Paul’s words to young pastor Timothy are as pointed and applicable to us today as when the Holy Spirit first inspired the apostle to write them.

And yet, there seems to be so much anxiety and confusion regarding God’s Word today. Questions regarding its nature and character continually confront the Church. That is why it is imperative that we continue to hold fast to the Spirit’s guidance given us to “Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you” (2 Tim. 1:13-14).

Luther is one of our great examples in this regard. When the medieval church had encumbered the witness of God’s Word with tradition and the magisterium, Luther helped the church recapture the centrality of the biblical witness. Sola Scriptura! “Scripture Alone!”

If it is not in accordance with My [God’s] Word, it is not the Christian Church. For what could induce the Christian Church to change and undermine the Word of its Lord? The true church would say: I cling to the Word of my dear Lord Christ. I insist on this. According to this Word I will make my decisions. I will not hold with those who do otherwise. This the Christian Church has always done in previous times. It condemned heresy and all false doctrine not according to its own opinion, as the pope and his people do, but according to the Scripture and the Word of Christ.1

The Lutheran Confessions maintained this witness, and Lutheran Orthodoxy sought faithfully to continue this confession.2 Yet even by the 1600s, people began questioning the Scriptures. Is the Bible the Word of God, or does it merely contain it? Can we be confident about the text that has come to us? Can we continue to uphold the truthfulness of the biblical narratives and teachings when we cannot scientifically reproduce or rationally explain the events the Scriptures describe or the doctrines it teaches? Yes! And, again, I say it. Yes!

This issue of For the Life of the World celebrates God’s faithfulness both in giving us His Word and maintaining it for the church’s confession and life. Dean Wenthe reminds us of the vital role that the Old Testament plays in the church today. “It is God’s Word for God’s people.” Charles Gieschen demonstrates that the Holy Spirit “is the ultimate author of these writings and that everything in them is the word of God.” Finally, Cameron MacKenzie tackles the challenge of choosing a translation and answers the pressing question, “Can we trust our Bibles?” His answer, and the answer of all here at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, is, “the answer is certainly yes. Our Lord promised to preserve His Word (Matt. 24:35), and He does not lie.”

What a good and faithful God we have! He has given us His Word, which testifies to the life and salvation we have in His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. So may we, with all the faithful, continue to sing with confidence about the gift of the Word, which is sure and certain.

I know my faith is founded
On Jesus Christ, my God and Lord;
And this my faith confessing,
Unmoved I stand on His sure Word.
Our reason cannot fathom
The truth of God profound;
Who trusts in human wisdom
Relies on shifting ground.
God’s Word is all sufficient,
It makes divinely sure;
And trusting in its wisdom,
My faith shall rest secure. (Lutheran Service Book, 587, v. 1)

In His service,

Lawrence R. Rast Jr.
President
Concordia Theological Seminary


**Features**

4 **The Story of the Old Testament**  
By Dean O. Wenthe  
The important and vital role of the Old Testament in God’s revelation remains for the church today. It is God’s word for God’s people. To understand Jesus rightly, it is crucial to know what it means to be “the second Adam, Abram’s seed, David’s seed, the Paschal Lamb, the Messiah, the Suffering Servant, the Son of Man” and to understand the nature of God’s redemptive plan.

7 **How Did We Get the New Testament?**  
By Charles A. Gieschen  
When we look at our leather-bound copy of the Bible, we may wonder how the 27 different writings that make up the New Testament ended up there. It is important to realize that we did not receive the New Testament through a simple process. An edited and bound copy of the New Testament did not drop to earth from God in heaven shortly after Jesus ascended.

10 **The Text of the Bible—Where Did It Come From?**  
By Cameron A. MacKenzie  
One can demonstrate the doctrines of our faith from modern Bibles as well as from the older versions. But, it’s still true that all Bibles are not created equal. So we need our seminaries to continue training men who can make sense out of what’s going on in textual criticism and translation theory. They can help the rest of us differentiate between “good” Bibles and “not so good” ones.

Also in this issue:

- What Does This Mean? ......................... p. 13
- Called to Serve ............................... p. 14
- In the Field .................................. p. 16
- Opening Service ............................. p. 20
- Faculty News ................................. p. 22
- Alumni ...................................... p. 25
- Profiles in Giving ............................. p. 26
- Military Project .............................. p. 28
- Seminary Guild ............................... p. 29
- Bible Study ................................. p. 30
- Calendar of Events ........................... p. 31
The first book of the Old Testament—historically called the Torah—was written by Moses and his circle around 1400 B.C. The content is a narrative description of events and revelation that stretches from creation (Genesis 1 and 2) to the death of Moses (1406 B.C.) just prior to Israel’s conquest and occupation of the land of Canaan.
The writing, formation and preservation of the Old Testament witness to God’s gracious engagement of rebellious creatures and creation itself. Through His chosen spokesmen and in their inspired words, the Triune God discloses who He is and who we are as the apex of His creative work—man and woman created in His image.

The first book of the Old Testament—historically called the Torah—was written by Moses and his circle around 1400 B.C. The content is a narrative description of events and revelation that stretches from creation (Genesis 1 and 2) to the death of Moses (1406 B.C.) just prior to Israel’s conquest and occupation of the land of Canaan. About 250 B.C., the Torah was translated into Greek in Alexandria, Egypt, and divided into five chapters or books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Subsequently, Greek, Latin and translations into other languages, including English, reflected this five-fold division.

In antiquity, the Torah stands out as a remarkable document. It far surpasses the epic texts of Egypt, Canaan and Mesopotamia in its length and detailed portrayals. Two aspects of the Torah particularly distinguish and separate it from other Near-Eastern literature. First, in contrast to the polytheism of the surrounding cultures, the Torah is clearly monotheistic, i.e., it portrays and teaches that there is but one God (Deut. 6:4). Secondly, God is revealed as the One who has chosen to redeem the world through the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15), the seed of Abram (Gen. 12:1-3), the seed of Isaac (Gen. 25:21-23), the seed of Jacob (Gen. 35:9-12) and the seed of Judah (Gen. 49:8-12), i.e., through the Messiah—Jesus of Nazareth.

Moses was the prophet par excellence. The root meaning of prophet (נביא) is spokesman. Moses embodied and defined the office: “And he (God) said, ‘Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles’” (Num. 12:6-8a).

A similar statement in Deuteronomy 34 underscores Moses’ pivotal role as the quintessential prophet, “And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face” (Deut. 34:10).

Acts 7:22 indicates that Moses “was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.” Such wisdom would include linguistic and literary knowledge. From Moses onward through Israel’s history, the prophets and their disciples would serve as God’s instruments by speaking and writing His words. The Torah-born people would hear God’s message through a thousand years of history that culminate in the message of Malachi (circa 430 B.C.).

While their historical contexts and situations varied significantly, the prophets interpreted reality from God’s perspective by delivering His words. The calls of Isaiah 6, Jeremiah 1 and Ezekiel 1-3 explicitly ground their message in God’s call. Throughout the major and minor prophets, key phrases claim a Divine content: “the word of the Lord came to me,” “an utterance of Yahweh” (יהוה יד הנביא). In addition to the Torah and the prophets (early collections include Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings among “the former prophets”), the Old Testament contains these writings: Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles. Each of these books discloses another aspect of God’s character and actions in varied and distinctive settings.
While there is sometimes clear indication of authorship (e.g., Baruch’s recording of Jeremiah’s words—Jer. 36:4; or David’s writing of Psalm 3), a number of Old Testament books do not clearly specify authorship.

