork and then withdrew to the lower levels of the ship to assist in the refueling operation.

While the world may not have noticed this seemingly mundane operation, without it the Missouri would not have arrived for the solemn occasion from which Gen. MacArthur noted, “that a better world shall emerge.” And so, with an air of lightheartedness and a nod to those whose unnoticed work champions the greater good, we can honestly write that without Albert Ruhlig, Gen. MacArthur could not have made good on his promise that he would “return.”

By God’s grace, Albert Ruhlig celebrated his 101st birthday in September. A life-long Lutheran, Albert’s parents were married in 1916 and lived in the Detroit area before the family moved in 1920 to their fledgling 80-acre farm near Dexter, Michigan. In 1920, Albert was born into the Ruhlig family of five girls and four boys, and he was soon baptized into the Christian faith at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan. A few years later, when Albert was nine, the crash of 1929 influenced the American landscape with the challenges of scarcity of employment, food, and most necessary commodities. Yet, ever optimistic, Albert is quick to note that, while cash was scarce, his family’s dairy and vegetable crops ensured they always had plenty to eat. The family business of taking the vegetable crops to market also helped sustain them through the Depression.

Church attendance and activities made up the bulk of social outings for the Ruhlig family, and so it is not so surprising that many of Albert’s relatives became pastors in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Albert’s early teenage years of long days working on the farm took a backseat to other happenings in the world when Albert was drafted into the Navy in 1944, and he was shipped off to the Pacific Theater on the day the war ended in Europe. He would serve his country until the conclusion of World War II, including that ceremonial day aboard the USS Missouri.

After his discharge from the Navy, Albert made the long train ride from California back to the farm in Dexter, Michigan, and the farm work again became the daily focus. Daily Albert would make two trips in a truck filled

to the brim with vegetables bound for the Detroit Western Market. But on an occasional weekend, there would be Walther League gatherings and trips to Camp Arcadia to provide social interactions with others. Soon Albert was named a Walther League Zone Chair, and a young lady in bank finance named Madonna was named the vice-chair. The Walther League provided an opportunity for Albert and Madonna to meet and fall in love. Their loving marriage lasted for 65 years until her death in 2013. Madonna was active in the Lutheran Women’s Missionary League and was also a member of the Board of Regents at Concordia University Ann Arbor, Michigan, for nine years. Together they raised three children and now there are six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. The family farm has grown to 240 acres, and Albert is still actively farming. Today he attends Our Savior Lutheran Church in Chelsea,



Mr. Albert Ruhlig

Michigan. He admits that at harvest time he only drives the grain hauling tractor because it is enough to keep him busy.

You may be thinking this is a great story about a person who has lived a long, fulfilling, and wonderful life, but why is it being recorded in this issue of “For the Life of the World”? I’m so glad I asked that question for you, and I will give you the answer. Here at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana, there are literally thousands of unsung heroes, like Albert Ruhlig, *and like you*. Without your faithful support we could not “form servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all.” Through *your*

gifts, God is working to provide pastors, deaconesses, and other servants of Christ, who proclaim His message of salvation to a world that is challenging, changing, and becoming more averse to Christians and Christian beliefs. Without *your gifts, sine qua non* gifts, many initiatives would not be possible: 100% tuition assistance, the Global Seminary Initiative, Food & Clothing Co-op, and many other means of supporting our future pastors and deaconesses.

If you haven’t already done so, we invite you to learn more about CTSFW at ctsfw.edu or visit your Seminary in person. Spend time exploring the wonderful campus, meet your world-class faculty who teach Confessional Lutheran theology, and participate in chapel, which epitomizes Christ-centered worship. Then, take time to interact with the students, chat with them about the experience of attending a Seminary that is truly a Lutheran community focused upon the proclamation of Jesus Christ and the salvation He won for all.

Please consider supporting the cultivation and enlivening of the next generation of servants who will proclaim with one voice God’s saving Word. Gen. MacArthur’s words of encouragement that a “better world shall emerge,” while true, have largely faded into time. Today the American landscape is faced with new challenges that are adversarial to our Christian faith and the message of the Good News of salvation won by Jesus Christ for all who would believe. Your support enables the Seminary to train the finest pastors in the world for God’s people today and for decades to come.

