

THE PRE-SEMINARY TRAINING OF SECOND CAREER MEN
AT
NORTHWESTERN COLLEGE

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Introduction

A Northwestern College brochure entitled *Is This the Time?* begins with two questions. The two questions are in the minds of some men who are members in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, men who are already pursuing or working in careers other than the pastoral ministry. "Should I become a pastor? Can I become a pastor?" The brochure, Northwestern College and the WELS says this to those men with those two questions burning in the hearts:

An important question for you, your family, and Christ's church. Perhaps you have thought about it from time to time and were not sure how to answer the question. Maybe you thought it was too late. Perhaps you didn't know where to go to ask questions, or you didn't even know what questions to ask.

For many it is not too late to prepare to be a pastor. You may have had a different career or job for years. You may be married and have a family. But for some reason the Holy Spirit has challenged you to think about becoming a pastor. There is a way for you to become a pastor even now. Northwestern's Seminary Certification Program prepares older men for work at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and the pastoral ministry."

Is This the Time? is an introduction, maybe the first introduction for some men, to the Seminary Certification Program at Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin. Northwestern College's primary purpose is to train men for the pastoral ministry in the WELS by preparing them for pastor training work at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin. Northwestern has provided college level training of men entering Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary for 130 years, dating back to 1865. For most of these years Northwestern has primarily trained traditional students, that is, students of the regular undergraduate age, entering college upon completion of high school. In 1988 the WELS decided to give Northwestern the responsibility of also training non-traditional students (21 and over, already involved in another career) in preparation for study at the synod's seminary in Mequon. The administration and faculty of Northwestern College very capably met this challenge of educating a different category of student and served the Lord of the Church faithfully by educating the minds and molding the spirits of older men as part of their preparation for the pastoral ministry of the gospel.

There are two other papers that have been written about the training of second career men for the pastoral ministry. Kenneth Engdahl, now a pastor at Shepherd of the Hills in Knoxville, Tennessee, wrote about the "Bethany Program" in 1986. His paper is entitled *The Bethany Program of Special Pre-Seminary Ministerial Training: Its Beginning, History, and Future*. Engdahl went through the Bethany Program and wrote the paper prior to the program's move to Northwestern. In 1990 Jeffrey Bovee, now a pastor at St. John in New Ulm, Minnesota, wrote a paper entitled *Reflections on the Bethany Program*. He too went through the Bethany Program but wrote his paper after the switch was made to Northwestern. I have drawn some information from Engdahl's paper, especially historical information about the training of second career men prior to and during the Bethany years.

As Jeff Bovee's paper was a sequel to Kenneth Engdahl's, so also this paper is a sequel to Bovee's. This paper will focus on the second career program that has been carried on at Northwestern since 1988. It will first of all cover a brief history of the pre-seminary training of older men in the WELS. Then it will look at the challenges of the program that faced the Northwestern administration and faculty and how those challenges were met. Thirdly, this paper will look at the challenges that have faced the second career students and how those challenges were met by the students with the backing of a dedicated faculty. Finally, a few words will be said about the program's future (beginning in fall of 1995) at the newly amalgamated college, Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota. This is the basic outline of the organization of this paper:

- I. The History of the Pre-Seminary Training of Older Men in the WELS**
- II. Challenges to the NWC Faculty and Administration**
- III. Challenges Met by the Students with the Help of a Dedicated Faculty**
- IV. The Program's Future Plans at Martin Luther College in New Ulm, MN**
- V. Conclusion**

To gather information for this paper I consulted some NWC brochures, NWC convention presentations, NWC curriculum information and especially a paper written by the NWC Admissions Study Committee in 1992. This paper is entitled *Second Career Students and the*

Pastoral Ministry of the WELS: An Agenda for Discussion and was delivered by faculty members at pastoral conferences during 1993 and 1994. I also interviewed NWC President John Braun, NWC Registrar Jerald Plitzuweit and a number of students that have gone through or are presently going through the Seminary Certification Program at NWC. I also will provide some reflections and comments on the program at NWC. After completing a Bachelor of Arts degree at Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa, I went through the NWC Seminary Certification Program (2 years) from 1989 to 1991. I deeply appreciated the education I received and the assistance, encouragement and role-modeling given by the faculty of NWC in preparing me for work at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. This paper might be viewed as a tribute to the Northwestern faculty, for the service they have provided in training older men for the ministry.