Nonetheless, God’s people, through time, discerned and collected the books that they regarded as authoritative, i.e., as God’s Word. Traditional dating has associated the formation of the canon or collection of the Old Testament books into a corpus of texts with Ezra, the “second Moses” (Ezra 7:12), around 440 B.C. Historic Jewish thinking has similarly located the formation of the canon in the Great Synagogue with Ezra as its founder and first president. The Great Synagogue is referred to in 1 Maccabees 14:28—one of the apocryphal books from the Second Temple period.

It is clear that by the time of Jesus, the scope and content of the Old Testament was widely recognized. For example in Luke 24:44, Jesus said this to the disciples; “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Since the Psalms were the first “book” of the writings, this text reflects the early Jewish division of the canon into the Torah, Prophets and Writings. It is also striking that when the New Testament authors appeal to Scripture, they exclusively use Old Testament texts.

Another remarkable witness to God’s gracious care is the preservation of the Old Testament canon. Due to a variety of factors, the oldest complete Hebrew text of the Old Testament—Codex Leningradensis—is dated to the eighth century A.D. Scholars had speculated and suggested that numerous changes had occurred through editing and revision so that one could not be sure that our texts were those for which the prophets were responsible.

Then, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the 1950s created a sensation. For here were many texts that antedated Codex Leningradensis by as much as a thousand years. To the delight of many and the disappointment of others, the texts were virtually the same, i.e., none of the variants required any change in doctrine or practice. This remarkable continuity surprised those who thought the texts would be fluid or plastic.

The important and vital role of the Old Testament in God’s revelation remains for the church today. It is God’s word for God’s people. To understand Jesus rightly, it is crucial to know what it means to be “the second Adam, Abram’s seed, David’s seed, the Paschal Lamb, the Messiah, the Suffering Servant, the Son of Man” and to understand the nature of God’s redemptive plan. The wonder and beauty of God’s presence in Christ is expounded by the apostles with the vocabulary and semantic content of the Old Testament.

For further details on “The Story of the Old Testament” see:


When we look at our leather-bound copy of the Bible, we may wonder how the 27 different writings that make up the New Testament ended up there. It is important to realize that we did not receive the New Testament through a simple process. An edited and bound copy of the New Testament did not drop to earth from God in heaven shortly after Jesus ascended. Like the Old Testament Scriptures, the various writings that make up what we call “the New Testament” were written by several different authors in Greek in different situations and at different times. Unlike the Old Testament, however, the window in which New Testament writings were written is only a few decades (primarily A.D. 50-70), much narrower than the centuries that separate Moses from Malachi. Like the Old Testament, there is also some variety to the type of writings found in the New Testament, primarily historical writings (the four Gospels and Acts) and letters (the various Epistles) but also one visionary prophecy (Revelation).
An interesting aspect of the New Testament writings is that they are not organized chronologically according to when they were written, but the four historical books that record the life and ministry of Jesus are given pride of place. This is very understandable for two primary reasons. First, the story of Jesus, especially His atoning death and resurrection for the salvation of the world, is the foundation of all the rest of the writings of the New Testament. Second, these four books are especially closely linked to the Old Testament since Jesus is understood as a fulfillment of many of the promises in the Old Testament. A person who reads the four Gospels for the first time may also wonder why there are multiple Gospels, three of which have significant content similarities (Matthew, Mark and Luke are known as the synoptic Gospels). The fact that there are four accounts of Jesus’ earthly ministry testifies to the centrality of the life of Jesus in the preaching and teaching of the earliest Christians, for each of these Gospels reflects what was being preached and taught about Jesus in the years leading up to the actual writing of these Gospels by eyewitnesses (e.g., apostles Matthew and John) or by those who drew on eyewitness testimony (e.g., Mark and Luke).

Although the Acts of the Apostles is Luke’s sequel to his Gospel, it is positioned after the Gospels and before the Pauline Epistles because it helpfully introduces the history of early Christianity, especially the Gentile mission led by the Apostle Paul. Luke was concerned to tell not only the story of Jesus but also the continuation of that story in the early decades of Christianity. From the historical narrative of Acts, one can then understand more about when and where Paul wrote his many letters, which are organized in the New Testament more by length than chronology (e.g., 1-2 Thessalonians are among the earliest of Paul’s letters, but follow several later and longer letters).

Why are letters such a prominent part of the New Testament writings? The number of letters in the New Testament reflects the missionary nature of the earliest church. Vital apostolic preaching and teaching were given not only by the physical presence of apostles like Peter and Paul, but also by their written message in letters, often penned to address concerns that arose after the establishment of a new congregation and the departure of the apostle who founded the congregation.
and teaching were given not only by the physical presence of apostles like Peter and Paul, but also by their written message in letters, often penned to address concerns that arose after the establishment of a new congregation and the departure of the apostle who founded the congregation. In the many letters of the New Testament, we have windows into the lives of early Christians in specific congregations, giving us concrete examples of how the apostles preached and taught pastorally in specific contexts, especially how they proclaimed the Gospel of our Lord Jesus in the decades immediately following His death and resurrection.

There are skeptics who state that we cannot know what the text of the New Testament writings is because the original Greek text of the individual New Testament writings were copied repeatedly and were changed by copyists over time, and none of our many manuscripts can be dated to the first century (e.g., the infamous Bart Ehrman). The intentional and unintentional changes made by copyists do not mean that we have an unreliable text upon which to base our English translations. In fact, the abundance of manuscript evidence allows us to have a very reliable understanding of what the original reading of the text was and how changes came about. It is proper to say that we have more evidence for the Greek text of the New Testament than we have for any other first century A.D. writing!

Some are under the mistaken impression that there were many other authoritative writings in early Christianity, but that later Christians determined what was authoritative (i.e., in the canon of the New Testament) and what was not. Although Athanasius did list which books were considered to be the Scriptures of the New Testament in his 39th Paschal Letter (A.D. 367), he is simply reflecting what the church had already acknowledged by its faithful reading and study of these writings since the late first century, even though most of the writings were universally accepted (homologoumena; e.g., the four Gospels) while the authorship or authority of a few were questioned by some (antilegomena; e.g., the book of Revelation). Neither one individual nor a council decided what was in and what was out; the faithful of the church recognized these authentic and authoritative writings through their use of them from the time that they were first received. The reason that a canonical list of books became more important in the fourth century is because many falsely-attributed and heretical Gospels and other writings began to appear in the second and third centuries whose content contradicted the writings of the New Testament (e.g., the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Judas).

What is the role of the Holy Spirit in bringing the New Testament to us? Like with the Old Testament writers, we believe that the Holy Spirit inspired the individuals who wrote the books of the New Testament so that we can even say that the Holy Spirit is the ultimate author of these writings and that everything in them is the word of God (e.g., 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21). The apostles themselves recognized the authority of the message that they proclaimed and wrote as none other than “the word of God” (e.g., 1 Thess. 2:13). Yet, the Holy Spirit was active in this process long before the actual writing took place. The Holy Spirit was active and at work in the life and ministry of Jesus and also in the apostles’ preaching of Jesus’ deeds and words, testimony which culminated in their writings. The story of the New Testament is not a simple one. It reflects how God works in history through human beings to testify to His salvific words and deeds in Jesus Christ so that future generations, like us, can hear and see them anew!

