

The **LUTHERAN** **CLARION**



Lutheran Concerns Association
1320 Hartford Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55116

June 2013
Volume 5, Issue 8

Concordia University System: It's Time for a Change

It is time to rethink the governance structure of the universities, the role of the Concordia University System (CUS) and the future of higher education in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The challenges facing higher education are not new: governance difficulties, financial stress, management limitations, a clearly understood and workable relationship between the universities and the Synod, to name a few. CUS was established in 1992 for the purpose of addressing and resolving these challenges. More than 20 years later, the same challenges and difficulties remain unresolved. It is time to take a fresh look at the purpose and effectiveness of CUS.

First, a workable relationship and balance must exist between the universities and the Synod. Despite the original purpose of CUS, this has not been accomplished. There are at least three reasons for this. First, the process establishing CUS was rushed. There was not adequate input provided by the universities. CUS was established from the top while being described as having broad support. CUS got off on the wrong foot. Second, the relationship between CUS and the universities has never been clearly articulated. Bylaws have been vague and general. Similarly, the authority of CUS has never been clear. As is often done in the LCMS, vague and general responsibility was combined with unclear authority.

It is necessary to clearly articulate the relationship between the universities and the Synod as a whole, and more particularly, CUS. It is essential that the authority and responsibility of CUS be understood by all. Doing so will not be an easy task. But it is essential. A lack of clarity means a lack of success.

Second, there is a natural tension between the universities and their administrations and Board of Regents, on the one hand, and the Synod on the other hand. This tension is a natural consequence of a church-wide organization that operates colleges and universities. It is natural for the universities to want as much independence as possible. And it is natural for the church body to maintain some degree of control. The challenge is in finding the best balance. In the past this has been attempted by detailed bylaws which often, despite their length in detail, lacked clarity. This has been ineffective. Again, it is necessary that the issue be addressed with clarity. The Synod has a legitimate interest in maintaining financial and theological integrity in the universities. Precisely how this is done is the challenge. Past

approaches have not been effective. To address these issues in a productive fashion it is necessary to have a system that promotes a positive, productive, and cooperative working relationship, instead of one governed by detailed and restrictive bylaws that do not work. It also will require recognition by the universities that they cannot be autonomous, while Synodical officials and entities recognize the universities need to be freed from excessive and unworkable regulations.

One example of the difficulty of the current structure is reflected in Bylaw 3.10.5.5, which describes the responsibilities of university presidents.

Anyone who has been through the calling process of a university president recognizes that no one is qualified and capable of carrying out all of these responsibilities. Thus, we impose upon the universities and their presidents impossible responsibilities. The bylaws are also filled with vague and ambiguous wording,

adding uncertainty. Instead of burdening the universities and their presidents with long, detailed, and impossible obligations, the bylaws should be significantly shortened, simplified, and clarified so as to establish basic general parameters. For example, there is a frequent debate as to whether the President of the institution should be a pastor. But the more basic question is whether the President has responsibility over kingdom of the right matters or kingdom of the left matters. Currently, the President has responsibility over everything. Why? Why not have kingdom of the right responsibilities given to one person, a pastor, and kingdom of the left matters—administrative, business management, employment, legal, etc.—be given to someone who is not a pastor? This requires thinking outside the current box. It

“...Concordia University Ann Arbor will continue as an LCMS institution preparing young men and women for professional church work...not because of our Synod structure, but despite it.”

In this Issue of
The Lutheran Clarion

| | |
|---|----------|
| Concordia University System | 1 |
| Same Sex Marriage & the Church | 2 |
| SMP: Unfortunate Consequences..... | 3 |
| Book Review: The Myth of Junk DNA..... | 6 |
| Spiritual but not Religious | 7 |

also requires a clearly stated relationship between the universities and the Synod.

It is necessary that the universities retain academic freedom and flexibility. But from a practical economic standpoint, it is extremely difficult for the universities in today's increasingly complex environment to retain in-house the necessary expertise over all financial, accounting, legal, employment, and many other business and administrative tasks. CUS was established in an effort to coordinate these activities. But it has not been able to do so.