I. The History of the Pre-Seminary Training of Older Men in the WELS

For many years throughout its early history, the Wisconsin Synod experienced shortages of pastors. This manpower shortage continued from the WELS' beginnings all the way to the 1970's. Manpower shortages was a main reason why the WELS did not expand like the Missouri Synod did with its more extensive worker training system. With the Joint Synod merger in 1917 the question of opening a practical seminary in addition to the theoretical seminary arose (Engdahl, 5). One of the reasons Missouri was able to train more pastors was that it had a practical seminary to train older men through a shorter course that did not emphasize the classical Biblical and church languages. But, as Engdahl points out (6), such pastoral training conflicted with the WELS' method of doing theology. "One simply cannot do theology with the Wisconsin Synod emphasis without the ability to do exegesis in the Greek and Hebrew." For this reason, it was impractical and unwise for the WELS to open a practical seminary of its own. Engdahl quotes Professor Carl Lawrenz on the topic of a practical seminary program in the WELS (6):

WELS thinking was reluctant to see its thorough theological seminary training watered down by the enrollment of students at its seminary who did not measure up to the pre-

there was
no shortage
in the
1930s and
1940s

seminary training that WELS was officially maintaining: its three preparatory schools . . . and its four-year liberal arts college. With its emphasis on basic biblical knowledge, on Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German and English language skills, and on a broad knowledge of world history the WELS worker training program aimed to give its seminary students the tools for thorough theological study and at the same time equip them for acquiring all the practical skills essential for the pastoral ministry.

From 1919 to 1961 there were various ways for older men of the WELS to get there seminary training. Many went to Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, the LC-MS practical seminary. In the 1950's, when doctrinal controversies between the WELS and LC-MS began to heat up, WELS members at the Springfield seminary were encouraged to take their senior year at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in order to become acquainted with the doctrinal issues between the synods (Engdahl, 8). With the 1961 WELS convention and termination of fellowship with the LC-MS, the Springfield option was ended and the WELS looked at its options for training older, second career men for the ministry.

In 1961 NWC was considered to begin such a program but felt that it could not for two principle reasons: (1) The WELS had not yet authorized NWC to enroll married men and (2), "NWC at the time was reluctant to accept students whose age at the time of their enrollment was twenty-one and above. It was felt that as they were placed in the lower college classes the disparity in age would greatly affect college life at NWC" (Lawrenz quoted by Engdahl, 11). (The second reason will be addressed in this paper.) Thus, the WELS' sister synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod was contacted and they worked out an agreement to have older WELS men receive their pre-seminary training at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota. This program, commonly called "The Bethany Program" continued from 1962 through 1988. Over those years over 200 men enrolled in the program. In 1988 there were between 100 and 120 pastors in the WELS who had their pre-seminary training at Bethany (Northwestern Lutheran, 1988, p. 295).

The Bethany Program was reviewed a number of times over those years and in 1986 a "Report of the Committee Reviewing the Bethany Program of Special Pre-Seminary Training" was issued. The committee consisted of Executive Secretary Robert Voss (BWT), Prof. John

Braun (NWC), Prof. Richard Balge (WLS), MN District President Gerhard Birkholz (COP) and Pastor Martin Janke (CI-CR). This is their report (p. 3-4):

After carefully evaluating all the responses and information the committee unanimously recommends moving the Bethany Program to Northwestern College at the present time. . . .