The Rev. Dr. Charles A. Gieschen (Charles.Gieschen@ctsfw.edu) serves as professor of Exegetical Theology and academic dean at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

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Have you ever shopped for a Bible? It’s not as easy as you might think. Bibles differ greatly in format (large or small, green or gray, etc.) and in what accompanies the text (study Bible or plain text, evangelical or liberal, etc.). They even vary in the text itself. Do you want the New International Version, Revised Standard Version or King James Version? If you’re old enough, you may remember when each of these versions was current in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. And that list leaves out a ton of others like the Good News Bible or the Living Translation. Today we use the English Standard Version. Each of these Bibles is a unique translation of the original text, Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament.
Translations vary for a lot of reasons. Some are better, some worse in terms of care and quality. There are also questions of English style. If you’re aiming at those for whom English is a second language, you want simple words and short sentences. But lifelong English-speakers can handle complicated sentences and challenging vocabulary. There are also differences in translation philosophy. Do you want a translation that sounds like ordinary American English or one that retains the flavor of the original? For example, do you want to hear “and it came to pass” when the Bible is read or should we just leave it out because that’s not the way we talk?

There are also issues of theology. Some translators, for example, do not believe in direct Old Testament prophecy fulfilled in the New Testament. Their handling of such passages will be much different from those who believe the opposite. Others want to mute differences between men and women, so they translate fathers as parents, and brothers as brothers and sisters. So Christians have to be careful when they choose a translation. Not just any old Bible will do.

Here’s another wrinkle. We said that all Bibles are translations of the original text. But did you know that translators also debate what is the original Hebrew or Greek? In fact, at the time of the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church declared the Latin text of the Bible authentic Scripture, so that up until the middle of the 20th century, Catholic and Protestant Bibles were different on account of the text they were translating. In the Old Testament, that resulted in seven extra books—the so-called Apocrypha. In the New Testament, it meant some noteworthy differences in certain passages, like the ending to the Lord’s Prayer, “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” (Matt. 6:13). Protestants had it, Catholics did not.

But that particular fight is long gone and Catholics now translate the Hebrew and Greek just like the Protestants (although they still include the Apocrypha). But here’s another oddity—the ending to the Lord’s Prayer is now missing from modern Protestant Bibles! And that’s not the only passage. If you look at your Bible, every so often you’ll find a missing verse number. For example, John 5:4 (about the angel at the pool of Bethesda) and Acts 8:37 (the eunuch’s confession before baptism).

In view of all the challenges in determining the original text, to say nothing of translating it, the question arises, can we trust our Bibles? The answer is certainly yes. Our Lord Himself promised to preserve His Word (Matt. 24:35), and He does not lie. In fact, one can demonstrate the doctrines of our faith from modern Bibles as well as from the older versions.

Meanwhile, the New Revised Standard Version has added an extra paragraph at the end of 1 Samuel 10 about the cruelty of Nahash, king of the Ammonites. So what is going on here?

Just this, the original manuscripts of the Bible no longer exist. This means that when it comes to translating Romans—or any other book—we cannot just look at what St. Paul wrote. Instead, we have to figure it out on the basis of copies—multiple copies—of what he wrote in the first place. For hundreds of years (thousands in the case of parts of the Old Testament), the books of the Bible passed down from one generation of believers to the next by means of handwritten copies called manuscripts. These need to be sorted and analyzed as best we can in order to reconstruct the original.

In the 16th century, when Luther and his Protestant successors prepared the first wave of Bibles in the language of the people, their acquaintance with biblical manuscripts was limited. Erasmus, one of the greatest scholars of the day, based his first printed Greek New Testament on just a handful of manuscripts. Today, we have about 5,700 manuscripts to examine. The situation of the Old Testament is also very different from the 1500s, especially after the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls, beginning in 1947, which included 220 Old Testament manuscripts, the oldest available. The result has been that for the most part, modern translators translate different Greek and Hebrew texts from those used by Luther and others from that period.

So how do we make sense out of so much material in order to establish the original text—the one we want to translate? Over the centuries, scholars have created an entire science devoted to just such an enterprise, and not only for biblical materials. All works from antiquity for which there is more than one manuscript present the same sorts of problems. For any particular passage we have to look at the variations that occur in the manuscripts and decide which one is what the author wrote.

Textual critics, as they are called, have developed many criteria for making that decision. Some of these criteria deal with external factors, others with internal. The former consists of things like the number of manuscripts supporting a particular reading, the age of a manuscript and its quality (was it carefully copied in the first place?). The
It’s still true that all Bibles are not created equal. So we need our seminaries to continue training men who can make sense out of what’s going on in textual criticism and translation theory. They can help the rest of us differentiate between “good” Bibles and “not so good” ones.

latter looks for the reading that best accounts for the other readings in view of mistakes that a copyist was likely to have made through haste, weariness, uncertainty and the like. Such principles are not always easy to apply and so there is always debate about some readings. However, for most readings there has also developed a great deal of consensus and confidence.

Unfortunately, that may now be changing on account of the computer. Textual critics can now process huge amounts of evidence and establish relationships between manuscripts and readings that were previously impossible. This will probably result in Hebrew and Greek texts that are somewhat different from the ones in common use today.

In view of all the challenges in determining the original text, to say nothing of translating it, the question arises, can we trust our Bibles? The answer is certainly yes. Our Lord Himself promised to preserve His Word (Matt. 24:35), and He does not lie. In fact, one can demonstrate the doctrines of our faith from modern Bibles as well as from the older versions. But, it’s still true that all Bibles are not created equal.

So we need our seminaries to continue training men who can make sense out of what’s going on in textual criticism and translation theory. They can help the rest of us differentiate between “good” Bibles and “not so good” ones.

So when you go to buy your next Bible and, of course, you want a good one, I suggest you talk to your pastor first. He may not help you much in choosing a cover color, but he can point you to a reliable translation. 📚

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Holy Scriptures: Word and Spirit Together

By John T. Pless

The Bible is neither an artifact of the Spirit’s past work nor is it a place where, under proper conditions, the Spirit might be expected to drop in from time to time. The Holy Scriptures are as Oswald Bayer has described them, “the breathing place of the Holy Spirit.” The Spirit, who inspired the prophets and apostles to put God’s Word into human language, has guided and guarded their transmission in the course of human history preserving them for the sake of the Gospel. Because they are His Word, they alone are the rule and norm for Christian believing, confession and life.

We receive the Scriptures as the Word of God not because the church has made them such, but because they are the Word of the Triune God. One of the Lutheran Church Fathers of the 16th century, Martin Chemnitz, put it like this “…the church does not have such power, that it can make true writings out of false, false out of true, out of doubtful and uncertain, certain, canonical and legitimate” (Martin Chemnitz, Examination of the Council of Trent, p. 181). Or as John Webster has more recently stated “Scripture is not the word of the church; the church is the church of the Word” (John Webster, Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch, p. 44). The process of canonization was not so much the church deciding that some books are the Word of God and others are not, but rather confessing that these books inspired by the Spirit (see 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:16-21) are the Word of God.