It is not an impossible task. The recent cooperation between Concordia University Mequon and Concordia University Ann Arbor (CUAA) has proven this. While CUS was established to assist universities in avoiding financial disasters, it was incapable of doing so for CUAA. Preventing potential disaster at CUAA required participation by many entities of the Synod, including in particular and most significantly CU Mequon. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this is that CU Mequon had no authority and no responsibility to concern itself with the difficulties at CUAA. But it had the ability. On the other hand, CUS, the LCMS Board of Directors, and other entities had limited authority and limited ability. The important point of all of this is that CUAA will continue as an LCMS institution preparing young men and women for professional church work and educating other students in a Christian environment not because of our Synod structure, but despite it. Synod structure was a significant obstacle.

It is time to replace the restrictive and ambiguous bylaws currently governing higher education with a system that allows the universities to operate without cumbersome and impossible expectations and obligations, while maintaining the Synod's financial and theological interests. To do this, CUS should be redefined, with its authority and responsibilities clearly stated so that it can support higher education in the LCMS proactively.

Christian A. Preus

Board of Regents, Concordia University Ann Arbor
LCMS Board of Directors (1995-2007)

Same Sex Marriage and the Church

As the United States Supreme Court deliberates over the *United States v. Windsor* case, the issue of homosexual marriage is on center stage in our nation's arena of public discourse. The matter is causing division between citizens, political parties, schools and families. The past five years have also shown just how vexing an issue same-sex marriage is for the Church.

Among those who lay claim to the Lutheran confession of faith, a great divide has arisen. The ELCA's 2009 Church-wide Assembly adopted the *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust* (HSG&T) social statement with its four different ways of how to view the propriety of homosexual relationships,

We Need Your Help: The Lutheran Clarion to Publish Monthly March—July 2013



With the March 2013 issue, *The Lutheran Clarion* began monthly publication leading up to the 2013 LCMS Synodical convention. In order to address the wide range of issues and concerns facing the upcoming convention, it is necessary to increase the publication frequency from bi-monthly to monthly.

Whereas in a non-convention year we would have published four issues in the January to July time frame, in this convention year we will publish six issues. This means, of course, our costs of publication and mailing will increase proportionately. Accordingly, we would ask, you our readers, to increase your donations in support of this convention-year effort.

Please send checks to:

Lutheran Concerns Association
1320 Hartford Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55116-1623

including the potential endorsement of marriage covenants between homosexual couples.¹ This prompted the LCMS response at the 2010 Synod Convention. 2010 Resolution 3-01A includes language directly opposing the HSG&T: “[W]here the Bible speaks clearly regarding matters of human values, conduct, or behavior, such teachings may not be denied or qualified, but must have continuing relevance in every era of the Church”² and “[T]he LCMS believes and teaches that same-gender genital sexual activity—in every situation—violates the will of our Creator and must be recognized as sin.”³

Part of the move toward church bodies adopting a change in their positions on homosexual relationships includes undermining the role that the Scriptures have in defining the Church's position on matters or changing the scope of the Scriptures' application. While that may seem like an overstatement, this is seen in the writings of those who are proponents of blessing homosexual couples.

In a December 2012 op-ed column, Claudia S. Pearce of Claremont School of Theology writes:

This time around, it's the same process. Most New Testament Greek scholars now point out there are only three passages that deal with homosexuality in the New Testament—Romans 1:23-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10—and those passages don't deal with homosexuality as we define it today but rather with temple prostitution and other abuses. Because of dated (and often loved) translations, many versions of the Bible imply otherwise. ... As more and more church members thoughtfully and prayerfully confront the evidence, it will only be a matter of time before the majority of Christians of all stripes become allies rather than antagonists for justice and equal rights for gay people. Then we will come out on the right side of history once again.⁴

The discussion in HSG&T about the various appropriate

Happy Birthday Rev. Zimmerman!

Clarion Readers—Please Join the **Card Shower** for Rev. Paul Zimmerman's **95th** Birthday!