We recommend moving the program to Northwestern College for the following reasons:

1. The program is moving in that direction of itself already. Enrollment in the Bethany Program has been decreasing. In 1978 the Bethany Program had a high of 30 students enrolled. In 1985 the number decreased to 8 students. In addition married students are enrolling at Northwestern College; 8 married students are currently enrolled on the Northwestern campus.
2. Students are expressing a desire to stay in the Synodical mainstream or to become a part of it sooner. Enrolling at Northwestern provides an opportunity for them to come to know their peers with whom they will share the work of the ministry in the future, the professors at Northwestern and the synodical structure. We feel that these advantages are an important factor in any decision.
3. Northwestern College can handle the program at this time. The faculty of NWC has expressed its willingness to accept the program and solve whatever problems its implementation will create. Since Northwestern is already serving married students, it has demonstrated its readiness and ability to assimilate older married students into its task of preparing men for the ministry.
4. The marriage restrictions at Northwestern have been relaxed significantly. The presence of married students is not an element which is as disruptive as it once was deemed to be. When the Bethany Program was started, there was no other place for these students to go. The situation has changed.
5. Although Bethany Lutheran College has made an effort to cut costs, the committee felt that moving the program to NWC would help the students save money through lower fees and moving expenses. We considered that the job market for married students would be better in Watertown and the surrounding area than in the Mankato area.
6. Moving the program to NWC will eventually save the Synod money too. We are not recommending complete and immediate transfer of the program to NWC but are suggesting that the current students at Bethany continue their training there. New inquiries will be directed to Northwestern. When there are no students at Bethany, the Synod will realize the saving.
7. All other alternatives, with the exception of discontinuing the program, created additional logistic and fiscal problems. The discontinuation of the program would seem to indicate that the Synod no longer needs or wants candidates for the ministry who are older and married and would have a negative effect on what the Spirit is doing in the hearts of those who need a program like the Bethany Program.

We respectfully request the Board for Worker Training to consider two other recommendations:

1. We recommend that the BWT take under advisement the visibility of such a program at NWC. While there has been good reason for giving the Bethany Program a low profile in the past, perhaps now is the time to give it higher visibility and added attention in our recruitment efforts.
2. We recommend that the BWT find more financial aids for students whom the Lord moves later in their lives to prepare for the ministry.

The recommendation by this committee of the Board for Worker Training was followed and the last four WELS men at Bethany graduated in June of 1988, thereby bringing the Bethany Program to official close (Northwestern Lutheran 1988, 295).

II. Challenges to the NWC Faculty and Administration

The Northwestern faculty had to make a number of adjustments when it was given the extra responsibility of training older/second career men. The challenge was in dealing with a portion of the student body that had a number of differences from the traditional student. NWC President John Braun, who became President in 1993 and was on the faculty when the program came to NWC, said that the faculty welcomed the program. He also said that some of the Seminary Certification students required greater patience on the part of the faculty, especially those in the language departments. President Braun also reported that since 1984 there has been a remarkable shift in the policy toward married students, a shift in accomodating them academically and a shift toward Koine Greek.

Professor Jerald Plitzuweit, the present Registrar at NWC, listed five main challenges that the program presented to the administration and faculty: (1) the Admissions process, (2) Academic issues, (3) the addition of three new courses to the curriculum, (4) the number of hours the non-trationals take in counseling and consulting time and (5) financial aid balance balance between traditionals and non-trationals.

Regarding the admissions process, Prof. Plitzuweit pointed out a number of different issues that make it more difficult to determine whether a non-traditional student is a viable candidate for study and potentially for the ministry. Because of the age, marital status and often, denominational background, it is more likely for a non-traditional student than for a traditional age student to have some "skeltons in the closet." The admissions committee struggles with the determining "what really is the motivation?" for the applicant to pursue training for the ministry. For this reason, the faculty formed the NWC Admissions Study Committee in 1992 to study the difficulties in the admissions process of a non-traditional student in order to report to pastors and

other synodical leaders the difficulties involved in the admissions process and to enlist the assistance of the pastors who would be recommending their church members for ministerial study. A report was completed and endorsed by the NWC faculty in 1992 and is entitled *Second Career Students and the Pastoral Ministry in the WELS: An Agenda for Discussion*. It was revised in 1994 to reflect the changes due to the amalgamation of colleges that will take place before the 1995-1996 school year. (What was the NWC Seminary Certification Program is referred to as the Martin Luther College Seminary Certification Program.)