While the Holy Scriptures stand in service of proclamation, they are not robbed of their normative character because they are written rather than oral. Hermann Sasse helpfully explains “All proclamation that is to be preserved must be written down. The written Word may lack the freshness of the oral proclamation, but its content remains the same, and it gains the advantage of remaining unchanged and being preserved for future generations” (Hermann Sasse, “Luther and the Word of God” in Accents in Luther’s Theology, edited by Heino Kadai, pp. 71-72).
One Step at a Time

By Jayne E. Sheafer

That time of devotion and reflection was just the beginning of his journey to the seminary. It would take six more years of preparation before he would enroll at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS), Fort Wayne. Along the way he had encouragement from many. “Pastor George Black, who officiated at our wedding, was the first strong influence towards my attending seminary. Rev. Marc Kappel and Rev. Ross Engel, the former and current pastors at St. Peter’s (Middleburg, Florida) graciously gave me opportunities to explore the tasks and responsibilities of the pastoral office. Rev. Bob Besalski, an interim pastor during a vacancy at...”
Interestingly enough, Bauch has found another place to build relationships and share the comfort of the Gospel. “One of my greatest opportunities has undoubtedly been the CTS basketball team’s outreach to Westville Correctional Facility. Besides granting the incarcerated relief from their monotony with a friendly game of hoops, we are given the opportunity to share Christ’s salvation with those who have, in more than one way, hit rock-bottom and are desperately seeking purpose and redemption for their lives.”

To gain more clarity on his decision, Bauch visited the CTS campus several times. His first visit was part of a Prayerfully Consider Campus Visit in 2008. “After spending that time on campus and worshiping with the seminary community, I realized CTS was a uniquely adept environment for pastoral formation. It would be four years before I enrolled, but that visit in 2008 was a defining moment for Christ leading me to attend CTS.”

With the decision made to attend CTS, Bauch knew beginning full-time graduate studies might be a challenge, so he chose to do some online preparation. “Taking pre-seminary Greek through the online program at CTS increased my interest in Scripture and was a convenient jumpstart into the curriculum before I enrolled full time, especially since I had been removed from academia for a number of years.”

The Bauchs moved from Jacksonville, Florida, to Fort Wayne in 2012 and Greg began his studies in September. He has adjusted well to being back in the world of academics and appreciates being the recipient of the well-rounded theological curriculum. In addition, both he and Amanda are grateful for the relationships they have developed through his fieldwork and vicarage at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, and with others throughout The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). “I think laypeople would be surprised to know the expanse of Christ’s kingdom to which we students are exposed. In addition to the seminary community, Amanda and I feel intimately connected with the Christian families at Emmanuel, where our son Gideon was baptized, with our home congregation and with the numerous adopting churches across the country that support us,” explains Bauch. “Christ’s familial unity in diversity is a constant reminder of His amazing work, a notion that cannot be lost on the seminary student.”

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It’s been an interesting journey for the Bauchs as they have made their way to CTS. He has gone from working as a financial analyst to full-time student and now to serving as a vicar for the 2014-15 academic year. When his studies at CTS are finished, he looks forward to being called to serve God’s people, keeping this goal in mind, “To serve our Lord and Savior as the man He has called me to be and to hear Him say, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant!’”

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It seems as just moments ago I completed my undergraduate degree and got married to a girl I met during high school at a Lutheran outing. I worked in business management and law enforcement. What seems as just moments later I am walking my daughter down the aisle for her wedding, quickly then throwing on my surplice and stole to conduct the service and now my son is a high school senior.

Days are fleeting.

Seven years ago I was called as pastor for a very small group of faithful Lutherans in Basehor, Kansas; a congregation that had suffered a split amid the controversies of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) 40 years ago. For over 30 years they had retired pastors serving them. They had saved money over time to provide for a full-time pastor (at least for two years) and requested a candidate from the seminary. I would have never dreamed a merger and new church construction would be moments away.

The Lord was providing growth to this congregation in my first year. Another small congregation eight miles away had an offer on their property for commercial development, and they were unsure of their future. It raised a question, why don’t we put all of our people and resources from these two

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*O LORD, make me know my end and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting I am.* Ps. 39:4

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*Pastor Weinkauf leads worship at Risen Savior Lutheran Church, Basehor, Kansas.*
small congregations together that we may do more for Lutheranism and outreach? Of course, it’s all the Lord’s work. After nine months of merger discussions, we merged in 2008 to form Risen Savior Lutheran Church, Basehor. We found new land and were determined to build the most architecturally theological, historical church we could afford. Now we have been at our new church location for nearly three years. Thanks be to God as He continues to grow our parish.

We are still a rural parish surrounded by more cows and fields than homes, just northwest of Kansas City. We have members coming in from 12 surrounding communities. This year we installed our first vicar, Cody Norton, sent to us from Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS), Fort Wayne. There are more people worshiping as confessional Lutherans than ever before in the 107 year history of the first Lutheran congregation in this area. Thanks be to God alone.

One of my monthly highlights is our congregation’s Lutheran Confessions discussion group. While portions of the Book of Concord are periodically used during the Sunday education hour, we hold a special discussion the last Sunday evening of each month. It began a few years ago with me as pastor inviting anyone to attend. I lead the readings and we pause much for discussion. Following our study of the Confessions, there is a time of social conversation and informal theological discussions accompanied by a good variety of beverages and food; a blessed time of enrichment in God’s Word, His doctrine and gathering of His people.

Amid so many wonderful blessings and numerous joys as a pastor here, a growing parish, new church building and facility, vicarage program, discussions for another building addition...there are still many struggles. Amid frustrations over people who leave, who may cause hurt to themselves and others, those who don’t join the congregation, those who aren’t regular in worship, those who do not heed scriptural counsel, time limits, the limitations of congregational resources, I am reminded of a quote I keep framed in my office from Hermann Sasse,

“The humble preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the simple Sacraments are the greatest things that can happen in the world. For in these things the hidden reign of Christ is consummated. He himself is present in these means of grace, and the bearer of the ministry of the church actually stands in the stead of Christ. That certainly puts an end to any clerical conceit. We are nothing. He is everything. And that means that the terrible sin of pessimism, which is the pastor’s greatest temptation, is finished with as well. It is nothing but doubt and unbelief, for Christ the Lord is just as present in his means of grace today as he was in the sixteenth or the first century. And ‘all authority in heaven and on earth’ [Matt. 28:18] is just as much his today as it was when he first spoke that promise to the apostles. And it remains so into all eternity. Do we still believe this?

We are unsure of what the future may hold as we trust the Lord to continue His good work among us. We pray that He will add new members among us and bless the work we are doing to establish a cemetery and plan an additional building project. Yes, our days are fleeting, but the Lord holds our future and it will be good for He is good. “I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done; I ponder the work of your hands” (Ps. 143:5).

