

**PREPARATORY
SCHOOL
STUDY
COMMISSION**

1986-1989

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CHURCH HISTORY PAPER
APRIL 16, 2003
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Historical Setting

In 1978, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) decided to purchase a new campus in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. Martin Luther Academy, from New Ulm, Minnesota, was moved to this new campus and eventually some faculty and students from the closed Northwestern Lutheran Academy of Mobridge, South Dakota, formed Martin Luther Preparatory School. There were three major concerns in 1977 that led to this action.

1. The growing enrollment and program of Dr. Martin Luther College were in effect pushing Martin Luther Academy off its campus and jeopardizing the continued life of the school. There was concern about providing facilities for MLA on another campus.
2. The same basic problem could be foreseen developing at Northwestern except that on this campus the continued growth of the preparatory school was already infringing upon the college and would eventually impede its growth in numbers and development of programs.
3. The third concern at that time was the need to invest large sums of money to update Northwestern Lutheran Academy. The wisdom of this investment was brought into question by the school's inability to recruit acceptable numbers for pastor and teacher training programs.¹

One of the contributors to these concerns and the eventual move had to be the projected growth rate² of the synodical schools supplied by the Commission on Higher Education in 1977. For example, the high percentage projected the number of graduates needed from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in 1990 would be 91 and in 2000 it would be 125. While the low percentage projected the number of graduates needed from the Seminary in 1990 would be 66 and in 2000 it would be 82. Dr. Martin Luther College would need 148 assignees in 1990 and 166 assignees in 2000. In order to get these numbers at the Seminary and DMLC, the prep schools would also have to produce

¹ Book of Reports and Memorials (BoRaM), p. 9, 1983.

² The rate was set at 3.2% growth for future years because that was the rate of present growth from 1970-77. The low-end predictions were set at a rate of 2.2% growth.

more candidates for the preaching and teaching ministry. The high percentage projection would need a total attendance in the prep schools to be at 1899 in 1989-90 and at 2393 in 1999-2000. The low percentage projection would need a total attendance in the prep schools to be at 1545 in 1989-90 and at 1827 in 1999-2000.³

All these predictions pointed to a larger enrollment on these campuses and the need to address physical expansion. The purchase of the campus in Prairie du Chien alleviated some of these concerns that were expressed in points 1 and 3 in 1977. Concern #2 was addressed at that time by limiting the enrollment of Northwestern Preparatory School. This concern was addressed again in 1983:

It is strongly suggested that whenever Northwestern Prep reaches its enrollment limitation further prospective students be encouraged to enroll at the other prep schools.

Finally, it is strongly implied that the long-range future of NPS on the Northwestern campus will be determined by the future enrollments of the college and the course of history. To this end, the continued existence of the school on the Northwestern campus shall be carefully monitored and regularly reviewed.⁴

The move of MLA to Prairie du Chien and the closing of NLA and amalgamation into MLPS were also reported on in 1983. ^{The Report} It included a list of outcomes since the move and proposed some future actions to be considered to help with declining numbers. In the BoRaM of 1983, the concerns of 1977 were continuing to be monitored and reviewed. At this time, the ⁶Synod saw fit to close one of the preparatory schools and move another to a new campus.

³ Proceedings, pp. 52-57, 1977.

⁴ BoRaM, p.11, 1983.

The need to monitor and review the three existing prep schools was expressed again in 1985. This time the review and monitoring didn't have to do with just NPS but the whole preparatory school system.

WHEREAS 5) the CHE⁵ is the body responsible for supervising the worker training schools; therefore, be it Resolved, a) that the worker training division continue to be sensitive to the matter of kingdom work balance; and be it further Resolved, b) that we support the preparatory school concept; and be it finally Resolved, c) that we direct the CHE to continue to monitor carefully the need for three preparatory schools.⁶

This resolution was spelled out in more detail in the 1986 Report to the Twelve

Districts:

Before the Board for Worker Training's next cycle of self-studies at our schools begins in 1991, there appears to be sufficient time to conduct a study of the preparatory school system. It is felt that such a preparatory school study would benefit the Worker Training Division and the Synod at large. The goal of such a preparatory school system study will be to evaluate the work of the system over against the continuing purpose and objectives of the Synod, of the Worker Training Division and of the three preparatory schools themselves. A three-year period, beginning with the 1986-87 school year, will provide sufficient time for careful study and evaluation on the part of the three schools and the persons drawn from outside of the schools who will be involved in the process. The BWT will report its findings of the preparatory school study to the Synod in 1989, with a progress report to be made in 1987.⁷

It is this preparatory school study that will be the subject of this paper with the intention of answering the following questions. Who made up this commission? What did this commission hope to accomplish with their three years together? How did they reach their final report? Did they meet the goals set before them? This paper will also follow the progress of the Committee on Philosophy and Purpose due to the abundance of

⁵ Commission on Higher Education

⁶ Proceedings, p. 57, 1985.

⁷ RTTD, p. 5, 1986.

first-hand material of their work. This Committee also did some important reviewing of the history of the prep school system and its purpose.

The Preparatory System Study Commission

By November 10, 1986, the Board for Worker Training had assembled the specific representatives to make up the committee. The members included:

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|---------------------------------|--|
| Pastor John M. Graf | parish pastor, serving as chairman |
| Principal Theodore H. Zuberbier | parish teacher |
| Mr. John W. Brooks | layman, acquainted with workings of the Synod as a whole |
| Mr. Ronald H. Meier | layman, well versed in synodical fiscal matters |
| Prof. David J. Valleskey | representative from faculty of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary |
| Prof. James F. Korthals | representative from faculty of Northwestern College and Academic Dean |
| Dr. Arthur J. Schulz | representative from faculty of Dr. Martin Luther College and Academic Dean |
| Pastor John H. Kurth | representative from the division of World Missions |
| Pastor Harold J. Hagedorn | representative from the division of Home Missions |
| Pastor Forrest Bivens | representative from the division of Parish Services |
| President Ronald N. Kaiser | member of the Conference of Presidents |
| Principal James Plitzuweit | representative of the Association of Lutheran High Schools |

Non-voting advisors to the committee who are to be present at plenary sessions and also available to the committees of the study commission:

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| President William Zell | Northwestern Prep |
| President Theodore Olsen | Martin Luther Prep |
| President John Lawrenz | Michigan Lutheran Seminary |
| Pastor Robert J. Voss | BWT Executive Secretary |
| and/or his successor | (Wayne Borgwardt) |

Specific Plans for the Study 1986-1989⁸

The **purpose** of the study is to evaluate the work of the preparatory school system over against the continuing purpose and objectives of the Synod, of the worker training division, and of the three preparatory schools.