Rev. Dr. Paul A. Zimmerman, distinguished as a faithful pastor and for decades of service to the Synod as former president of Concordia-Seward, Concordia-Ann Arbor and Concordia-Chicago (formerly Concordia-River Forest) and service on the Fact Finding Committee of Dr. J.A.O. Preus, on June 25, celebrates his 95th birthday. Please send him a birthday card:

**4792 Scharmen Road
Traverse City, MI 49696**

Or call Rev. Zimmerman at 1-231-263-2243.



Thank him for years of dedicated service to the Lord and wish him the Lord's continued blessings.

views of homosexuality includes the similar sentiment: "On the basis of conscience-bound belief, some are convinced that the scriptural witness does not address the context of sexual orientation and lifelong loving and committed relationships that we experience today."⁵

At the 77th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, a blessing rite for homosexual couples met approval. From an extract from the "I Will Bless You and You Will Be a Blessing" resource, homosexual relationships are regarded as an expression of our covenantal relationships with God:

Our covenantal life with God is expressed in relationships of commitment and faithfulness, including those of same-sex couples. It is the Church's joy to celebrate these relationships as signs of God's love, to pray for God's grace to support couples in their life together, and to join with these couples in our shared witness to the gospel in the world.⁶

This is tantamount to extending the description of marriage as reflecting the relationship between Christ and the Church found in Ephesians 5 to apply to homosexual couples. The application of the Scriptures is greatly widened.

As the issue of homosexual relationships and marriages drives a wedge between Christians and between those outside the Church, the question arises of how best to deal with the matter. For Christians who oppose homosexual relationships and marriages, part of the needed response is to demonstrate how what is seen as Scriptural prohibition actually is that. The claims made by the LCMS' 2010 Resolution 3-01A must be bolstered by good exegetical scholarship. The principle that the Scriptures actually bind the conscience of believers—rather than the other way around—must also be stressed.

But two other facets to the Church's response are needed. LCMS President Matthew Harrison alludes to one in his recently-published report to the Synod: "It has become increasingly difficult to stand and oppose the advance of the homosexual agenda when I am well aware of the fact that the LCMS has invested very little in actually reaching out to and caring for those individuals and families who are affected by same-sex attraction."⁷ Recognition of the failure to

meet the LORD's will must be answered with care—with the Gospel and the works that flow from it—rather than another pounding of condemnation. The Church's actions must convey the truth that Jesus' atoning work applies to the sinfulness of homosexuality.

The other facet is the ability to discuss the matter of homosexual relationships and marriage with those whose consciences are not bound by the Scriptures. This will be more difficult. For those who are outside the Church, the appeal to "thus saith the Lord" is quite ineffective. But if the union of man and woman is part of the Divine Will, part of the order of the world that He created, there should be the ability to present that fact. Equipping believers to speak of these other reasons for opposing homosexual unions is needed.

These are troubling times, indeed. No two matters are so essential to human existence than the issues of life and of sexuality. The challenges to the LORD's will and design in these matters are great in our present day. Now is the time for the Church to again ask for the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and the fear of the LORD to guide our hearts and minds, so that our mouths may speak rightly in gentleness and respect, and then to love one another—not only in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

Rev. Luke T. Zimmerman

Pastor, Calvary Lutheran Church, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania

1 *A Social Statement on Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2009, pp. 19-20.

2 2010 *Convention Proceedings*, p. 114.

3 2010 *Convention Proceedings*, p. 114 [emphasis original].

4 C.S. Pearce, "The Christian Case for Gay Marriage" published in *The Virginian-Pilot*, December 15, 2012.

5 *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*, p. 20.

6 "The Witnessing and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant," 2012, p. 2; accessible at: <https://www.churchpublishing.org/media/869869/IWillBlessYouandYouWillBeaBlessingEXTRACT.pdf>

7 2013 *Convention Workbook*, pp. 12-13.