Students Receive Awards from Concordia Theological Foundation

The Concordia Theological Foundation, Santa Rosa, California, presented student aid awards to several fourth-year students at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. The primary purpose of the Foundation is to assist in preparing men for the Office of the Holy Ministry by providing financial support to the seminary. The ten men receiving the awards on June 22, 2014, are listed with the name of the congregation to which they were recently called:

- **David Appold**, associate pastor, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Paducah, Kentucky
- **Tyrel Bramwell**, pastor, Our Savior/First Lutheran Churches, Chester/Greenville, California
- **David Buchs**, associate pastor, St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, Wheaton, Illinois
- **Michael Kearney**, pastor, St. Paul’s/St. Paul Ev. Lutheran Churches, Alden/Alden (Buckeye), Iowa
- **Adam Koontz**, pastor, Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church, Lititz, Pennsylvania
- **Jonathan Meyer**, associate pastor, Divine Savior Lutheran Church, Hartford, Wisconsin
- **Brandon Ross**, pastor, Faith Lutheran Church, Johnstown, Colorado
- **David Sutton**, pastor, Our Savior Lutheran Church and School, Marlette, Michigan
- **William Traphagen**, pastor, St. John’s/Trinity/St. John’s Lutheran Churches, Underwood/Rural Hazen/McCluskey, North Dakota
- **Aaron Vergin**, pastor, St. Mark’s Lutheran Church, West Bloomfield, Michigan

(1-r) **President Rast, David Appold and David Hawk at the presentation of student aid awards from the Concordia Theological Foundation**
Work Continues on Educational Debt Study

Our study concerning educational debt and the seminary student continues as we work on a video to inform the church-at-large about this ongoing challenge. The video will include perspectives from a recent graduate, current students and members of the seminary administration. “We find ourselves in a truly unique set of circumstances today. We haven’t faced something like this before as a church body. When we were founded in the nineteenth century, it all seemed so easy. Support your congregation, which supported the district, which supported the Synod, which funded the seminaries and everybody could attend. The direct cost to the students was minimal and everything seemed to fit perfectly and in order,” says Concordia Theological Seminary President Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr. “Today we live in a little bit different situation. We find that we’re in this kind of perfect storm of increasing debt for the student, increasing costs for the institution and fewer resources for the Synod. That tension that we all then live in must be addressed, and finding the right answer is the challenge.”

The video is scheduled to be ready for release to districts, congregations and interested individuals in January 2015. There will also be reports prepared to give an in-depth look at how educational debt is affecting current students, graduates and, in turn, their service in the parish. These reports will be available on the seminary website, www.ctsfw.edu, and we will post updates in future issues of For the Life of the World.

An introduction to this study, which is funded by a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., was published in the June 2014 issue of For the Life of the World and can be accessed at www.ctsfw.edu/ForTheLifeOfTheWorld. Printed copies may be requested by emailing PublicRelations@ctsfw.edu or phoning 260-452-2250.
On Sunday, September 7, 2014, the Concordia Theological Seminary community celebrated the beginning of our 169th Academic Year. There are students on campus from all regions of the United States, as well as Brazil, China, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Nigeria, South Korea, South Africa, Spain, Taiwan, Tanzania and Uganda. In addition to those in the Master of Divinity, Master of Arts–Deaconess Studies and Specific Ministry Pastor Programs, many will be pursuing the Master of Sacred Theology, Doctor of Ministry or Doctor of Philosophy degree. “As we begin a new academic year, we especially rejoice that the Holy Spirit continues to draw faithful men and women, often through the encouragement of their pastors and the support of their home congregations, into our many programs. The faculty eagerly looks forward to the adventure of teaching theology that is centered on Christ crucified, risen and returning for the salvation of the world,” commented CTS Academic Dean Rev. Dr. Charles Gieschen.

Top: 2014 incoming class of pastoral ministry students.
Bottom: 2014 incoming class of residential deaconess students, with President Rast and Dr. James Bushur, director of Deaconess Studies.
This is an exciting time for students as they delve into new classes, prepare for fieldwork and begin to ponder how they will accomplish all that needs to be done. To put things in perspective, CTS President Dr. Lawrence Rast Jr. offered these words of advice, “In childlike faith turn to the Lord for strength, He is always welcoming. Second, make sure you continue to come to chapel to hear God’s Word and receive His gifts. And third, know that through all your challenges the Lord is preparing you for His service, for you are His and He has great plans for you.”

Several new staff members were installed by the Rev. Daniel May, president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod’s Indiana District:

- Rev. Dr. Robert Bennett (executive director of the Luther Academy), international missions specialist
- Rev. Mark DeLassus, advancement officer
- Mr. Matthew Machemer, associate kantor
- Rev. Roger Peters, assistant to the director of Library and Information Services

“We are most pleased to welcome these talented individuals to the seminary community. We are grateful for the gifts they bring and the contributions they will make as we serve together to form servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost and care for all,” said Rast.

1. Dr. Arthur Just talks with students before the Opening Service.
2. (l-r) Installation of Dr. Robert Bennett, Rev. Mark DeLassus, Rev. Roger Peters by LCMS Indiana District President Rev. Daniel May.
3. Installation of Associate Kantor Matthew Machemer by President May.
4. Dr. Detlev Schulz taking photos of the day’s celebration.
5. Gathering of the CTS community, family and friends for the opening of the 169th Academic Year.
Faculty News

During their recent meeting, the Board of Regents of Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS), Fort Wayne, advanced one faculty member in rank and granted tenure to three others. “We rejoice that the faithful service of these valued colleagues on the faculty has been recognized by our Board of Regents. We hope these actions will encourage these brothers as they continue their exemplary teaching and service to Christ here at CTS,” said Dr. Charles A. Gieschen, CTS academic dean.

The Rev. Dr. James G. Bushur was granted tenure. He joined the CTS faculty in the fall of 2006 and serves as assistant professor of Historical Theology and director of Deaconess Studies. He received his B.A. in Biblical Literature from Taylor University, Upland, Indiana (1989), M.Div. (1993) and S.T.M. (Thesis: “The Flesh of Christ and the Economy of Salvation in the Teaching of St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons,” 1998) from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Durham, UK. Bushur specializes in patristics and is a member of the North American Patristics Society.

The Rev. Dr. Walter A. Maier III was advanced in rank from associate professor to professor. Maier joined the Exegetical Department at CTS in November 1989 and specializes in Hebrew and Old Testament studies. His doctoral dissertation on Asherah, a Canaanite goddess, was published in 1986 in the Harvard Semitic Monographs series. He has contributed a number of articles to several books, including the Anchor Bible Dictionary; served as translation consultant and on the advisory council for the English Standard Version (ESV) Bible; was the study note contributor for the Book of Nahum for the ESV Study Bible; was a consultant for 1 and 2 Kings for The Lutheran Study Bible; and is currently completing the Concordia Commentary on 1 Kings. Maier is also one of the regular preachers on the syndicated television program Worship for Shut-Ins.

The Rev. Dr. John G. Nordling was granted tenure on the faculty. Nordling joined the CTS faculty in 2006 as an associate professor of Exegetical Theology. He has developed “Lutheranism & the Classics,” a biennial conference wherein pastors, classicists and educators consider how the classical languages have influenced Lutheranism in the past, and how Greek and Latin are poised to enrich church, academy and culture in the future. He has written Philemon for the Concordia Commentary Series and Religion and Resistance in Early Judaism: Greek Readings in 1 Maccabees and Josephas for the Concordia Peer Reviewed Series.