In meeting this purpose, the study will better enable the BWT to carry out the Synod's mandate to be sensitive to the matter of kingdom work balance (that is, not doing one thing at the expense of another) and to monitor carefully the need for three preparatory schools.

The purpose and objective statements for the Synod, the worker training division and the three preparatory schools were provided.

Then followed the list of **objectives** for the study:

- A. To review previous studies of the worker training system, especially as they pertain to the preparatory schools.

Note: Previous studies include the Moussa Report, the Keller Report, the "Blue Ribbon" report, the reports given to the 1977 regular and 1978 special conventions of the Synod, and the report to the 1983 Synod convention. Other pertinent studies may also be examined. Also note the benefits that accrue to the Synod through students who have discontinued.

- B. To review the philosophy which has sustained the preparatory schools as a part of the Synod's worker training system, historically and at present.

Note: The role of the preparatory schools in setting standards is to be examined. A comparison with the experience of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod before and after the abandonment of their preparatory school system is suggested.

- C. To evaluate the contribution of the preparatory school system to the Synod's program of training workers for the church, historically and at present and future production.

Note: The group should study available information on enrollments, yield for the preaching and teaching ministries, attrition, the persistence of students in the eight to twelve year course of study. A comparison should be made of contributions made by other sources.

⁸ These were drawn up by the Executive Secretary of the BWT in consultation with the presidents of the three preparatory schools and the BWT's Curriculum Committee.

- D. To analyze the financial and physical resources which exist for the operation of the preparatory school system at present.

Note: things to be considered include the cost per student of graduates presented to the church for assignment, the cost of attrition, the percentage of the Synod's budget that is necessary for the support of a worker training system that begins in high school, the ability of the physical plants of the preparatory school to meet current and future needs, and comparisons with alternative systems in terms of cost and physical resources.

- E. To assess the advantages and disadvantages of the preparatory school system today
- F. To compare alternatives to the present system

Note: Alternatives include a different number of prep schools, no prep schools, the area Lutheran high schools and public schools

- G. To make recommendations to the Board for Worker Training

The commission also had a set **structure** for the study. They would meet in plenary session under a chairman appointed by the BWT in order to organize itself, appoint three study committees of four members each and adopt a budget for its work. The three committees were 1) Philosophy and Purpose to achieve objectives A and B, 2) Training of Workers to achieve study objective C, and 3) Finances and Physical Resources to achieve study objective D. The study commission would then meet in plenary session to achieve study objectives E, F, and G.

The **schedule** for this study had two important dates: 1987—progress report to the Synod convention included in BWT report and 1989—final report to the Synod convention included in BWT report.

1987

The commission held its first official meeting on February 4th. The meeting began with a luncheon at Alioto's where Pastor Robert Zink, chairman for the BWT,

addressed the group as well as the chairman of the commission, Pastor John Graf, and Executive Secretary Robert Voss.⁹

When they returned to the Synod Administration building, they reviewed the "Plans for the Study". Then the commission members volunteered to join one of the three four-member committees. Committee #1 on Philosophy and Purpose was Bivens (chairman), Korthals, Schulz, and Valleskey. Committee #2 on Training of Workers was Brooks (chairman), Graf, Hagedorn, and Plitzuweit. Committee #3 on Finances and Physical Resources was Zuberbier (chairman), Kaiser, Kurth and Meier.¹⁰

These newly formed committees began their individual work on their assigned objectives, knowing that they needed to come up with a progress report for the upcoming (1987) Synod convention.

The Committee on Philosophy and Purpose reviewed their objectives and began to discuss "documents from the past, which would enable us to discover the philosophy of the Synod in its earliest days." While discussing the history of the worker training system, the following questions arose: "What has sustained our system? Have we changed our outlook over the years? What is the best possible way to prepare workers for the church?" The committee made some assignments in an effort to answer these questions. "Valleskey will search the Proceedings, beginning with the 1930's. Korthals will look for statements of philosophy from the August Ernst era. Bivens will examine Koehler and the Benet Law. Schulz will look for Wayne Schmidt's paper (a doctoral dissertation which deals with the Benet Law)."¹¹

⁹ John Graf *et al.*, *Minutes from Commission Meeting*, p. 1, February 4, 1987

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Forrest Bivens *et al.*, *Minutes from Committee on Philosophy and Purpose*, February 4, 1987

The committees rejoined in plenary session, where the chairmen reported on their progress. The commission chairman then reported that the presidents from the three prep schools and the area Lutheran high school representative would address the commission on the following morning. They would be discussing the contributions of their schools to the Synod's worker training program.¹²

The commission gathered together again on February 5th. They began by listening to the area Lutheran high school representative and President Zell from NPS. "Out of the discussion, the membership voiced recognition of the principle that structured change in one function of a system tends to have a ripple effect on other aspects of the system."¹³

This was followed by presentations from President Lawrenz of MLS and President Olsen of MLPS. "A frank discussion ensued which underscored the importance that any decision made by the commission as far as possible take into consideration the overall impress of the prep school system on the Synod's concept of ministry and effect of any changes on the Synod's Gospel mission."¹⁴

Committee #1 also met on February 5th. They continued to address a question from the previous day: "Have goals and objectives changed in our synod?" They felt that this was a very important question to keep in front of them as they continued their study. The committee also spent time on the question—"How do we get a handle on the current opinions which people have of our worker training system, especially opinions concerning the prep schools?" They thought about using a questionnaire, which would

¹² John Graf *et al.*, *Minutes from Commission Meeting*, p. 2, February 4, 1987.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 2, February 5, 1987.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3, February 5, 1987.

be researched by Schulz, with carefully chosen questions that will allow them to interpret the responses returned. They also formulated a set of questions that were fundamental to their study: "What are we looking for in the 'end product' of our worker training system? Can this 'end product' be obtained without the prep schools?"¹⁵ All of these questions were to be looked at as the individuals of the committee worked on their reports.

In late April, the committees produced their required progress report for the 1987 Synod convention. In these progress reports of the individual committees, they identified their purpose and also the course of action that they would be taking to carry them out.

The Committee on Philosophy and Purpose has chosen to confine its study at the present time to those extant documents and reports that have articulated or commented on our historic and traditional mindset or philosophy pertaining to our worker-training system in general and our preparatory school system in particular. The Committee on the Performance of the Prep Schools finds that its assignment to evaluate the contribution to the synod's program of training workers for the church should be divided into two parts: quality and quantity. The Committee on Finances and Physical Resources has begun the involved process of identifying those facts and figures which will help provide the answers to questions on the ability of our synod's constituents to provide suitable physical facilities and programs of education for and through the prep school system.¹⁶

The individual committees would continue working on gathering information and meeting their objectives for the next few months.