In its opening statements, the report discusses the difficulty in the admissions process of non-traditional students:

The Admissions Committee of Martin Luther College make important decisions regarding potential candidates for the pastoral ministry. Since a large percentage of students admitted into the college level of our pastoral training track have continued their training at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and then become pastors in our congregations, admission standards require careful thought. On the one hand, we must maintain high academic and other standards to insure as much as possible the integrity of the service of our future pastors as well as the educational quality and excellence of the pastor training curriculum. On the other hand, we must also be sensitive to the need of our church body for more pastors, the desire of some to become pastors in spite of some limitations, and the wide range of talent--intellectual and social--among our current pastors and potential students. We must do this while considering the qualifications for public servants of the word expressed in Scripture (1).

Our training of traditional students for pastoral ministry does help us screen those who will eventually be called into our congregations. Because we have the opportunity to know our traditional students for as much as four of five years before they go on to the seminary, generally we have a good handle on their ability to perform the varied tasks of the pastoral ministry. Even with traditional students who are on our campus for several years, however, no guarantee prevents mistakes, and we do not claim to be correct in every case. When we recommend a student to the seminary, we carefully consider a student's intellectual, social, and personal gifts for the pastoral ministry. We also assume that our traditional students will grow and mature throughout their training, some of them demonstrating remarkable maturation between graduation here and entrance into Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

Non-traditional or second career students pose a different series of challenges. These older students have matured already before coming on our campus, and some of them are married and have their own children. We had no influence on them during the years when that maturation took place. In some cases their maturation may have taken place in a non-Christian environment and therefore without the influence of the Holy Spirit through the gospel. In such cases, questions about qualifications and talents are more critical. In other words, we have less influence on them when they come because they already have established patterns of behavior. Such older students have a rich and diverse background different from the traditional age student. That diversity can be a valuable resource for our pastoral ministry, but it also presents questions about the intellectual, social, spiritual, and personal talents necessary for the public ministry of the word as a pastor (2).

Martin Luther College, with almost all colleges across the country, has adjusted its policies to work with older students. As the school in our church body given the responsibility to prepare men for the seminary, MLC will need to continue to evaluate present realities in our pastor training and then communicate those realities to the rest of the church. This paper is an attempt to do just that (2).

When the program began at NWC not every non-traditional student was required to go through an interview with the Admissions Committee. In order to attempt to avoid some of the above mentioned pitfalls of a non-traditional applicant, an interview with the Non-traditional Student Committee is required as part of the admissions process. In this interview some members of the faculty have the opportunity to share with the applicant their views on the academics, on student life and give them some things to consider, especially issues regarding their family life (if they are married) and the need for 100% support from their wife. This interview has served well and has ^{led} lead a number of men to realize that this "is not the time."

Another effort to help in the admissions process and to aid and advise possible applicants in their decision on whether to apply for enrollment in the Seminary Certification Program was a retreat that was held at Northwestern in the early summer of 1993. President Braun reported that there were 46 candidates in attendance. Some discovered the program (and ministry) was not for them, some did decide to start and some have since dropped out. NWC planned to have the retreat every two years, alternating between Watertown and New Ulm, in order to advise and encourage those older men who are wondering about being a pastor. With the amalgamation in 1995, the retreat schedule has been pushed back a year and is planned for the summer of 1996.

In discussing the ministry and possible enrollment with potential students, the Admissions Committee also found that there were a considerable number of men that come with a misunderstanding of the Call into the Ministry. They come saying that they have received an inner call from God to become a minister. They come with a false concept of public ministry and talent for ministry (p. 13):

[There is a] challenge to orthodox Lutheran theology represented by some potential seminary certification students. In so many cases potential older students have the concept of an inner call to the ministry. Some have asserted that they have heard a voice from God directing them to become Lutheran pastors. However the motivation to choose the vocation of a Lutheran pastor may have blossomed, what we often find is that some

potential second career students have some kind of emotional call into ministry at the root of their thinking. They are absolutely certain that they will succeed whether or not they have the gifts.