The Rev. Prof. John T. Pless was also granted tenure on the faculty. He joined the seminary faculty in 2000 as an assistant professor of Pastoral Ministry and Missions and director of Field Education. Pless is the author of Handling the Word of Truth: Law and Gospel in the Church Today, A Small Catechism on Human Life, Word: God Speaks to Us, Confession: God Gives Us Truth, Martin Luther: Preacher of the Cross—A Study in Luther’s Pastoral Theology and two chapters in Lutheran Worship History and Practice. With Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), he is editor of Women Pastors? The Ordination of Women in Biblical Lutheran Perspective. He served on the Agenda Committee for the Lutheran Service Book. He is book review editor for Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology and a member of the editorial council of Lutheran Quarterly.

Dr. Carl Fickenscher
October 26: Pittsburgh Area Reformation Service, First Trinity Lutheran Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Dr. Charles Gieschen
November 2: 25th Anniversary Service, Trinity Lutheran Church, Tryon, North Carolina

Prof. John Pless
October 26: Circuit Reformation Service, Grace Lutheran Church, Naples, Florida

Pres. Lawrence Rast
October 5: Homecoming Celebration, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Catawba, North Carolina

October 26: Sacramento Valley Lutheran Laymen’s League Reformation Service, Town and Country Lutheran Church, Sacramento, California

November 2: Denver Area Reformation Festival, Our Father Lutheran Church, Centennial, Colorado

For the Life of the World
Kevin J. Hildebrand, formerly associate kantor at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, began his service as kantor, on July 1. The change comes in response to the retirement of Kantor Richard C. Resch at the end of the 2013–2014 academic year. “It is a particularly humbling blessing to assume the office of seminary kantor, following Richard Resch’s long and distinctive service. As with any change of personnel, there will surely be some changes that accompany the transition,” says Hildebrand. “However, one thing that will not change is the tireless and principled dedication to confessing the faith in the church’s song that Concordia Theological Seminary has for so long modeled, taught and encouraged in no small part to Kantor Resch’s leadership and example.”

Hildebrand, who has served at CTS since 2002, will serve as director of the Seminary Kantorei and principal director of the Schola Cantorum. Hildebrand is widely known for his hymn playing and compositions, which have been published extensively by Concordia Publishing House (CPH) and MorningStar Music Publishers. He is the editor of *Hymn Prelude Library* from CPH, based upon the hymn tunes of the *Lutheran Service Book* (*LSB*).

Matthew A. Machemer began serving as associate kantor at CTS at the end of July. “It is such a blessing to step into an already well-established tradition of church music laid by Kantors Resch and Hildebrand and to be given the opportunity to model faithful and beautiful worship for the seminary community in years to come. I am excited to take up this work both at the seminary and in the church-at-large,” says Machemer. “As Lutherans, we are heirs of a wonderfully rich musical tradition. This tradition is one that beautifully houses the means of grace within a worship setting that is christological, liturgical and corporate. I pray that, by God’s grace, the seminary would continue to be a place where beautiful church music is faithfully modeled, and that its students would be prepared to take the gifts of Christ crucified to their congregations and the church-at-large.”

Machemer is a 2007 music education graduate of Concordia University Chicago and most recently served as kantor of Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hartland, Michigan. He has also served parishes and schools elsewhere in Michigan and in Illinois. Machemer has numerous music publications to his name, in addition to several contributions to the *Hymn Prelude Library*.

“The tradition of excellent, Lutheran music for worship is strong at CTS,” said CTS President Dr. Lawrence R. Rast Jr. “I am confident that the leadership and talents of Kantors Hildebrand and Machemer will be an integral part of student formation at the seminary and an excellent educational resource for church workers and laypeople throughout The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.”
We’re all aware that the Church Year has a major impact on the work of pastors, musicians and congregations as they prepare services from week to week. Indeed, its influence on our planning is perhaps so pervasive that we simply take it for granted. The conference will begin with a contemplation of time and how the Church Year beautifully orders our time according to God’s saving purposes. In addition, there will be many practical considerations, both at the larger level of planning out the entire year—from the long green season to the various feasts and festivals—and in the details of how the Church Year can renew the vigor of our congregations.

- The Same Yesterday, Today and Forever: Jesus as Timekeeper—William C. Weinrich
- Let the Church Year Be Your Guide—Paul J. Grime
- Preventing Perfunctory Propers
- Then Let Us Keep the Festival: That Christ Be Manifest in His Saints—D. Richard Stuckwisch
- Back to the Future—The Good Shepherd Institute after 15 Years

Registration & Information
Deadline for registration is October 28, 2014.
To register online, visit www.ctsfw.edu/GSI.
For more information, please email GSI@ctsfw.edu or call 260-452-2224.

Advent Preaching Workshop

**Time and Advent: As It Was in the Beginning, Is Now and Ever Shall Be**

Very often when speaking of Advent, we hear of the three “comings”: Christ came in the flesh at the fullness of time in Bethlehem, He comes now through His divinely appointed means of Word and Sacrament and He will come again in glory. In this workshop, Professor Pulse will examine the concept of time in the season of Advent, exploring the various challenges that the pastor faces in his task of weaving past, present and future into his Advent preaching.

**November 4, 2014**
1:30-5:00 p.m. and 7:00-8:30 p.m.

**Presenter**
Professor Jeffrey H. Pulse

**Registration & Information**
Cost for the workshop is $40.00. You may register online at www.ctsfw.edu/GSI or by phoning 260-452-2224. You may also email GSI@ctsfw.edu for additional information.
If God’s Word did not contain or possess eternal quality and lasting character, then there would be little reason for a pastor to share and proclaim its riches every Lord’s Day. If you are like me, the primary reason I chose to pursue the pastoral vocation over others, and even attend CTS as a student, was the opportunity to influence eternally and positively the lives of others as they grow in Christ. Dr. Luther adds in light of the verse above, “…the Word of Christ is preached until now and will endure in the church always” (Luther’s Works, Vol. 11, p. 477).

God’s Word emphatically carries everlasting worth, a value which remains today and throughout all eternity. However, too often that is easily forgotten amid the distractions of life in a sinful world. As you reflect upon the ages and stages of your own life and the lasting significance of God’s Word, who was (and perhaps still is) most instrumental in enlightening and encouraging you? Who lovingly listened to you and graciously apportioned Scripture so that your faith was cultivated and developed? Perhaps it was your father, mother, a grandparent, a family relative, a pastor or a teacher. The point is that someone planted that Word within you, and others still water it again and again (1 Cor. 3:8). No matter how you received such a potent and extraordinary Word, the Holy Spirit, by His almighty power, has worked a great work within you so that this saving Word may go now to others. When you were baptized and confirmed, your own pastor led and instructed you. Later in college and seminary other pastors and individuals surrounded you with varied gifts and personalities who still impact your life and ministry.

Today, this good and gracious work of God’s moving Word flows from you to others and throughout the world, despite our enemies’ continual threats to overthrow the value or integrity of the Scriptures. That saving work, under the power of the Holy Spirit, still proceeds even when many people wish to reject God’s Word, its teachings and yes, even you, in favor of a cultural agenda. Fads and trends will certainly come and go, but God’s Word is unchanging and Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8).