The Committee on Philosophy and Purpose met together on May 26th to report on their assignments from February and discuss them. The reports began with Biven's summary of a J. P. Koehler article dealing with education. He also reported on the "Blue Ribbon" document, especially pages 16 and 17 that dealt with prep schools. The

¹⁵ Forrest Bivens *et al.*, *Minutes from Committee on Philosophy and Purpose*, February 5, 1987.

¹⁶ BoRaM, p. 13, 1987.

following "Quarterly" articles were also mentioned: Vol. 80 #2 (pp. 98-117), Vol. 77 #3 (pp. 168-172) and Vol. 83 #1 (pp. 43-60).¹⁷

The next speaker was Korthals who presented the results of his study of the Ernst Era. He presented the committee with a handout. At the top of this handout was the question: "Have the goals and objectives of the WELS educational system changed over the years?" The conclusions mentioned below were reached on the basis of the documents of the August Ernst Era. The conclusions will be outlined here because they will serve as a part of this commission's final report (BoRaM, p. 14-15, 1989).

- 1) Shortage of trained workers.
- 2) Confessionalism.
- 3) Lack of other educational opportunities.
- 4) Need for specialized training.¹⁸

This report included some observations on the conclusions reached from the Ernst Era.

Points #1 and #2 are still valid in our present situation. Point #3 no longer applies. Point #4 is still valid, but in a slightly different context. For students who are removed from the synodical "Heartland" the statement is still valid. In varying degrees it is also true in areas, which have Lutheran High Schools, depending on the ability and the success of the Area Lutheran High Schools to provide an education, which is preparatory to the college.¹⁹

Schulz was the next reporter to the committee. He discussed a Kowalke paper and reviewed the Keller Report. There was mention of pages 23-24, which reported preparation of teachers must be done within schools of Synod. Toppe's paper from 1965, "Role of NWC" in the Proceedings of 1965 was also reviewed. There was also mention

¹⁷ Forrest Bivens, *Minutes of Committee on Philosophy and Purpose*, p. 1, May 26, 1987.

¹⁸ James Korthals, "Have the goals and objectives of the WELS educational system changed over the years?", May 26, 1987. Typewritten.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

of the Proceedings from 1969, which provided a statement of the role of secondary education. The BoRaM of 1971 added a Supplementary Report on Synodical Academies.²⁰

Following the reports on the historical purpose of the prep school system, the committee discussed what they wanted to accomplish. They decided to distribute a questionnaire throughout the Synod to discover what others viewed as the objectives of the prep school system. This was done “because each member of the committee has had and still has a personal connection with the WELS educational system” and they feared that their “objectivity might well be called into question.” Schulz presented the Delphi Technique²¹ and the committee agreed to use it for their study. This was followed by a lengthy discussion on what questions should be included. The final product contained two questions: 1) List the objectives or purposes that you think are appropriate for the preparatory schools of the WELS and 2) What benefits does the Synod derive through students who attend one of the three preparatory schools but do not continue their preparation for the pastoral or teaching ministry?²²

The three different rounds of the survey would be distributed throughout the 12 districts of the Synod to 120 people—44 laymen, 52 pastors and 24 teachers. The committee would review the results of the three rounds of surveys at later dates.²³

²⁰ Forrest Bivens *et al.*, *Minutes of Committee of Philosophy and Purpose*, p. 1, May 26, 1987.

²¹ The objective of the Delphi Technique is to obtain a consensus without bringing individuals together for face-to-face discussion. This is achieved by having them complete a series of questionnaires interspersed with controlled opinion feedback. This type of controlled interaction among the respondents means saving in time and money, but it permits independent thought by the participants and is helpful to them in the gradual formation of a well-considered opinion. It has the added advantage of providing confidentiality or even anonymity (Schulz, “*The Delphi Technique: An Overview*”, p. 1, May 26, 1987. Typewritten.).

²² Forrest Bivens *et al.*, *Minutes of Committee of Philosophy and Purpose*, p. 2, May 26, 1987.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 2, May 26, 1987.

The Prep School Study Commission met together one last time in 1987, on November 15th. The chairman for each committee gave a progress report on their work over the recent months. The commission chairman then asked that the final reports of the committees be in to him by February 22, 1988, so he can have a commission report to Administrator Borgwardt by March 24, 1988. "Open discussion ensued about how the commission might best get prepared to offer responses to points E, F, and G of the assignment." February 12, 1988, was the date set for the next commission meeting and each committee was to be ready to report its findings. "Commission members were encouraged by one another to keep open minds concerning conclusions and recommendations to be derived from the study."²⁴

1988-The Final Work of the Individual Committees (January – March)

The first plenary session of the commission of this new year was set for the 12th of February. The Committee on Philosophy and Purpose met the night before to compile data from their questionnaires for the report to the commission on the following day. It was on February 12th that the committees reported their findings to the group, followed by discussion on their work. The committees were to make any necessary corrections and give a final copy to the chairman of the commission by February 22nd. The committees were also asked to prepare a response on Objectives E and F for the next plenary session, which was scheduled for March 24. This was also the date that the chairmen would present the reports of the committees to the BWT.

The Committee of Purpose and Philosophy prepared for the March 24th meeting by gathering together on March 1st. During this meeting the group revised their "Study of

²⁴ John Graf *et al.*, *Minutes of Commission Meeting*, p. 1, November 15, 1987.

Selected Respondents' Perceptions of Appropriate Objectives for WELS Preparatory Schools"²⁵, which was presented at the February 12th commission meeting.

The committee also worked on the note attached to Objective B of the study and addressed Objectives E and F as instructed by Chairman Graf. This document worked up by the committee provides some pertinent points on these objectives, which did not always appear in the final commission report. For this reason, a great majority of that presentation is provided here.

The note of Objective B was to examine what happened to the Missouri Synod after they abandoned their prep school system. This issue was addressed under their point #1:

The Role of the Prep Schools in Setting Standards. In our discussion of this point we are defining "standards" as the academic standards necessary for conducting the liberal arts programs of our colleges.

Would standards suffer if the prep school system was dropped? Our response to that question is: YES. The prep schools are presently the standard setters in our educational system. In this connection it should be noted that the standards at the Missouri Synod's worker training schools declined when they dropped their prep schools.

The strong liberal arts program at Northwestern College requires more than a language background on the secondary level. Both Northwestern College and Dr. Martin Luther College need strong secondary programs in history, music and English.

In summary this committee feels that:

- A) Maintaining standards is a matter of high priority;
- B) Prep schools help set standards for a more successful liberal arts program;
- C) Other approaches, involving the Association of Lutheran High Schools, merit study.²⁶

²⁵ The summary of this fourteen page report is found in the final report of the commission (BoRaM, pp. 16-17, 1989).

²⁶ Forrest Bivens *et al.*, *Committee Reaction to the note attached to point B in the Objectives of the Study and to points E and F*, p. 1, March 1, 1988.