SMP: Unfortunate Consequences

The Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program was established during the 2007 Synodical convention as the brainchild of the *Ablaze!* program of the previous Synodical administration. As such it was designed to provide a pathway to ordination that did not require a rigorous academic program of preparation and was available to men who did not wish to abandon their previous occupations to become residential students at our Synod's seminaries. Now, five years later, the first graduating classes have left the seminaries and have entered the *ministerium* of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. It is time to look back and see how it is working thus far. The predecessor of the SMP program was the Distance Education Leading To Ordination (DELTO) program. It was intended to be a means by which small parishes in isolated geographic locations would receive laymen who provided Word and Sacrament ministry who, while serving, would continue their education toward ordination.

Thank You

Balance-Concord, Inc.

Balance-Concord, Inc., has been a most faithful contributor to *The Lutheran Clarion* in honor of the sainted **Rev. Raymond Mueller** and the sainted **Rev. Edgar Rehwaldt**, both of whom faithfully served the Synod and Balance-Concord, Inc., for many years.

The Clarion is most appreciative of such continued support from Balance-Concord, Inc., as well as the wonderful support of our readers. These contributions make it possible to bring you substantive articles by respected and qualified authors on issues affecting YOUR Synod. Please continue your support. It is both appreciated and needed.



Not so the SMP program. The *Ablaze!* initiative sought to identify ten percent of specifically "missional" LCMS congregations (about 600 *Ablaze!* Covenant Congregations) committed to the more Church Growth oriented model of "doing church." Each of these Covenant Congregations were to spawn four additional congregations (formed in their own Church Growth image). How were these congregations to be staffed with pastors who would carry on the missional task as the mother congregations intended? The answer was the Specific Ministry Pastor program.

The language of the Synodical resolution adopted in 2007 (5-01B) made that very clear when it said:

In addition to the original objective of the Distance Education Leading To Ordination (DELTO) Program to provide pastoral ministry where full-time ministry cannot be maintained, such specific ministries will include such categories as church planter, staff pastor, and others as needs arise. (2007 Convention Proceedings, p. 134.)

Thus, the SMP program was specifically designed with the primary intent to increase the influence (and congregational delegates) from Church Growth oriented congregations within the LCMS. Do the math: 600 congregations x 4 new congregations = 2,400 additional congregations and additional delegates to various district conventions and a significant increase in Church Growth oriented Synodical delegates. This might well have broken the 52% to 48% voting margins by which major decisions are made at our Synodical Conventions. The end result of this effort was to have been the permanent change of emphasis toward the Church Growth principles within the Missouri Synod.

Enter the 2010 Synodical Convention and challenger to President Kieschnick, Rev. Matthew C. Harrison. With the election of President Harrison a renewed emphasis on Word and Sacrament ministry took hold in Synod. The theology of glory personified by the *Ablaze!* program rapidly disappeared from the view of most of Synod, but the SMP program still survives.

The latest enrollment of seminarians at our two seminaries currently stands at:

Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne: 55 General Ministry seminarians (four of whom are in an alternate

route programs), and five new SMP students. There are a total of 30 SMP seminarians enrolled.

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis: 88 General Ministry seminarians (eight of whom are in an alternate route programs), and 31 SMP seminarians. There are a total of 114 SMP seminarians enrolled.

Recently, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, released a list of its first class of SMP graduates. Of the thirteen graduates only six will serve as solo pastors, two of whom will serve congregations of 246 and 183 baptized members (quite large enough to support their own General Ministry—four year residential seminary—Pastor). Only four SMP men will serve small congregations ranging in baptismal membership from 36 to 103. The majority of the SMP graduates will be serving in multiple pastor congregations ranging in baptismal membership from 74 to 4,789. Clearly, the original intent of serving small, geographically isolated congregations has gone by the way for the most part.

At our St. Louis Seminary, only three of eleven SMP graduates will serve as solo pastors serving congregations of 30 and 149 baptized members with the third man serving a congregation with no baptized members. Four SMP graduates will serve with another pastor in congregations ranging in baptismal membership from 164 to 846. Another graduate will serve in a congregation who only has two pastors listed on the Synodical website, but on their church website there are four pastors and a total of 202 baptized members. The most interesting situation is a congregation in San Antonio, Texas, that lists a total of five pastors (three of whom are new SMP graduates) serving 1,141 baptized members.