May God bless you, pastor, as you continue to preach Christ crucified and risen again. God bless you, people of God, as you continue to be a light on a hill which cannot be hidden (Matt. 5:14). May God bless our Synod and CTS that we may continue to be a vital and necessary resource within the church to bring the saving light and life of Christ to many lives.

The Rev. Timothy R. Puls (Timothy.Puls@ctsfw.edu) serves as director of Alumni and Church Relations at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
In 1817, King Frederick William III of Prussia ordered the Lutheran and Reformed churches in his territory to unite, forming the Evangelical Church of the Prussian Union. As one might imagine, this forced union did not sit well with all involved. Many “Old Lutherans” chose to form their own churches, and others left for Australia and America seeking religious freedom and fidelity to the inspired Word of God.

After a meeting on March 23, 1854, one such group planning to immigrate to America called their first pastor, John Kilian, formed a new congregation and began making plans for a trip to Texas. The trip would not be an easy one. First was the challenge of securing a single ship large enough to transport the whole congregation together. That was followed by a cholera outbreak that quarantined the ship in Ireland. After the disease ran its cycle, the ship, the Ben Nevis, continued its voyage to America, landing in Galveston, Texas, in December of 1854. Among the group of stalwart Lutherans aboard the Ben Nevis that day were the great-great-grandparents of Walter and Gladys Moerbe of La Pryor, Texas. Walter and Gladys are faithful members of Trinity Lutheran Church in Uvalde, Texas, and today are great-great-grandparents themselves.

I first met Walter and Gladys in 2013 while visiting supporters of Concordia Theological Seminary in southwest Texas. Their story is the story of “Old Lutherans” who are committed to their faith, their church and their family. As descendants of the first Wendish immigrants, Walter and Gladys were raised along the original trail that began in Galveston. Their ancestors first established themselves in Lee County, the area that today is Serbin, Texas.

In the early 1940s, both Walter and Gladys were living in “the Concordia Community” in Austin, Texas, where they attended Concordia Austin.
Boarding School, a Lutheran high school and the forerunner to what is today Concordia University Texas. Before meeting his future wife, Walter became close friends with Walter Rast and Lawrence Rast Sr. Walter Rast is the uncle of and Lawrence the father of current Concordia Theological Seminary President, Dr. Lawrence Rast Jr. Both Walter Rast and Lawrence Sr. would eventually participate in Walter Moerbe’s wedding to Gladys on August 7, 1949. Walter served as Best Man and Lawrence played the organ.

In 1950, the southwest was hit with a terrible drought that made it impossible to make a living off of the land, so Walter took a job working production for a chemical company in Bishop, Texas, and during that time he and Gladys were blessed with four boys. Walter has said that it was 22 years of shift work that allowed him and Gladys to provide for the boys all the way through college.

Once the boys had been taken care of, the family moved to southwest Texas where they bought a farm. “Life is never easy,” Walter said as he told me that in the first year on the farm his crops were destroyed by hail. When an opportunity to work off the farm presented itself, Walter never missed a beat as he continued to provide for his loved ones. “The good Lord always provides!” Walter told me as he held back tears of genuine Christian joy. He also offered me words of wisdom that he always shared with his boys, “If you find yourself at the crossroads of life and don’t know which way to go, ask the Lord, then go, trust the Lord and never look back.”

In December of 2002, after attending a midweek Advent service at Trinity, the Moerbes found themselves at their own crossroad when they were told of the death of their son Stanley who was killed tragically in a farming accident. “What are we going to do, and what about the two grandchildren?” Gladys recalled asking her husband. “Trust in the good Lord,” was his reply.

As the two reflected upon the loss of their son, Walter told me the story of how his son always out-competed his brothers in 4-H competition. Be it steers or hogs, he always took First Place and now he is in first place again, being the first of the boys to be in Heaven with our Lord. As one can imagine, the loss of a loved one can be very difficult even for a Christian family but Gladys told me “Our faith is what got us through.” “Take the Lord at His Word” Walter jumped in. “The Lord has never lied yet, and He never will—our son is in Heaven!”

Walter and Gladys spent several years farming before retiring in 1993. They have always been faithful supporters of the church, whether it was their local congregation or other Christian causes.

In 1983, Walter and Gladys were studying the Holy Scriptures and had come across God’s teaching on tithing, when Walter remembered reading that Jesus had said “Trust Me and see.” So the two decided that day to commit 10% of all they had to the Church and Her mission and they have never looked back. “You can never out give the Lord,” is what Walter told me over and over again. It seems to be a pretty good model for life.

On a recent trip to Texas, I had the opportunity to take President Lawrence Rast Jr. with me to visit the Moerbes. What a delight to hear he and the Moerbes recap their lives and connect the “Old Lutheran” dots! When Dr. Rast asked them why they chose to support CTS, they responded “We want to help form pastors who will teach the truth about our Lord to our grandchildren, great-grandchildren and beyond.”

Walter and Gladys continue to support the mission of Concordia Theological Seminary with their generous gifts and are currently working with our Advancement staff to make sure their family’s estate continues to provide the future needs of the Church.

The Rev. Jon D. Scicluna
(Jon.Scicluna@ctsfw.edu) serves as vice president for Resource Development at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
Chaplain Major James D. Buckman sent this letter of thanksgiving for your response to his plea for the urgent need for Lutheran Service Books and Luther’s Small Catechisms. We join him with heartfelt thanks to all who donated. To God be the glory; great things He has done.

“As the Wing Chaplain for the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing (AEW) at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, I supervise the largest Chapel staff in the Area of Responsibility (AOR). Our base has over 10,000 souls which we are responsible for; in addition, we are called upon to deploy Chaplain teams wherever we have troops. As I write this article, the words of my last phone call are still in my mind, ‘Chaplain? This is the Command Post, we have three human remains coming in at 1845. There will be escorts.’

‘Chaplains of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) serve under the authority of our church body’s Ministry to the Armed Forces. Our Synod decided long ago that our troops ‘shall not march alone’; we put our Ministry to the Armed Forces under our Mission Board because LCMS Chaplains are supposed to take advantage of the opportunities we have to share the Gospel wherever God has prepared the opportunity.

‘My space is short, so let me get to the point. LCMS Chaplains must be supplied with LCMS resources for worship and discipleship. We must supply our Chapel teams with hardbound copies of the Lutheran Service Book (LSB) and Luther’s Small Catechism. We should give our Chaplains–stateside or deployed–an overabundance of these two critical resources.

‘Luther’s Small Catechism is a great counseling resource. In a typical day I counsel several deployed troops. Whenever possible, after prayer and some investigative discussion to determine which Commandment best applies, I then introduce them to the catechism like this, ‘Here is a book that has both 300 questions about Christianity and 1,000 quotes from Scripture to answer these questions. We have a lot of questions in life; they are not all in this book, but enough are. Let’s turn to page…’

‘I always ask the troop to do the reading; I will reflect as appropriate. Then after the Commandments, etc., I will go to ‘Christ’s Work of Redemption’ and ask them to start reading with Question #133. As they leave, I encourage them to take their copy of the catechism with them along with a copy for their spouse. I strongly suggest they mail this home to their wife and that they start using it together on FaceTime. If they have children, I give them one copy for each of their children; this has never been turned down.