As the committee worked on Objective E, they created a list (point #2) of both the advantages and disadvantages connected with the present prep school system. The advantages were:

- A) It fulfills the objectives of our worker training system.
- B) It places the student into a mind set for worker training.
- C) It allows for religious and academic growth, while focusing on the ministry with fewer distractions.
- D) The frequency of worship opportunities which it provides.
- E) The strong music, history and language programs.
- F) Encouragement for the qualified student to continue in worker training is provided on a regular basis.
- G) Common approach to subject matters allows for easier transition to college.²⁷

The committee provided the following disadvantages of the prep school system:

- A) It allows young people to “drift” through the system without seriously considering and praying about their life’s work.
- B) It can isolate students from the mainstream of society.
- C) It takes young people away from the womb of the home.
- D) Students don’t know much about life in the local congregation.
- E) There is a weakness in mathematics and the natural sciences.
- F) It does not provide a healthy mix of experiences.
- G) Due to the investment which has been made it encourages some to continue who should not continue.²⁸

The committee addressed Objective F under point #3:

Consider and Compare Alternatives to the Present System.

From the perspective of this committee, i.e., the philosophical and the theoretical, given sufficient financial support and the assurance of sufficient numbers of workers, we would not change the present system.

However, since it seems that sufficient funding and sufficient numbers of workers are not assured, change may be necessary. This committee feels that each alternative has to be measured against the basic philosophy and the purpose of our worker training system. Any change must be made

²⁷ Forrest Bivens *et al.*, *Committee Reaction to the note attached to point B in the Objectives of the Study and to points E and F*, p. 1, March 1, 1988.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2, March 1, 1988.

carefully to avoid undermining the basic purpose and values, which the preparatory schools are now supplying.

This committee has no concrete recommendation concerning change. As long as our concerns about the system's philosophy and purpose are met, we could support any change, which might be necessary.

On the basis of the survey, which this committee conducted, we do feel there is a need to consider the role and the potential role of the Area Lutheran High Schools in worker training, regardless of the alternative, which is finally chosen.²⁹

The committee's work on these objectives were presented at the commission's next meeting on March 24, along with a review of their revised edition of historical perspective and the results of their questionnaire, which was mailed to commission members.

The Prep School Study Commission reconvened on March 24. The Committee on Finances and Physical Resources were the first to present their revised study to the commission. Since there has not been much information about this committee up to this point in the paper, time will be spent here to expound on their findings that did not show up in final commission report. There were four parts to their report. Part one was the cost per student of the preparatory school system.

This will include the cost of attrition in the preparatory system in that those students who graduate and enroll at NWC and DMLC will be listed as costing the total of each of their four years of preparatory school subsidy divided by their number. These costs were charted from the 1983 graduates through the 1987 graduates, a five-year slice. They range from a low of \$15,146 (NPS, 1982-83 graduate) to a high of \$31,257 (MLPS, 1986-87 graduate). The five-year averages grow from \$19,441 to \$27,239. Again, these are costs of providing one enrolling college freshman at either DMLC or NWC from our preparatory system. This does not include the costs paid by parent/student.³⁰

²⁹ Forrest Bivens *et al.*, *Committee Reaction to the note attached to point B in the Objectives of the Study and to points E and F*, p. 2, March 1, 1988.

³⁰ Theodore Zuberbier *et al.*, *Report of Committee III: Finances and Physical Resources*, p. 1, March 24, 1988.

Part two discussed the issue of kingdom balance. A summary and chart from this section appears in the final commission report (BoRaM, pp. 23-24, 1989). They charted the percentages of the total Synod Budget that went to the prep school systems. This chart included how much the Synod spent in a year, how much of that money went to subsidize the prep schools and the percentage. The chart went from 1980 to 1987. In 1980, the Synod spent \$12,144,347. A total of \$1,656,684 went to preparatory subsidy at a percentage of 13.6%. By 1987, the Synod was spending \$16,844,913. While the prep school subsidy was \$2,430,570—a percentage of 14.4%. This final percentage was compared to a Home Missions total of about 25% and a World Missions total of about 18%.³¹

Part three of this committee's report dealt with the ability of the physical plants of the preparatory schools to meet current and future needs. The majority of this section shows up in the final commission report (BoRaM, pp. 21-22, 1989) and will not be reported here.

The fourth and final part of this committee's study was comparing alternative systems. This section provided the commission with a cost comparison of students from the prep schools and from Area Lutheran High Schools (ALHS), which is the only alternative system in place. This study displayed that the average cost to send a student to an ALHS is substantially lower to Synod members *for Christian Education* than is the case in our prep system.

A representative year, 1985-86, shows an average of \$1,037 per ALHS student cost to the ALHS associations (Synod members) of an average

³¹Theodore Zuberbier *et al.*, *Report of Committee III: Finances and Physical Resources*, p. 1, March 24, 1988.

\$2,610 total operating cost versus the preparatory school per student average of \$3,270 in Synod subsidy of the \$5,345 total operating cost. Note that from Synod budget there is no cost for ALHS graduates, but about \$1,000 per student per year is given by Synod members to ALHS's in addition to what the student and parents contribute. A portion of that \$1,000 per student may represent lost potential contribution to the Synod budget. Note also that providing students from NWC and DMLC is an important secondary goal of each ALHS. Therefore costs to Synod cannot be determined on a net NWC/DMLC freshman enrollee basis as they are for the prep system.³²

In the closing of part four, the committee recognized that there are other differences between prep and area high schools that have not been factored in here. "This study concerns operating cost factors only. It does not address the reasons for the cost differential (e.g. salary and programs), but rather notes that graduates from both ALHS's and our prep system are accepted into the regular NWC and DMLC worker training curriculum."³³

The Committee on Training Workers were next to present to the commission. A revised report was distributed to the group. A closer look at this committee's work will also be provided here. The assignment of this committee was to "evaluate the contribution of the preparatory school system to the Synod's program of training workers for the church, historically and at present." In order to carry out this task, they were to look at and study "enrollments, yield for the preaching and teaching ministries, attrition rates, and the persistence of students in the eight to twelve year course of study."³⁴

How did they accomplish these goals? The committee used a seminary research

³² Theodore Zuberbier *et al.*, *Report of Committee III: Finances and Physical Resources*, p. 3, March 24, 1988.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 3, March 24, 1988.