In response to this misunderstanding and in order to instruct potential students on the Biblical doctrine of the Call and of Ministry, Professor Daniel Deutschlander was asked to write an essay on the topics of the Call and Ministry that could be handed out to the applicants. The essay *The Theology of the Call and Ministry* was published by Northwestern College in pamphlet form in 1993.

Academic issues were a second major challenge to the NWC faculty. Prof. Plitzuweit observed that often a non-traditional student is not ready to step into an academic track of the traditional student that is so high in academic standards as it is at NWC. Pres. Braun pointed out that in the area of languages there are many difficulties for the non-traditional student because of his lack of understanding grammar and language structure. This is often due to the public school system of teaching usage-based English instead of grammar-based, as it is taught in our prep schools and most of our area Lutheran high schools. The faculty reports that they desire to bring the non-traditional student up to the academic level of the traditional student (6):

Second career or seminary certification students pose some challenges for the WELS pastor training curriculum. First, these students come from diverse backgrounds and may not all even have a sense of English grammar necessary to understand the grammar of Greek and Hebrew. Second, they will not all have the study skills necessary to achieve success at the college level. Third, some will require additional time from faculty members to help them succeed, creating potential staff and counseling demands. Fourth, some courses have been added to the curriculum specifically to accommodate these students and bring them to the level of our current students. Fifth, use of a summer school on our campus may help older students succeed. In our judgment academic standards should remain high for these students as well as for our traditional students. Seminary certification students should perform at the level of our traditional students.

In order to bring the non-traditionals up to the traditional's level, a language structure course (not officially part of the curriculum) was taught by Prof. Cyril Spaude to those who needed it. And beginning in the fall of 1994 a two-semester course in Koine Greek was added which includes the language structure part of the Spaude course. In the 1995-1996 a 4 hour course combining the exegesis of John and Acts (separate courses for the traditional student) will

be given during the first semester of the second year on campus for those coming in with a B.A. degree. However, Prof. Plitzuweit mentioned that because of the small enrollment in these courses they are very expensive to run. Therefore, if there are cuts in the MLC budget in the years to come they may be the first courses to be dropped and the non-traditional students will again be enrolled in the first-year classical Greek course. The first students that are presently enrolled in the Koine course said that they appreciate the small class size because they get more individual attention from the professor. Some of the non-traditionals that went through the regular classical Greek course lamented the possible "watering down" of the language requirements. Time will tell if the Koine route will serve the future pastor well. The German or Latin requirement for the traditional student is not required of the non-traditional student because of NWC's desire to get the men into the ministry as quickly as possible. Picking up German or Latin would most likely require an additional year of study by the non-traditional student.

I asked Prof. Plitzuweit what the traditional students thought of the non-traditionals and the "lesser" language requirements. He reported that as far as he knows the traditional students don't question it at all. In fact, they kind of feel sorry for the older men whom they see really struggling to get through the Greek and Hebrew. Students presently enrolled in the Koine Greek course report that the traditional students don't really know anything about the requirements of the non-traditionals and thus do not question the differences in requirements. The college requires an enrollee in the Sem Certification Program to be 21 or older in order to avoid having students of the same age in both programs and to discourage some students from circumventing the language requirements of the traditional track of study.

Another challenge that faced the faculty was the number of hours that non-traditional students take of counseling and student/teacher consulting. Prof. Plitzuweit pointed out that the older student generally wants much more of the Dean's and Instructors' time. (This is the case in all schools.) The older student is more willing to seek out the professor over a question. The married student also requires more counseling time with the Dean of Men in dealing with

marriage and family matters. From my observation, the faculty is very willing to go the extra mile to help the student succeed. But it is a fact that the non-traditional student does require more of the ^{Faculty's} faculties time than the average traditional student.