We thank God for His Son Jesus Christ and His Word that not only never fades, it “remains forever and this Word is the good news that was preached to you” (1 Peter 1:25). By the grace of God, and with your support, we will strive to make certain that “this promise is for you and for your children” (Acts 2:39). ▲

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Ministry and Mission Opportunities

By Carolyn Brinkley

Our LCMS chaplains have been and continue to be an incredible blessing around the world, to both our Church and our nation. These courageous pastors, graduates from both of our seminaries, leave pulpits, families, and homes to be the presence of Christ for those who serve as God's instruments of protection in the Armed Forces. Their important ministry not only brings the church to LCMS military personnel serving far from home, but Chaplains are also missionaries to the unchurched.

Chaplain Lt. Col. Derek M. Wolter writes, "While on deployment to the Persian Gulf in 2021, I celebrated my 25th anniversary as an Air Force chaplain. Through three deployments, two extended TDY's (temporary duty) abroad, plane crashes with loss of Airmen at two units, and the regular duty weekends and annual trainings associated with Air National Guard service, I have seen the wisdom of our founders in providing for a dedicated corps of spiritual providers to the military community. By endorsing chaplains to serve in the armed forces, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod reaches beyond itself to serve tens of thousands of men and women experiencing and suffering the effects of life situations that most people 'back home' could never imagine.

"The chaplain in a military setting is more than just 'the religious guy.' The chaplain is the assurance that there is a place where all the hurt and fear associated with military service can be shared in confidence. He is a safe repository of guilt and confusion. He is the one person on base who demands nothing from you and is present to calm, guide, and bring comfort and healing.



Pictured is a small sampling of theological resources that are sent to chaplains. Lutheran Service Books and Luther's Small Catechism are their top requests. Many thanks for all who partner with the CTSFW Military Project in this ministry and mission opportunity to bring the mercy of Christ to the Armed Forces around the world.

He is the conscience of the installation, interacting with commanders, officers, and enlisted, providing an example of integrity, excellence, and service, advising on trends and identifying toxic environments so that command can respond to negative patterns and address problems and needs appropriately.

"The chaplain responds to all with the love of Christ, offering the Savior's compassion and service to all who walk through the chapel doors. He is there to guide a member in the formation or renewal of faith, and to celebrate the presence of God and the mercy of Christ in the most difficult of circumstances. The Military Project of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, generously supports this spiritual work by providing resources for worship, devotional life, and brotherly support for those serving in the field. We serve in your name. We are equipped through your gifts. We are uplifted by your prayers."

How can you help?

Please keep our chaplains and military personnel in your prayers. They are God's instruments of protection. For information on service projects or how to start a military project please email MilitaryProject@ctsfw.edu or call (260) 452-2140. 

Monetary donations can be mailed to:

Concordia Theological Seminary,
Attn: Military Project Coordinator
6600 N. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, IN
46825

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Beginning the C

While the pace can be dizzying and the questions are challenging, we would do well to remember that there truly is nothing new under the sun. The Church has for generations recognized that cultural and technological changes have profound theological implications and that God's Word still applies as much today as ever. By teaching that Word in its full clarity we can begin to frame the discussion for the changes coming over the next several years.



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In 1966, NBC aired the first episode of Star Trek. Viewers were thrilled by a world of advanced technology, with handheld computers, massive screens, instant communication with anyone (regardless of where they were), computer-based translation, and even computers that you could talk to as though they were human. In the last 65 years, the generation of engineers and scientists who grew up watching Kirk and Spock explore the galaxy have brought many of their futuristic dreams into reality. We live in a world of smart phones, tablet PCs, smart assistants, and other technology of which the Star Trek writers could not have dreamed, and the rate of change is accelerating. As Dr. Robert Weis described it, “The gap between science fiction and science fact is shrinking.”