³⁴ John Brooks *et al.*, *A Study of High School and the Relative Comparison of Enrollment and Persistence Data of Graduates of DMLC and WLS*, p. 1, March 24, 1988.

paper titled "Where Do the Pastors Come From?", researched and written by Pastor John Kenyon in 1985. "The approach for the development of the attrition data involved the random selection of eight classes, four each from DMLC and NWC. These classes were selected beginning with the freshman year at each school. The percentage of the starting enrollment of these classes to the graduates assigned at graduation were then compared." The BWT office provided the committee with this information.³⁵

What did they find? Since the source of enrollment statistics only deals with pastors, the assignment of graduates only deals with Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and not DMLC. While this is some important information, it only deals with one of the prep school tracks. Here is the enrollment and also attrition data. The expanded version with charts is in the final commission report (BoRaM, pp. 17-21, 1989).

In the period from 1960 through 1964, the prep schools supplied approximately 80% of the graduates assigned. In the more recent period from 1980 through 1984, this number declined to approximately 50%. The number of students from the area Lutheran high schools, on the other hand, increased from approximately 1% to approximately 25% respectively during the same time periods. The number of students supplied by public high schools during the same time periods increased from approximately 15% to 22%. The attrition data supplied by the BWT office indicates that the area Lutheran high schools have the lowest attrition rate at both NWC and DMLC with an average of 34% for the eight classes. The prep schools were next with an average of 52%, and the public schools were highest with 59%.³⁶

In conclusion, the committee reported that the data "appears to give sufficient reason to question the investment the WELS is placing into the preparatory school system, particularly when considering only the quantity of students the prep schools are

³⁵ John Brooks *et al.*, *A Study of High School and the Relative Comparison of Enrollment and Persistence Data of Graduates of DMLC and WLS*, p. 1, March 24, 1988.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2, March 24, 1988.

supplying in assigned graduates.” They also reported that the study did not address the “quality” of the graduate supplied by prep schools. “The quality factor, although difficult and perhaps even impossible to measure, is critical to making a total evaluation of the contribution of each high school source to the worker training program.”³⁷

The Committee on Philosophy and Purpose reported next. This material has been reported on earlier and will not be repeated here. Since their report was sent out to commission members via mail, it received a short review. There was one change made to the document. In the “Historical Perspective” section, point #2 was changed from “Confessionalism” to “Confessional Integrity.”³⁸

Following the final committee reports, the commission began to address Objective E of their assignment. They formed a list of advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages:

1) Strong curriculum 2) Controlled study periods 3) Nurtures a mind set for worker training 4) Single-mindedness of purpose 5) Espirit de corps for the ministry 6) Limited social interaction 7) Dormitory environment (Christian peer influence) 8) On-site encouragement (faculty and synod-related events) 9) Peer encouragement (stronger than influence) 10) Single track curriculum for the public ministry 11) History, languages, and church music emphasis 12) Provides workers 13) Daily worship schedule 14) Parents receive subsidized education cost 15) Broader input to calling process 16) Synodical control 17) Availability to ALHS constituency

Disadvantages:

1) Breaks up families 2) High cost 3) Dormitory environment (temptation) 4) Isolation from mainstream (ghetto) 5) Myopic life perspective (tunnel vision) 6) Limited social interaction with community (works against an evangelistic attitude) 7) Coat-tail effect (student enters ministry for wrong reasons) 8) Lack of parental influence 9) Lock-step program (curriculum) 10) High college-seminary attrition 11) Weakness in science and mathematics 12) Attitude of elitism 13) Travel hardship

³⁷ John Brooks *et al.*, *A Study of High School and the Relative Comparison of Enrollment and Persistent Data of Graduates of DMLC and WLS*, p. 2, March 24, 1988.

³⁸ John Graf *et al.*, *Minutes of Commission Meeting*, p. 1, March 24, 1988.

14) Inactive in local congregation 15) Daily worship schedule 16) Presumes unrealistic early vocational decision 17) Synodical control (inflexibility/bureaucracy)

Each advantage and disadvantage was compared to the area Lutheran high school and the public high school. Then Bivens was called to read the report of the Committee on Philosophy and Purpose on the role of the prep schools in setting standards. The commission agreed that documentation was needed for the statements made about the Missouri Synod prep schools but also agreed to leave the subject of this report for further consideration when Objective F is considered.³⁹

The commission continued to talk about what should be done with the list of advantages and disadvantages. Preliminary consensus was reached that the advantages suggest reasons for maintaining the preparatory school system, while the disadvantages point in the direction of at least modifying the system as it now exists. Further discussion led to Graf and Kurth volunteering to construct an instrument that should enable the commission members individually to rank the advantages and disadvantages before the next meeting. This would be done with the idea that a compilation of the rankings would have implications for accomplishing Objective F.⁴⁰

The commission agreed to spend a great majority of the next meeting discussing Objectives E and F. This next meeting would be on June 1 and include the prep school presidents with their lists of advantages of the prep school system for the Synod.⁴¹

Before the commission's meeting in June, Chairman Graf sent out a letter on May 10th to the commission members. The purpose of the letter was to "get a handle" on

³⁹ John Graf *et al.*, *Minutes of Commission Meeting*, p. 1, March 24, 1988.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1-2, March 24, 1988.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.2, March 24, 1988.

pertinent facts and realities with which to “assess the advantages and disadvantages of the preparatory school system today.” After the brainstorming session on March 24th, the list was to be “polished up” and mailed to commission members and presidents of prep schools before the June meeting. Included with the updated list of advantages and disadvantages, was a system of rating the lists to help the committee come up with some final decisions. The lists were now labeled “Reasons for Maintaining the Preparatory School System As Is” and “Reasons for Modifying the Preparatory School System.” This change was made in order to make the titles appear more positive as they evaluate the system. The commission members and presidents were encouraged to spend some time to evaluate the lists and it provided a basis for their discussion in the June meeting.

1988—Final Work on Objectives E and F (June-December)

The commission was assembled once again on June 1st. This meeting spent a great deal of time on Objective E. President Olsen added a couple of reasons for maintaining the present system: 1) Provides colleges opportunity higher level of instruction and 2) Provides colleges with a large nucleus of students who understand the concept of the teaching and pastoral ministry and who positively influence other college students whose background has not provided this understanding. President Lawrenz added yet another reason, which he summarized as “the development in students of a certain ‘social toughness.’” The meaning of this ‘social toughness’ seems to derive from the kind of campus and classroom life fostered in the prep schools. Discussion was continued on Objective E with the commission giving their top 5 priorities.⁴²

⁴² John Graf *et al.*, *Minutes from Commission Meeting*, p. 1, June 1, 1988.

The Prep School Presidents were given the floor to give their reasons for maintaining the prep school system. President Lawrenz began the presentations. “The main thrust of his presentation was to make the point that the full potential of the preparatory school system remains to be realized.” In his observation, the prep schools will come closest to serving their primary purpose when all that is done in them contribute to focus students on ministry. He also noted that each prep school is a “separate organism with a culture and climate of its own.”⁴³

President Zell took the floor next and his comments seemed to fit into three main categories. His points are recorded here because they are not expressed elsewhere in documents and he provides some interesting points.