“Deaconess Carolyn Brinkley and the Concordia Theological Seminary Military Project have been the source of hundreds of LSBs and catechisms. Deaconess Brinkley is equipping Chaplains for the fight. You need to support her however God leads you. I have shared copies of LSB and the catechism with my boss (who is not LCMS), and he asked if we could get more for the other Chapels; we are now shipping LSBs and catechisms to all Chapels in the AOR that request it, and my boss put out an email inviting the requests to be made. Non LCMS Chaplains are gladly using our LSB and the catechism.

“God has prepared good works in advance…it is time to go to work.”

Chaplain, Maj James D. Buckman
Wing Chaplain
USAF AFCENT 379 AEW/HC
Victory Chapel

How can you help?
Please keep our chaplains and all military personnel in the Armed Forces in your prayers. They are God’s instruments of protection. For more information on service projects or how to start a military project, please email MilitaryProject@ctsfw.edu or call 260-452-2140.

Monetary donations can be mailed to:
Concordia Theological Seminary
Attn.: Military Project
6600 N. Clinton St.
Fort Wayne, IN 46825-4996

Deaconess Carolyn S. Brinkley (Military.Project@ctsfw.edu) serves as coordinator of the Military Project at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
From Your Seminary Guild
By Joyce West

How the Bible came to us is best described by learned theologians. It is that the Bible did come to us that is most important and receiving the treasures in it—a gift from the Holy Spirit.

Using the Words of the Bible directs our lives. The directions from Jesus in Matthew 28:19 are “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Using these directions, Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS) is training students to do this work.

The Seminary Guild is in place to aid and encourage the students on their journey. The dictionary says that a guild is an association for mutual aid and promotion of common interests. Following the directions from the Bible in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing,” the Concordia Theological Seminary Guild offers monetary support for seminary needs and projects to encourage and sustain the students in the common interest of promoting the spreading of the Word of the Bible. New project ideas are presented to the membership as requests and needs arise.

The Guild also nurtures its members with fellowship and enlightenment from the Word at the regular meetings, held on the second Tuesday of September, October, November, December, February, March and April.

Of special note is the meeting in October, Donation Day. On that day, October 14, special emphasis is placed on donations to the Food and Clothing Co-op, which is used by seminary students and their families.

To date, the schedule for 2014-15 includes CTS Prof. Jeffrey Pulse speaking about the inner city work at Shepherd of the City, Fort Wayne; Cynthia Kahn speaking at Donation Day about People of the Book Lutheran Outreach (POBLO); a military retiree telling of his experiences; and at the Christmas meeting, the Guild will hear the Kantorei sing and a cookie exchange is being planned.

As the 2014-15 seminary classes begin, I quote Philippians 1:9-10: “And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ.”

Mrs. Joyce West (joycew43@gmail.com) serves as president of the Concordia Theological Seminary Guild, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
From the Word

How the Bible Came to Us

By Lance A. O’Donnell

The Bible is a sacred book—the sacred book. Like other sacred books in modern form, it is bound, respected and read from in worship. However, under the cover, the Holy Bible is unlike the sacred books of other world religions. Islam’s Qur’an, for example, is believed by Muslims to be the direct revelation of Allah through an otherwise illiterate man. Mormonism’s Book of Mormon is supposedly the transcription of golden tablets from God discovered in western New York state and transcribed by Joseph Smith. The Holy Bible, however, reflects the incarnational character of the LORD.

The Bible’s Self-Understanding

Let’s look to the Bible itself and discover its “self-understanding.” Please read and make note of:

1. 2 Timothy 3:16 _________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________

2. 2 Peter 1:21 _________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________

3. 2 Peter 3:15-16 _________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________

In these three passages we summarize the Bible’s use and origin and—dare we say—peculiarity. In 2 Peter 3:15-16 I hope you noticed St. Peter’s understanding of St. Paul’s writings. Unlike Qur’an, which is understood in Islam as Allah simply speaking through the prophet, in Christianity we understand that the LORD speaks through the writer, but the writer’s personality and culture are used by God, not abrogated.

Jesus’ Witness to the Old Testament

If we wish to understand what the Bible is and how it is to be understood, we must consider Jesus’ own reflection and teaching. Please read and make note of:

   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________

5. John 5:39 ______________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________

6. John 10:31-36 __________________________________
   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________

   ______________________________________________
   ______________________________________________

In Luke 24:44 note who Jesus said the Scriptures are about. Notice, too, that Jesus used a contemporary division of what we call the Old Testament: the Law (the books written by Moses), the Psalms (the hymnbook of the Old Testament) and the Prophets (meaning all the rest of the books). Again, in John 5:39 Jesus makes clear who the whole of the Old Testament is about. The other two passages (John 10:31-36 and Luke 11:51/Matt. 23:35) may seem obscure, but they refer to what Jesus says the Old Testament is about, and Jesus also affirms the authority of these writings, whether Genesis (blood of Abel in Genesis 4) or 2 Chronicles (blood of Zechariah in 2 Chronicles 24). In other words, whether Old Testament or New, the Bible is a book about JESUS.

This is a key issue of faithfulness in our day, as it has been throughout history. Whether in the third century or the 18th or the 21st, there have always been those who wanted to make the Bible fit their own ideas. There have always been those who used a buffet approach, picking and choosing what they wanted to believe, but in those obscure passage referenced above Jesus made it clear: the Scripture cannot be broken! The Scripture finds its fulfillment—and the hope of the whole world—in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the Savior of the world.

Will you follow Christ and His adherence to Scripture even when it does not seem to fit your understanding, or will you go your own way as the Pharisees and so many others did?
Write!

Finally, consider just a couple examples of God’s call to write (or references thereto). Read and make note of:

8. Jeremiah 30:2 __________________________________________
    __________________________________________________
    __________________________________________________

9. Revelation 1:10-11 ________________________________________
    ______________________________________________________
    ______________________________________________________

10. John 17:20 _____________________________________________
    ______________________________________________________
    ______________________________________________________

11. Ephesians 2:19-20 ______________________________________
    ______________________________________________________
    ______________________________________________________

When God called to His chosen writers to “Write!”, they did. When Jesus called the Apostles to “preach the Word,” they did. When God inspired Paul and the other New Testament writers to write, they did, and these writings were received and attested to by the others (remember Peter in 2 Peter 3:15-16) as the Word of God.

The church is founded upon the “prophetic and apostolic Word,” that is, the Old and New Testaments. These are not entirely ethereal documents. They are history, poetry, apocalypses and letters. They were not written on golden plates in the heavens; rather, they were written on vellum and tablets of stone, parchments and papyrus. It is a mystery and a glory of God. “But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong” (1 Cor. 1:27).

Conclusion

There is a lot more to how we received our Bible than what we have pondered here. There is the magnificent history of its preservation on various materials, the early controversies over spurious post-Apostolic writings, the transmission of the texts over time and the process of translation among others.

Ultimately, receiving the Bible as the Word of God is a matter of faith, for “without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11:6). But, oh how important that Word of and for faith is! Read Rom. 10:5-17 and you’ll see why. In so doing, you’ll also be reminded of why Concordia Theological Seminary exists. 📜

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