By the time this article has been edited, printed, and mailed (or emailed) to you, it will already be out of date. Change, particularly in technology, is relentless. It's overwhelming to try to keep up with what we *can* do, much less to have time to consider what we *should* do. Alvin Toffler described the feeling as “future shock,” or “too much

change in too short a period of time.” By the time a piece of technology has been invented and brought to market, there's no time for the conversation about morality, ethics, and theology. The time for those conversations is when technology is being developed, and with the pace of advancement increasing, the questions need to be asked today about

Conversation

William S. C. Johnson

the technologies of tomorrow.

I won't pretend to have all the answers. The simple questions are simple, and where the Bible directly addresses an issue, there's not much debate. But many of the questions here are not that simple, and the answers will likely not be as neat and simple as we'd like, but the time for the conversation to begin is now.

Upgrading the Body

In 1948, Norbert Wiener published *Cybernetics or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* and theorized a world in which human bodies would be repaired and augmented by robotic components. While one can argue just where the threshold is for a "true" cybernetic, it's clear we've crossed (or very shortly will cross) the line from fiction to reality. Prosthetic researchers today are already able to provide patients with limbs that can be directly controlled just like their original biological limbs. Prototypes are even available that transmit return signals to the brain allowing for the senses of touch to be restored as well.

Theologically this seems simple and is, at least at first. If a brother or sister has lost some part of their body and we're able to restore what was broken, then we act to heal. But what happens when the prosthetic outperforms the flesh and blood? Is it moral for a person to replace an otherwise healthy portion of their body with a cybernetic to gain strength, speed, or agility? These questions are years away, but it's already time for the Church to begin preparing its members by teaching clearly about the fearfully, wonderfully made bodies God has given us and providing the context for the inevitable debate.

A New Way to Be Human?

No trope is more prevalent in science fiction than the "thinking" computer/robot/android. From Asimov's *I, Robot* to Iron Man's Jarvis, the idea of computers that can think for themselves is commonplace in fiction, and with it come the questions about what it means to be human and whether sufficiently advanced artificial intelligence (AI) are themselves "alive." We're a ways away from that conversation outside of the movie screen, but recent years have brought this fiction much closer to reality as AI equals and surpasses human minds at a variety of tasks.

In the transportation world, we are seeing rapid research, development, and even active deployment of artificially intelligent self-driving vehicles. As the prices come down and these technologies become more cost effective, the transportation industry is poised for massive disruption, with careers like drivers, pilots, and sailors looking more and more like candidates for replacement by AI.

In similar fashion, creative people such as writers and even songwriters are being challenged by ever more complex machine learning networks. As the network consumes writing samples from a particular author or genre, it slowly improves its efforts to emulate the writing style in its own "original" material. While the efforts are largely lackluster at this point, they're readable, largely capture the tone of the source material, and are improving substantially as time goes on. There are complaints that the content generated by AI lacks any real creativity or insight, but that same criticism has been leveled at many successful human artists as well.

Several companies are already working on (and patenting) AI algorithms

that can be primed with the content of a person's life (social media posts, email, writing, etc.) and can emulate that person after they have died. While it's a far cry from Kurzweil's *Singularity* (where full human beings are uploaded to computers to "live" forever), it does have the potential to change our experience of the death of a loved one. It will be possible, in the coming decades, to escape the grieving process by embracing the simulation of a loved one. As a Church, we need to be very clear in our teaching about life, death, and what it means to be alive and fully human. Clarity in our teachings about humanity will also clarify the inevitable debate about whether truly advanced AIs can be considered human and deserve human rights.