- 1) Cost. He warned that if the decision for the future of the preparatory schools is based on dollars and cents, someone (the Synod) will eventually be sorry. The critical question must be “What is the best way to prepare qualified, competent pastors and teachers?” He submitted the thought that the Lord is not bound to models and so we as a church must get workers for the public ministry any which way we can but cautioned that where we get them from is important.
- 2) Quality. “What is quality?” He pointed out that the only measurable dimension of quality is academic. He suggested the more elusive dimensions of quality and those that are equally or more important in the ministry come with experience, thus we must constantly remind ourselves that, while we strive to get the best raw material (students) we can, the Lord makes abundant use of the “broken vessels” in ministering to a world thirsting for the Gospel. The prep school is seen by Zell as having two advantages over the area Lutheran high school with respect to worker training: 1) Set curriculum which overall sends a stronger student to the colleges and 2) Prescribed evening study period.
- 3) Quantity. The primary emphasis here should be to work more on encouraging a desire for ministry as a vocation among our youth (and their parents) than on “system.” If revision of the prep system means elimination in any way, the synod then will not get pastors and teachers in sufficient quality. For example, if NPS closed, its 200-some students would not automatically matriculate to MLPS. Quite a number would be

⁴³ John Graf *et al.*, *Minutes from Commission Meeting*, p. 2, June 1, 1988.

lost. In short, he sought to impress on the commission that reductionism is not as easy as it might appear.⁴⁴

President Olsen was the last to speak. He viewed the strength of the prep schools to be their singleness of purpose, which provides an integrative factor for melding college students in their understanding of ministry. He finished with two random thoughts: 1) MLPS is “out of the way” only if one wants to attend school elsewhere and 2) in general he stated the 17 “Reasons for Maintaining...” can be documented but the 17 “Reasons for Modifying...” appear to be purely subjective.⁴⁵

The meeting continued by discussing Objective F, which called for a comparison of alternatives to the present system. Chairman Graf asked for suggestions from the commission. The different suggestions appear in the final commission report (BoRaM, p. 25-26, 1989). During the discussion of these different suggestions, a caution was voiced that the commission should “be wary of proposals that would eliminate present facilities that might be needed within 20 years.” Finally, the commission recognized a threefold concern expressed by the commission that might lead to an acceptable decision. These, too, appeared in the final commission report (BoRaM, p. 25, 1989).⁴⁶

The chairman then proposed that the three committee chairmen, Administrator Borgwardt, the secretary, and he serve as a committee to give direction to the next steps the commission should take. After the meeting, this group handed the responsibility to just the commission chairman Graf and Borgwardt. They would make the assignments

⁴⁴ John Graf *et al.*, *Minutes from Commission Meeting*, p. 2, June 1, 1988.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 3, June 1, 1988.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3-4, June 1, 1988.

for the next meeting. The commission also decided that it was not practical to visit the various schools.⁴⁷

On June 13th, Chairman Graf mailed out the assignments that the little committee (Graf, Zuberbier, Borgwardt) decided on. They were to be short, approached from both sides (maintaining and modifying) and would serve as the basis for the September 28th meeting.

Here are the assignments:

- Arthur Schulz – The Perception of the Area Lutheran High Schools Regarding their own Role in Worker Training.
- James Plitzuweit – The Ideal Role of the Area Lutheran High Schools in Worker Training for the WELS, with implications for need and role of the prep schools.
- Forrest Bivens – Design for the Ideal System of Secondary Training for Future Church Workers, ignoring present historical traditions---a view from Parish Services.
- Ronald Kaiser – Design for the Ideal System of Secondary Training for Future Church Workers, ignoring present historical traditions---a view from outside the heartland of WELS.
- Wayne Borgwardt – The Missouri Synod without prep schools: a parallel experience?
- James Korthals – The Hybrid School (worker training and general college prep): the potential for dual role at one or more of our current prep schools. (A related concept: asking one or more area Lutheran high schools to become hybrid.) (Consider the experience of Mobridge. Also that some of our area Lutheran high schools may not have been born prematurely if this option had been available.)
- Harold Hagedorn – Pros and Cons in Rearranging (but not substantially changing) the Current System: number of schools and their locations. Consider the significance of history and tradition also in this connection.
- Ronald Meier – Some Specifics Regarding Cost Savings in Altering the Current Prep School System.
- John Kurth – The Case for Modifying the Prep School System for the sake of Kingdom Balance.

These papers were then presented at the commission's next meeting on September 28th. Obviously these papers can not be provided in full here but a short summary will be provided on many of them, usually by the author, himself.

⁴⁷John Graf *et al.*, *Minutes from Commission Meeting*, p. 4, June 1, 1988.

Schulz: “The first and most important conclusion is that the present perception of a Lutheran high school regarding their role in worker training definitely does not warrant their taking over this responsibility and closing the present preparatory schools.”

Plitzuweit: “The ideal role for the area Lutheran high schools is to complement a slimmed down synodical academy structure in supplying the needs for the worker training program of WELS.” When dealing with the question of the possibility of ALHS replacing the prep schools, he replied, “Quite frankly I feel that there are too many uncontrollable variables to even begin to answer the question. At the same time I do feel that the ALHS can provide a greater number of graduates for the worker training programs of our synod.” He also provides 8 ways to make this goal a reality.

Kaiser: He provides a very interesting hypothetical situation but probably not very cost effective nor good for retaining quantity. He was asked to think outside the box and he did explore some options.

Borgwardt: This report offers some very interesting points to consider. The sources that he talked to from the Missouri Synod reflected on the effect that having no prep schools had on their ministerial colleges and seminary. LCMS community Lutheran high schools did “not serve as an effective feeder for ministerial training.” They also noticed a “decline in the quality of academic work the seminaries are able to maintain...Most of those contacted indicated an appreciation for the training provided in a preparatory school focusing on worker training.”

Korthals: Reported on Northwestern Lutheran Academy of Mobridge, which actually served as a sort of hybrid school by providing worker-training and general education. “In the long run it seems to be a more reasonable approach to suggest that the

hybrid school would have to be an area Lutheran high school with one or more positions subsidized by the Synod.”

Hagedorn: This paper was to address “rearranging the current system (but not substantially changing).” It appears that the changes mentioned here are quite substantial—“combine our present colleges on New Ulm campus... combine MLPS and NPS and sell MLPS.” The pros and cons deal with those amalgamations.

Meier: This study provides the financial impact of three specific scenarios: 1) close MLPS 2) close MLS and 3) one prep campus; one college campus. “Savings are apparent in both the Synodical prep system and college system by combining and relocating schools... Decisions should not be based solely on dollars and cents, or solely on tradition, or solely on emotion. I pray that the Lord will guide the “decision makers” in making balanced decisions that will serve the constituency for the glory of God.”

