

Black Concerns Program Proposal  
submitted by  
The Black Concerns Committee

I. Background

- A. The LCA's Statement on Goals and Plans for Minority Ministry expresses the hope that seminaries develop programs which would sensitize white seminary students to the racial problems in church and society.
- B. The CLTEN BWSP has been disbanded and the responsibility for racial concerns has been lodged within the two seminaries. By action of the CLTEN Board at its November 1979 meeting, funds budgeted for the BWSP were allocated to the seminary.
- C. When our committee began its work it assumed that one of its tasks would be to find ways for effective recruiting of black students for enrollment at the seminary. After consultation with the Reverend Leopold Bernhardt on the possibilities and strategies of recruiting black students, the committee reached the conclusion that at least for the immediate future the primary problem lies not in recruiting black students, but in the effective placement of black graduates within the church. The committee believes that the responsibility for recruiting as well as for placement lies with the synodical committees and officials. Until the seminary can undergird its recruitment efforts of black students with the simultaneous assurance that calls to white or black congregations will actually be available upon graduation, the committee recommends to the seminary not to undertake special recruitment programs directed to black students. Moreover, located where it is, this seminary cannot offer black students those features that attract them to sister seminaries in Chicago or Philadelphia. However, through the Lutheran House of Studies and its relationship to Howard School of Religion, this seminary has the potential for developing a program that could be attractive to black students.

II. Financial Aid for black students

The committee recognizes that some black students may choose to study at our seminary being guided by synodical panels or by their own initiative. Therefore the committee recommends that the seminary allocate funds to assist black students who enroll in this institution so that their study here can be of maximal benefit to them.

III. Black Concerns Program

The committee urges the seminary to continue and even expand that part of the former CLTEN Black-White Studies Program which was intended to enable white future professional leaders of the church to deal with the persistence of various forms of personal and institutional racial prejudice. The committee makes these recommendations:

- A. As future faculty positions become open, prime consideration should be given to eligible black candidates and a careful search should be made to determine availability of black candidates. It is especially desirable that a black candidate be sought for a traditional classical theological discipline such as biblical or historical studies, etc.
- B. Until this is accomplished the seminary should make efforts to obtain part-time services of black theologians who could be employed especially

during the sabbatical leaves of professors.

- C. The present program of bringing black speakers to the campus for convocations should be continued. Martin Luther King Day should be observed by lectures and presentations. Special events such as commemorating Bishop Payne should be held. A broad spectrum of speakers should be engaged, including black urban ministers, important public officials and black college professors.
- D. The association with Howard School of Religion, established by our membership in the Washington Theological Consortium, should be cultivated.
- E. The Lutheran House of Studies in Washington should include black concerns in its regular program.
- F. Under the auspices of the Lutheran House of Studies, a variety of action/reflection courses should be developed in cooperation with black churches, black insitutions and agencies, to be offered during January terms or during either of the semesters.
- G. Students should be encouraged to take courses at Howard University and transportation should be arranged to enable students to attend classes or action/reflection courses in Washington, D.C. It is recommended that the administration study the feasibility of buying a fifteen-seat van for facilitating transportation. Perhaps some of the funds returned by CLTEN to this seminary could be used towards the purchase of such a vehicle.

#### IV. Graduation Requirement

The committee recommends that all candidates for the M.Div. degree, including Option B students, participate in a structured educational unit designed to deepen their awareness of racism in church and society and to give them insights into some aspects of the black experience, which would enable them to express the gospel more clearly within a racially pluralistic society. This graduation requirement could be met in a variety of ways.

- A. Field Education, Internship, CPE in black congregations or institutions
- B. Action/Reflection courses offered through the Lutheran House of Studies in Washington
- C. The development of a January Term course at Gettysburg
- D. Attendance at Howard University in selected courses
- E. While the prior examples contain forms of interaction with black persons, a feature which is highly desirable, it is recognized that such interaction may not always be possible due to Gettysburg Seminary's location and transportation or schedule difficulties. Therefore the committee recommends that some courses develop modules on the black experience (e.g., Course 2.402 Introduction to Religion in America; Course 2.304 Basic Problems of Christian Ethics; Course 3.812 The Urban Church). Students taking any one of these courses in fulfillment of the black concerns requirement shall devote a research project to a topic related to the black experience.

#### V. Other matters

- A. Each division shall seek ways of bringing the black emphasis into the required courses and to express this concern within the objectives and strategies stated in the course syllabi.
- B. In consultation with the librarian the committee will encourage the gradual expansion of library holdings in the area of black studies.
- C. In consultation with the chaplain students will be introduced to the rich resources of worship in the black church.
- D. Financing; the committee is to be the advocate of this program vis-a-vis the seminary and vis-a-vis the Lutheran Church in America.