“The SMP program was founded to advance the convictions of the Ablaze! Covenant Congregation’s...Church Growth principles... Along the way the excellent preparation of pastors for the Office of the Holy Ministry—a historical point of pride for our Synod—has been sacrificed.”

Perhaps the most important unfortunate consequence of the SMP program is the loss of the Scriptural sense of vocation for the Office of the Holy Ministry as a singular commitment. Commitment has taken a back seat to convenience. Our Lord said in Luke 9:62, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." That goes double for those desiring to enter the pastorate. Virtually every General Ministry seminarian has been faced with the decision to abandon all that has gone on before in his life and risk everything to head for the seminary. This is a commitment by the seminarian's entire family. The SMP program asks for no such risk. The SMP seminarian keeps his "day job," keeps the family home and demands comparatively little either from himself or his family.

For the General Ministry seminarian it's an "All In" proposition. The family must pull up roots, often move across the

country, settle in a strange place often far away from family and friends, and this is frequently done with great financial hardship. The SMP lack of commitment and lack of singular commitment to a sense of vocation is underscored by the minimal on-campus requirements for the SMP seminarian who is only required to spend two weeks per summer on campus. Our pastors need to be "All In." They need to take their hand off of the plough and become the well-educated pastors they need to be for the sake of the Church.

Another unfortunate consequence of the SMP program is the provision of an academically inadequate preparation for the Pastoral Office. In a day and in a culture as religiously pluralistic and increasingly pagan as ours is, this is the worst possible time in which to inadequately prepare men for the highest office in the church. The General Ministry Pastor is required to take a minimum of 139 credit hours. The SMP seminarian is required to take only the equivalent of 24 credit hours prior to ordination and an additional 24 hours following his ordination. **Thus, the SMP graduate has only 34 percent of the academic preparation of the General Ministry Pastor.** What had to be removed from the curriculum in order to achieve the lessened requirements of the SMP program? Let's break it down:

| General Ministry Pastor | Specific Ministry Pastor |
|---|---|
| <u>Exegetical Studies</u> (Biblical Studies) 14 classes | <u>Exegetical Studies</u> (Biblical Studies) 4 classes (no Greek; no Hebrew) |
| <u>Historical Theology</u> 5 classes | <u>Historical Theology</u> 1 class |
| <u>Systematic Theology</u> (Dogmatics/Confessions) 9 classes | <u>Systematic Theology</u> (Dogmatics/Confessions) 6 classes |
| <u>Pastoral Ministry/Missions</u> 13 classes + 3 yrs field work + vicarage | <u>Pastoral Ministry/Missions</u> 5 classes + vicarage |

Let's use a couple of analogies: airline pilots and brain surgeons. Would you consider placing your life into the hands of either an airline pilot or a brain surgeon if that individual had only one third of his academic preparation? Of course you wouldn't! Then why in the world would anyone want to place his eternal soul into the hands of a pastor who only has one third of the preparation he really needs to be a pastor?

No one questions the motivation of the SMP seminarians to serve the Lord, nor does anyone question the quality of the seminary professors who teach them. However, there is a minimum competency achieved through adequate pastoral formation that simply cannot be crammed into the equivalent of 48 credit hours of instruction.

It is also an extremely unfortunate consequence of the SMP program that men must compromise their sacred ordination vows to swear faithfulness to knowledge they do not have and which they do not fully understand.

Holy Scripture is quite clear about the character of sacred vows:

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain." (Exodus 20:7)

Ordination vows are most certainly not a mere formality, nor a rite of passage. They are a sacred promise to God and before His people to keep His Word without equivocation or

compromise. SMP seminarians are being asked after only eight classes:

- P: Do you confess the Unaltered Augsburg Confession to be a true exposition of Holy Scripture and a correct exhibition of the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church? And do you confess that the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Small and Large Catechisms of Martin Luther, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, and the Formula of Concord—as these are contained in the Book of Concord—are also in agreement with this one scriptural faith?
- R. Yes, I make these Confessions my own because they are in accord with the Word of God.