Kurth: Kingdom balance says “look at our existing strategies, and modify any program in any division if the same goals can be reached more economically and thus enable us to expand our work of preaching and teaching the gospel in both strengthening and outreach ministries.”

The next meeting of the commission was set for October 27th. On October 7th, Graf sent out another letter to the commission members. He said that the purpose of this meeting would be “to come to a consensus on our opinions and recommendations. I anticipate writing the final document, but I will need your input to provide the foundation for that report.” There were some new assignments handed out to members in order to “flesh out those main points and address them in directed detail.” These are the assignments:

- Bivens – Keep the System—ALHS can't do it alone (we need the prep school system; it's doing a good job, but we need to streamline and support it).
- Plitzuweit – Disperse Responsibility for Providing Workers (equalize costs; cultivate sources; unified curricular approach) – ALHS and WT schools work together
– ALHS could do better with increased support in money and manpower.
- Hagedorn – Consolidation of prep schools (MLPS and NPS) at Watertown (rationale)
- Meier - Consolidation of prep schools (MLPS and NPS) at Watertown (costs, detailed)
Consolidation of DMLC and NWC at New Ulm (costs, less detailed)
Consider:
- A. retaining various numbers of MLPS students at Watertown
 - B. cost savings or expenditures of eliminating the MLPS campus
 - C. costs of moving NWC library books to New Ulm
 - D. moving costs for faculty families
 - E. costs of sales or lack of sales of MLPS properties
 - F. any other pertinent financial implications
- Valleskey – Consolidation of prep schools at Watertown which mandates college amalgamation elsewhere (New Ulm)
- Kurth – Present prep system to be cut back (better to say “modified”, “streamlined” or some other positive word) in interest of kingdom balance.

There was also an additional assignment for Korthals and Schulz. They were to interview Presidents Voss (Northwestern College) and Huebner (Dr. Martin Luther College). These were the two questions that they were to ask: “Do you see a combined NWC/DMLC as a possibility? List pros and cons. Do you think it is feasible for our ALHS and WT schools to work together more closely and effectively in preparing workers for ministry? What are the possibilities?”

The commission was reassembled on October 27th. The meeting began with the reading of a letter from Kurth, who was not able to attend the meeting. In his report, he cautioned the commission “against making recommendations that might affect any synodical education institutions beyond the preparatory schools.”⁴⁸

The reading of the two interviews of the college presidents followed. In the interview with President Voss, there is a similar remark, like Kurth's written response, about the commission's work going beyond prep schools.

President Voss prefaced his remarks by noting that this question is actually an offshoot of the commission's original charge. Although he has no problem with the question, the commission should be prepared to deal with the questions, "Is this the business of the committee? Aren't you well beyond your original assignment?"

Since Question #1 is similar to questions which have been raised in the past, it is necessary to consider this question from its historical background. Why did this idea fail in the past? It failed because it violated every tradition of the Synod. It also failed because such consolidation was viewed as centralization and this was resisted...An additional concern is the matter of long-range planning. This whole matter would have to be carefully considered in view of the Synod's needs in the next century. Short-term financial difficulties should not determine our future course of action. Will the needs of the Synod best be handled on a single campus forty years from now? What size student body will our Synod need to carry out its mission? Carefully planning, not a crisis reaction, continues to be necessary.⁴⁹

The commission noted a similarity in the "pros" of the two president's responses, which seems more prominent than the differences.⁵⁰

The meeting continued with the reading of the reports. These reports were much shorter in length and in the form of an expanded outline. A short summary will be provided once again.

Bivens: This report supplies many reasons for keeping the current prep school system in place because in general it is meeting the needs. It also gives a few reasons why the Area Lutheran high schools are not able to meet these needs alone (without prep system).

Plitzuweit: Discusses different ways that area Lutheran high schools can provide more workers. A couple of the key factors are curriculum and manpower.

⁴⁸ John Graf *et al.*, *Minutes from Commission Meeting*, p. 1, October 27, 1988.

⁴⁹ Robert Voss, "Report to Prep School Study Committee: Interview with President Robert Voss," interviewed by James Korthals (October 21, 1988).

⁵⁰ John Graf *et al.*, *Minutes from Commission Meeting*, p. 1, October 27, 1988.

Hagedorn: Focuses on amalgamating the prep schools in Watertown by listing a few positives from the move and also some reasons for leaving MLS where it is right now.

Meier: His outline dealt with the costs/savings of combining the prep schools of Wisconsin and the two colleges. His conclusion was an annual savings of \$800,000-\$1,025,000 by combining the two preps and the two colleges.

Valleskey: This paper dealt with the amalgamated colleges. The majority of this paper makes up 'Addendum B' of the final commission report (BoRaM, p. 32-34, 1989).

Following the reading and discussion of the papers, Chairman Graf asked the commission "to identify assumptions we are ready to make as a basis on which to build our report to the BWT. They came up with three assumptions."⁵¹

Assumption #1: We recognize the value of saving the preparatory system in some form.

Assumption #2: (revised) We recognize the need to streamline the preparatory school system and that this be accomplished by amalgamating MLPS and NPS on the Watertown campus which necessitates amalgamation of NWC and DMLC on the New Ulm campus.⁵²

Assumption #3: (revised) We recognize the need to supplement the present worker training system by implementing ways for the synod's constituency, in particular the area Lutheran high schools, to strengthen their resolve and capability for increasing the number of worker training students.

⁵¹ John Graf *et al.*, *Minutes from Commission Meeting*, p. 3, October 27, 1988.

⁵² There was a bit of resistance to accept this assumption at first because it was only carried by a majority vote. The vote was then made unanimous.

This basic outline of assumptions is expanded upon in the final commission report (BoRaM, p. 26-31).

The commission members decided to plan their next meeting for December 15th, when they will review the preliminary draft of the report prepared by Chairman Graf. It was also decided that the meeting with the Presidents of the prep schools to present the report would be January 3, 1989.⁵³

The meeting of December 15th was devoted to the revision of the preliminary draft of the commission's final report. "Graf led the commission members in discussing, revising, amending and general editing of his prepared report. The second draft copy will reflect the decisions of the commission."⁵⁴

The January 3rd meeting had the three prep school presidents present to offer their remarks concerning the commission's report. President Olsen started with his report. He addressed some dollar figures that were off and questioned the commission's intention to address the report to the synod. He touched on the kingdom balance issue and provided some recommendations to the commission.⁵⁵

President Lawrenz was next to address the commission. He asked some of the same concerns that Olsen had and also had a few new ones. He asked that this or a future study more clearly state the position MLS should have as an educational institution. Lawrenz also bemoaned the fact that in his opinion the prep schools have no coordinated recruitment policy. He closed by requesting caution be observed in the presentation of the attrition figures in the report.⁵⁶

⁵³ John Graf *et al.*, *Minutes from Commission Meeting*, p. 3, October 27, 1988.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1, December 15, 1988.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1, January 3, 1989.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

The last president to speak was Zell. He suggested the report recognize that additional music facilities will be needed if the Watertown campus is to become solely a prep school. He also expressed lack of confidence in the stress on kingdom balance.⁵⁷

The commission made a few minor revisions based on the presidents' responses. Then they decided on the date to meet with the BWT. It was set for January 31, 1989.