Finally, the issue of financing the training of the non-traditional men is also a concern of Northwestern and the Synod. Prof. Plitzuweit reported that the administration is still wrestling with the issue of how to strike a balance between the traditional students and the non-traditional students when awarding financial aid. Even though the committee report in 1986 requested that the BWT find more monies for the financial aid of the non-traditional student, there is still not enough aid available to meet the need of all students. Northwestern doesn't want to provide a synod welfare system. The Admissions Committee voiced this concern in the paper written in 1992 (p. 12):

As non-traditional students become more and more a part of the pastoral training approach and emphasis, they will be in competition with traditional students for the same financial aid. We sense that the losers in this scenario will be the traditional students who may be deprived of the aid. Some safeguards should be established which prevent traditional students from being at a disadvantage when applying for financial aid.

The Non-Traditional Student Committee also explores the potential student's indebtedness and finances. They may advise the applicant to get his finances in order first or require him to have a plan for dealing with the indebtedness. They are very concerned in this and all areas of the potential student's life because they are "committing synodical money to the training of these students and the future leadership of God's people is at stake, we wish to be as shrewd as snakes but as innocent as doves" (p. 11 of Admissions Committee Report).

Prof. Plitzuweit also reported on the attrition rate from 1985 through 1994. In those years a total of 54 enrolled in the Seminary Certification Program. 16 finished the program and 16 are still in it and will complete it in 1995 or 1996. 22 dropped out or were dismissed from the program for various reasons including: academic (5), change of vocation/career (7), financial (3), personal reasons (5) and confessional (2). The attrition rate (22/54) is about 41%. The highest

years of enrollment in the Seminary Certification Program ^{were} are from 1992-1994 when a total of 29 enrolled during the span of those three years.

NWC faced many challenges when taking on the pre-seminary training of older, second career men. The faculty and administration adapted very well to the different category of students and demonstrated their deep-seated commitment to serving the Lord and his church by putting their every talent and every effort into preparing men for the ministry. I will conclude this segment with the faculties own statement of purpose (Admissions Committee Report, 15):

Seminary certification students coming to Martin Luther College should understand that we desire to prepare them for the pastoral ministry. For them that involves more than just achieving academic grades, and for us it means more than just monitoring their academic performance. We, as faculty and Christian elder brothers, model Christian behavior and help shape Christian character appropriate for the pastoral ministry, which is marked by temperance, self-control, respectability, gentleness, hospitality, congeniality, humility, and whatever else would help the potential pastor acquire a good reputation within church and outside it (1 Tim. 3).

III. Challenges Met by the Students with the Help of a Dedicated Faculty

In order to get a student's perspective I interviewed a number of men that have gone through or are presently going through the Seminary Certification Program at Northwestern College. I tried to get a broad spectrum of student and so talked with two that were much older and far into other careers before enrolling at Northwestern. One was married and one was single. I also will rely on my own perspective of the program, having gone through it when I was only two years older than my classmates. I talked with four men who are presently in their junior year at NWC. Three were single (one was a year or two older than his classmates and two were six or seven years older) and one was married, about 10 years older and recently had become a father. In interviewing them I focused on two categories of challenges and adjustments that they had to make in enrolling at NWC: academic challenges and social challenges.

One of the men wanted to enroll at NWC four years before he did, but did not have the 100% support of his wife and was refused by then President Voss. Voss' discouragement to enroll proved right when four years later the man's wife came to fully support her husband's desire to study for the ministry.

The biggest challenge to most of the men in the academic area was the languages. Many of them expressed that they could write well enough but when it came to grammar and doing things like diagramming sentences, they had no clue. This deficiency became very apparent when trying to understand and label different parts of Greek and Hebrew syntax. They had trouble learning Greek because they didn't know English grammar. The patience of the language professors and the six-week course on basic language structure was what made it possible to get through the Greek and Hebrew requirements.

Another man stated that he didn't have the same problems that others had with Greek and Hebrew because of his background in a very demanding commercial banking career. He was ready to put in the number of hours that were demanded of him if he was going to get a solid grasp of Greek and Hebrew. The hard work paid off. He felt that he was very adequately prepared in the languages and is very grateful to Professors Spaude and Eickmann--without their help he wouldn't have gotten through. Both of these students are glad they were required to take the freshman classical Greek courses and lament that those now enrolling will only be required to take a koine Greek course. They both thought that the regular Greek course offered to the traditional students provided a wider foundation for the Biblical languages. They also thought that the non-traditionals shouldn't be given special treatment in regard to languages required of them, including German and Latin.