("Ordination," *Lutheran Service Book Agenda*, p. 166, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 2006)

With only two doctrine classes and one in the Lutheran Confessions prior to taking the above vow, how can it be possible to take this vow with a clear conscience? Frankly, it is difficult enough to take this vow for General Ministry Pastor seminarians who have six such classes under their belt before they even have their vicarage and nine classes when they have completed their course of study.

Another unfortunate consequence of the SMP program is the unintended consequence that enrollment in the General Ministry Pastor program (three years of residential study and a year of Vicarage) at both of our seminaries is declining. Prospective seminarians are human. Given the choice of making the commitment to the pastoral vocation requiring relocation of their families, leaving home and community, and (in most cases) a previous career; some will opt for the less demanding course of study that makes such a level of vocational commitment unnecessary. It's just easier; therefore, the path of least resistance is taken. However, the financial bread and butter of the seminaries are the four year residential General Ministry Pastor seminarians. For already cash-strapped seminaries, this is an additional burden that is unnecessary. More importantly, this means that as the years go by, more and more SMP seminarians will enter the Office of the Holy Ministry which, in turn, will result in a greater and greater percentage of inadequately prepared pastors on the Synodical roster. Originally, SMP men were tied to the congregation from which they originated and to which they were first called, but that is no longer the case.

Bible and Christianity Today

August 12-16, 2013, New Haven, Missouri

Camp Trinity at New Haven, Missouri, will host a five day *Bible and Christianity Today* seminar, August 12-16. You are invited to attend.

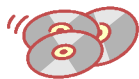
Among the many speakers will be Retired Attorney Scott Meyer, *Lutheran Clarion* writer and President, Concordia Historical Institute and Dr. Louis Brighton, Professor Emeritus of New Testament Exegetical Theology at Concordia Seminary, and author of *Concordia Commentary on Revelation*.

Call 586-5533-0555 or email contactus@redeemerpress.org for registration information.



**Lutheran Concerns Association
Conferences for 2012 and 2013
Available on DVD**

If you would like a copy of the 2012 and/or the 2013 LCA Conference, please mail \$7.50 for each set to:



Lutheran Concerns Association
1320 Hartford Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55116-1623

The 2010 Synodical convention removed the restrictions on calling SMP men and we are already seeing calls extended and accepted to serve in other congregations. It becomes necessary to wonder how long the formal distinction between General Ministry Pastors and Specific Ministry Pastors will be maintained. Such a removal of these designations is only one Synodical convention away.

Moreover, when some at the seminaries were voicing support for the passage of the SMP program, it was said that the faculty would do their best to convince SMP seminarians to transfer to the General Ministry Pastor program. Thus far no such conversions have been reported. Some at the seminaries have also quietly voiced their concern that communications between the mentoring pastors for SMP seminarians and the seminaries have been woefully inadequate.

Conclusion

The Specific Ministry Pastor program was founded to advance the convictions of the *Ab'laze!* Covenant Congregation's plans for a more widespread adoption of Church Growth principles within the LCMS. In some cases it is still serving that purpose. Along the way the excellent preparation of pastors for the Office of the Holy Ministry—a historical point of pride for our Synod—has been sacrificed.

Perhaps it would be wise to listen to God's Word with respect to the ordination of pastors in the Church:

"Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands," (1 Timothy 5:22)

Rev. Richard A. Bolland
Assistant Pastor-Emeritus
Gloria Christi Lutheran Church, Greeley, Colorado

Book Review:

The Myth of Junk DNA

Jonathan Wells, Discovery Institute Press, 208 Columbia Street, Seattle, Washington 98102, 2011. 169 pages, paperback. \$15.00.

Jonathan Wells is a Senior Fellow with the Center for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute in Seattle. He holds a PhD in Molecular and Cell Biology and also a PhD in Religious Studies.

Wells begins by pointing out that there is no hard scientific evidence that the small changes produced by mutations in existing species has ever produced a new species. Wells quotes the British bacteriologist Alan Linton who states that "No evidence exists in the literature that one species has

ever been shown to evolve into another." (p. 12) Microevolution (change within a species) is well supported by the evidence, but Macroevolution (development of one species from another different species) remains an assumption.