The January 31st plenary session was the last meeting of this prep school study commission. They had completed their work by providing three recommendations and asked to be discharged. The Preparatory School Study Commission of 1986-89 was done.

Observations concerning their study and what it accomplished

The Board for Worker Training and the Prep School Presidents were certainly valid in giving thanks to the Commission for its work. This group of twelve men spent many hours researching to come up with the final product. They spent many hours in meetings discussing the prep school system and ways that it can be improved. Their work on the Prep School System ought not be overlooked in the future for two reasons. 1) They provide remarkable support for keeping the prep schools as part of the Synod's worker training program. 2) They also set a path that future studies should be careful not to follow.

Reason #1 really accentuates the strength of this study. There was some noteworthy research done that supports the work and purpose of the prep schools in our synod. A purpose of this commission was to "evaluate the work of the prep schools." Even though the percentage of prep school students graduating from Wisconsin Lutheran

⁵⁷John Graf et al., *Minutes from Commission Meeting*, p. 1, January, 1989..

Seminary was down from decades ago, the prep schools still provided the largest percentage of candidates for the preaching ministry. They were also providing a substantial percentage of graduates for the teaching ministry as well. Yes, these numbers should not be all that surprising because that is the purpose of the prep schools to prepare young men and women for the public ministry. At least these percentages show that the prep system was still doing its job by preparing high percentages of students in these classes.

The paper written by Wayne Borgwardt that has to do with the comparison of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and their prep school system also provided some great support for keeping the prep school system. The issue of cutting some or even all prep schools was discussed at times by this commission. This was something that the Missouri Synod did and the result was pretty disastrous to their worker-training program.

The list of objectives that was formed from the questionnaire of Committee #1 also displayed many reasons to keep the prep school system because of the special curriculum that was offered and many other reasons. The other interesting result of the questionnaire, which did not make it into the final draft, was the variety of answers provided by the respondents addressing the question of the benefit a student provides to the Synod even though he or she does not become a pastor or teacher. "Laypersons who provide leadership in their congregations. Laity with personal experience and first-hand knowledge about the WELS worker training program, its curriculum, and facilities. Adults who have learned how to study and grow through the Word."⁵⁸ This is just a sample of the 13 different points.

⁵⁸ Forrest Bivens *et al.*, "A Study of Selected Respondents' Perceptions of Appropriate Objectives for WELS Preparatory Schools," p. 4, March 1, 1988.

The historical study of the commission also displayed the importance of the prep school system. Three of the four concerns from WELS early education history were still valid today. These concerns and comparisons were part of the final commission study.

Some of the papers prepared by the commission members also dealt with the role of the Area Lutheran High School and its impact on the prep school system. It was clear from the commission's research that the ALHS were not going to be able to replace the prep system, even though the cost difference is enticing. At best, the ALHS would improve on their increasing numbers but since they have a general Christian education program and not specific ministry program, it is unrealistic for the prep schools to close down and the ALHS pick up their numbers. The ALHS does not have the same purpose or objectives as the prep schools.

For the most part, the final report provided by the Prep School Study Commission covers the purpose and objectives set before them. However, there is one topic that kind of overshadows the report. This is where Reason #2, a caution to future studies to stay on the path chosen for them, comes in to play.

At the beginning of the Commission's report, it describes how this study is like planning and making an automobile trip. The commission had its trip planned out for them in great detail but as they neared the end they went off-road on some rough terrain. This fact was alluded to in the commission's meeting by Pastor Kurth and in an interview with President Voss of Northwestern College. The aftermath of this report also shows the confusion of the commission's trip.

WHEREAS 5) There are misunderstandings about the PSSC report and its relationship to the whole evaluation of the prep school system; and

WHEREAS 6) These misunderstandings are currently hindering

- recruitment at MLPS; and
- WHEREAS 7) An informed constituency is vital in making future decisions about the prep school system; therefore, be it
- Resolved, a) That we thank the PSSC for their evaluative tool; and be it Further
- Resolved, c) That the BWT explore in depth the issues raised in the PSSC report and their related implications; and be it further
- Resolved, f) That the BWT be directed, via The Northwestern Lutheran and/or other means of communication, to clarify the purpose of the PSSC report as an evaluative tool and to show how the PSSC report fits into the entire evaluation of the prep school system.⁵⁹

It is Recommendation 2 and Addendum B which cause the commission car to travel off course and produce the confusion described above.

The final report also seemed a bit too optimistic. All of the cutbacks and the amalgamations were going to save the Synod so much money. Saving money is always beneficial, especially when you flash some big numbers before people's eyes. However, there was not enough study done to ^{demonstrate?} promote those kind of savings.

The idea of amalgamating the two colleges on the New Ulm campus was not a new idea. It was brought up and discussed in 1978 but there were some problems.

The problem areas in the joint occupancy of the campus in New Ulm now are the gymnasium, the student union, and the music facilities (in addition to the off-campus student housing). How long the two schools on one campus at New Ulm would be able to share the academic areas and the library without hindering the program of one or the other is debatable. The kitchen and cafeteria at New Ulm are capable of providing for the needs of both schools, probably for some time to come... it appears that the two schools in New Ulm require almost immediate construction of dormitories, a gymnasium, a student union, and additional music facilities. Cafeteria and kitchen as well as library and classrooms also would be needed in the future.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Proceedings, pp. 72-73, 1989.

⁶⁰ Report to the Twelve Districts, pp. 13-14, 1978.

These problems could not have all been answered, if any, by the time the commission reported their idea for this same amalgamation on the same campus. The negative side is not really addressed in this report. When the individuals of the commission presented reports on amalgamation and other topics, they were asked to play the devil's advocate. This never came through in the final report. It was very positive but not very realistic!

Conclusion

The study of this commission has been very interesting and beneficial. It was amazing to see all the reports and discussion behind the scenes and how that translated into the final report of the commission. It also showed how important it is to provide a balanced presentation, that is stating both the positive and the negative angle. Leaving one side out can totally skew the report and cause confusion. It is also vital to keep the car on the road and reach the goals set before hand.

May the Lord continue to bless our preparatory schools and the decisions we make concerning them! To him be the glory both now and forevermore!

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