The students presently enrolled in the koine Greek course are happy to be in it and don't feel they have avoided any academic challenges by not taking classical Greek. They said they appreciate the small classes and the extra attention by the professors. Those two plusses lead to helping them learn a lot faster and better, partly because with a small class better preparation is required.

One of the men, after just about completing his first of two years at NWC, said that the two year course is the absolute minimum number of years to complete the Seminary Certification course. He had wanted to complete it in one year by taking a number of course overloads, but Prof. Deutschlander convinced him of the value of going for two years--in order to complete the academic part and also in order to have his thinking and attitudes molded by the God-fearing, Word-loving faculty members. He wouldn't want to go on with any less than two years at NWC (or MLC).

The second category of obstacles faced by the older students was just that--getting along with the younger, even much younger, students. One man, who was about 20 years older than his classmates said he didn't really get to know his classmates until after graduation. This was because he was married with children and was not around the dorm much. But he also said he never felt like an outcast. He figures he was accepted as much as you could expect considering the situation. He felt that in one way he had some good influence on the younger guys. By coming into NWC and having been a successful lawyer, many of the younger guys learned that this studying for the ministry is serious stuff if even a lawyer would give his career up to do it. The Admissions Committee report said this about having older students on campus and in classes (8): "The seminary certification students we have are welcome additions to the student body." "Their influence on our current student body is healthy and positive. Our goal is to attract more such men and train them for potential service." This answers the concern that the faculty had back in 1961 when they were asked about having the second career program on campus at Northwestern.

Another man that was in a banking career for 10 years before enrolling in the Seminary Certification program described his move into dormitory life as "culture shock." He "was living in a foreign country." He said he didn't quite know how to act and react around the younger students and they didn't know how to react to the older guys. He credits Dean Lindemann with helping him out by putting the proper perspective on some of the words and actions of the younger students. But he was glad ~~two~~^{to} spend the two years at NWC because it acclimated him

to the NWC/Seminary mindset. He couldn't imagine getting to or being at the Seminary without having spent some years at NWC.

From my experiences in the Seminary Certification Program I too am very thankful for the dedication of the faculty to doing everything necessary to assist all the students in getting to the Seminary. I also valued the the effect that my classmates had on me by unknowingly encouraging me by just being there and going through the same studies and struggles that I was going through. This was a key in developing the brotherliness that is so apparent among classmates at the Seminary. If the same course of study were to be taken by one's self on a university campus it would be impossible to get through it--thus showing the vital importance of close ties between pastoral students.

All Seminary Certification students lauded the efforts of the NWC faculty. All the faculty members are incredible gifts from Christ to his church.

IV. The Program's Future Plans at Martin Luther College in New Ulm, MN

With a change in location, the Seminary Certification Program will continue with the same required curriculum. However, Prof. Plitzuweit did mention that some changes may come with the tightening of the Synodical budget. All of the Seminary Certification students presently enrolled in their first of two or second of three years of study plan to continue at Martin Luther College in the fall of 1995. I pray and am confident that the Lord Jesus will continue to bless his church with professors that are faithful to him and his Word.

V. Conclusion

The research for this paper began as an attempt to compare and analyze the various programs that the WELS has used to prepare older men to enter the Seminary to train for the public pastoral ministry. In doing the reading of papers and report published and interviewing students that have enrolled in the Seminary Certification Program at NWC, the focus of the

paper became more and more focused on what an incredible blessing the Northwestern College faculty has been and is to our church body. Their dedication to their Lord and to their students is unmatched by that of any other college (as is attested to by men who have attended other colleges). Whether for the training of traditional or non-traditional students, the Lord Jesus has seen to it that there are faithful teachers to impart his word to the next generation. These men have carried out what Paul wrote to Timothy (2 Tim. 1:13-14): "What you have heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you--guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us."

To God Alone be the Glory.

CITATIONS

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