Nothing New Under the Sun

While the pace can be dizzying and the questions are challenging, we would do well to remember that there truly is nothing new under the sun. The Church has for generations recognized that cultural and technological changes have profound theological implications and that God's Word still applies as much today as ever. By teaching that Word in its full clarity we can begin to frame the discussion for the changes coming over the next several years. As we pursue our God-given vocations as salt and light in a broken and dying world, we can help people to see and embrace their essential identity as humans created by a loving God and redeemed sinners for whom Christ died and rose again. 🏠

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Our Unchanging God

Jeffrey H. Pulse



Photo: Erik M. Lunsford/The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Introduction: “The world is a changing.” Even though those words were spoken decades ago, they were prophetic of our world today. It is mind-boggling how rapidly the world around us is changing. Technology changes so quickly that our computers are out of date before we open the packaging. The advances in medicine are only outpaced by the new diseases and viruses and constantly moving goalposts of our current, challenging times. Governments and governance rapidly evolve all around our world, and maps that were up to date 10 years ago are obsolete. Then there is our currency and the advent of cryptocurrency, online medicine with virtual checkups, and I can control the temperature of my smoker/grill from my phone ... I think. The world has changed and continues to change. And change does not always bring us peace or make us comfortable. I look at my television and the remote thingy and wonder why things just can’t stay the same! Where do we find comfort and stability in the midst of it all?

I. God Never Changes

Read Hebrews 6:17–20, Hebrews 13:8, and James 1:17.

What do these verses tell you about our God and His character?

Compare these verses with **Psalm 110:4** and **Malachi 3:6** (quoted in Hebrews 7:21). Why should this bring you comfort and peace?

The fact that God is unchangeable and unchanging should bring comfort in the midst of the uncertain, frustrating, and changing world we live in. In the midst of it all, we are comforted by a God who is the same yesterday, today, and

forever! This is comforting. It's easy to understand it and hold fast to it ... too easy.

II. God Relents, Turns, Changes His Mind

Read Exodus 32:12–14 (the account of the Israelites making the golden calf) and compare it with the account of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery in Isaiah 38:1–6. Which of God's actions stands out in these accounts? How might this be considered a contradiction of the Hebrew passages read earlier?

Does this tension in any way take away your confidence in an unchanging God?

How do we resolve the tension in these verses? (Read Psalm 106:45).

Not only do we see evidence of God "changing" His mind in the pages of Scripture, we even find evidence that He wants us to ask Him to change His mind. Whenever we go to the LORD in prayer and ask Him to bring healing to a loved one or rescue us from a situation, we are asking God to change His mind ... and this is a good thing. After all, the prayer of a righteous man has much power (James 5:15–16)!

III. Resolution

Our struggle is in understanding the will of God. Not His specific will for a specific occasion, but rather what does the general will of God look like? Too often we consider God's will to be a tight rope, and one slip plunges us into the deep. However, God's will is depicted as a path upon which things, events of our lives, and the history of the world, both past and present, take place.

God is almighty, all-powerful, and in control of His world and its history. Nothing can take that power from His hand. On the path of His will, there is room for change, and because God is almighty, He can change His mind and still remain faithful to His promises and bring about all things according to His will.

After all, He did create the world in six days, He most certainly can keep the world from imploding because He changed His mind and gave Hezekiah 15 more years of life.

Read Isaiah 55:6–11. What is God's desire for His Word?

Read 1 Timothy 2:3–7. What is God's ultimate desire and will?

IV. Comfort

As you reconsider the passages you have already read, you may note an interesting and completely consistent pattern. If God does choose to change His mind (through our prayers or by other means), it is always on the side of grace. God never goes against His promises of forgiveness, life, and salvation in His Son, Jesus. It is correct to say that God changes His mind according to His unchangeable nature as One who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. God's will is a path, but because His ultimate will is that all men might be saved, there are things (changes) which would be off the path. God refuses to change anything that would go against His ultimate will.

Conclusion: The world is indeed changing. The evidence is all around and overwhelming, and this reality can cause us much anxiety and worry, both now and into the future. Yet, there is hope and great comfort because our God is in control. He never fails and never changes who He is or what must be done to accomplish our salvation. God never fails to be gracious and merciful toward His children. And, because His ultimate will is that all might be saved, He continues to act in a way that will accomplish His ultimate will.

Let us pray: LORD God, Heavenly Father, continue to watch over us, your children, as we live in an ever-changing world. Grant us comfort and peace in your unchangeable nature and your everlasting love, grace, and mercy for all. In Jesus' Name. Amen. 🙏

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