To complicate matters Darwinists now face a new adversary; Intelligent Design. Developed in recent years, Intelligent Design proponents maintain that it is possible to infer from scientific evidence that the origin of living things can be better explained by an intelligent cause (a designer) than by unguided natural causes.

As a result, evolutionists have turned to a new argument. In 1953, English scientists James Watson and Francis Crick were studying how living organisms pass on their structure and traits from one generation to the next. They discovered what they called "the secret of life." They deciphered the molecular structure of deoxyribonucleic acid.

DNA is a huge molecule that carries all the secrets of how existing plants and animals create new generations. DNA consists of subunits called "nucleotides." Each nucleotide consists of a sugar molecule attached to a phosphate group and one of four bases. The bases are named: Adenine, Thymine, Cytosine, and Guanine. These nucleotides are attached to each other and form a very long structure. Two of these wrapped around each other to form a helical shaped molecule. This is called deoxyribonucleic acid. Hundreds of millions of nucleotides are joined in one unit. Because of the varying order of the attached bases, it is a code for the synthesis of the various different proteins. The helical structure unwinds, a simpler molecule called Ribonucleic Acid (RNA) is formed, which is then translated into a protein.

It turns out that much of the DNA does not encode proteins. At first it appeared that the unused DNA had no function and was referred to as "Junk DNA." Darwinists seized upon this fact and claimed that here was evidence of evolution. It was thought that this Junk DNA had once been useful, but as evolution had proceeded it was replaced by new DNA. They

**Thank you Clarion Readers for Financial Support
for Rev. Jeffrey Horn: \$1,460!**



We have been encouraging **Clarion** readers to provide financial support for Rev. Jeffrey Horn, a CTS graduate who served Zion Lutheran Church in Garrett, Indiana, from 2003-2012. Rev. Horn and his wife, Lora, will serve the Lord in Papua, New Guinea, as missionaries. He will teach at Timothy Lutheran Seminary and will look for ways to strengthen the education there. So far, we have received \$1,460 from **Clarion** readers; others may have sent contributions directly to Synod for Rev. Horn.

While the LCMS is willing to "send" him and his family, it is up to Rev. Horn himself to raise the \$164,000 that is needed. Pilgrim Evangelical Lutheran Church, West Bend, Wisconsin, through its Horizon Fund, has matched the first \$500 received.

Clarion readers, please send checks payable to:

Lutheran Concerns Association
1320 Hartford Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55116-1623

Mark the memo line of your check "New Guinea Mission Project."

were just vestigial genes. In 2007, Columbia Professor Philip Kicher, attacked Intelligent Design theory, writing “if you were designing the genomes of organisms, you would certainly not fill them up with junk.” (p. 24)

Paul Zimmerman

PhD, Chemistry, University of Illinois
MDiv, Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, Missouri
Traverse City, Michigan

Spiritual but not Religious

What happens when doctrine and practice are separated? Simply put, all kinds of naughtiness can and will creep into the church. When practice alone is driving the car and practice is disconnected from pure doctrine, one can only end up in the ditch. When the local congregation, trying desperately to keep up with the latest fad or cultural rage becomes “The Church of What’s Happening Now,” people grow tired and apathetic. They can do all this at home so why bother with church? They often classify themselves as “spiritual but not religious.” In other words they still believe in a God or some Higher Power, and they are sincerely seeking some spiritual meaning for their lives, but they have left the institutional church; it has nothing of substance to offer.

Pastors and laymen alike see that there is a growing indifference and apathy in America with regard to church membership and worship attendance. So, what is the problem and more importantly, what is the solution? Should we become innovators, jettisoning anything that smacks of being too “religious” and substituting a more generic “spirituality”? Perhaps we should stop being specifically “Lutheran” and be more “Protestant?”

This is exactly what some among us are doing. A recent seminar at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection (LCMS) ¹ in San Rafael, California, suggested that too much emphasis on doctrine is keeping people away from the church. One of the many things that the *Spiritual But Not Religious* workshop advertised and encourages you to do ² is to imagine what your congregation would be like if you emphasized a more spiritual practice rather than doctrinal purity.

Keynote speaker for the event was The Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress, author of *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Practice* and *The Sacred Path Companion: A Guide to Using the Labyrinth to Heal and Transform*. You can read more about her work to introduce people to the labyrinth here, <http://www.veriditas.org/>. Those who attended the event also heard from Rev. Lon Haack, Nebraska native and host pastor who is “certified in Labyrinth spirituality and ministry” as well as California-Nevada-Hawaii District President Rev. Robert Newton. According to the advance publicity for this event, you must remember that “society is changing and the church must change too.” I made several requests for papers, transcripts, or recordings of the seminar; none are available.

“...these fads and gimmicks, while often well intended, do much harm to the church and the extension of God’s kingdom among us.”

Is this the type of change that is needed among us? I would humbly submit that these fads and gimmicks, while often well intended, do much harm to the church and the extension of God’s kingdom among us. What is needed is a change. A change away from generic Protestantism and a return to historic, confessional, orthodox Lutheranism? The problem of indifference and apathy toward God and His gifts is nothing new and is as old and Genesis 3. The answer is always the same: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow! It’s time for us to stop the insanity of promoting and encouraging practices that distract and deter from the cross and empty tomb, (as well as forgiveness, life, and salvation) and fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith. We need to visit our apathetic and indifferent members and bring them God’s Word full strength; Law and Gospel. It’s time for us to demand that our leaders actually lead and our teachers actually teach and to remember that God’s Word has behind it all power and authority in heaven and on earth. It’s time for us to scrap the gimmicks and fads and trust the Triune God who

promises to draw people to Himself. It’s time for us to remember our identity as distinctively Lutheran Christians, in both doctrine and practice. *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”* Romans 12:2.

If you are visiting Lincoln, Nebraska, I am happy to report that you cannot visit our labyrinth here at Good Shepherd since we don’t have one; *“Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.”* 1 Corinthians 1:22-25. If you are curious, however, the Unitarian/Universalist church on the other side of town has one for you to visit and enjoy.

Rev. Clint K. Poppe

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Lincoln, Nebraska

- 1 <http://resurrectionlutheransanrafael.org/tp40/Default.asp?ID=227183>
- 2 http://ez-host2.com/graphics/uploadfile/8178/sbnrconvergenceflyer_.pdf

Editorial Comment: Rev. Poppe told the Chairman of the Editorial Group of *The Lutheran Clarion* that he went directly to the California, Nevada, Hawaii District Office seeking a printed copy, a recording or a video of the address by the Episcopal Bishop and also to the pastor of the sponsoring congregation and was unable to secure such information there either. When a question was raised to a pastor in the District if copies of the noted address were made available in the District, a negative response was received. Is this the way what is called “church” should act?

The Lutheran Clarion

The official publication of the Lutheran Concerns Association, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.
Circulation: 5,400



Published regularly to support issues and causes within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod which build faithfulness to true Confessional Lutheranism and to be a clear voice of Christian concern against actions and causes which conflict with faithfulness to the One True Faith.

The address for all matters pertaining to the LCA is:

1320 Hartford Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55116-1623

Editorial Board: Mr. Walter Dissen (Chairman)
Mr. Scott Meyer
Rev. Jerome Panzigrau

Faithful Lutheran individuals who are members of LCMS congregations are invited to submit articles of approximately 500 words for consideration. Inquiries are welcome. Manuscripts will be edited. Please send to: Mr. Walter Dissen
509 Las Gaviotas Blvd, Chesapeake, VA 23322
(757-436-2049; wdissen@aol.com)

The Board of Directors for the LCA:
Mr. Walter Dissen (President)
Rev. Thomas Queck (Vice-President)
Rev. Dr. Daniel Jastram (Secretary-Treasurer)

Mr. Scott L. Diekmann Rev. David Ramirez
Mr. John Klinger Mr. Leon L. Rausch
Mr. Scott Meyer Mr. Donald Zehnder
Rev. Jerome Panzigrau

<http://www.lutheranclarion.org>

Lutheran Concerns Association
June 2013



Lutheran Concerns Association
1320 Hartford Avenue
Saint Paul, MN 55116-1623