

2014

## A Special Kinship

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### Recommended Citation

Buchholz, Kurt (2014) "A Special Kinship," *Concordia Journal*: Vol. 40: No. 3, Article 2.

Available at: <http://scholar.csl.edu/cj/vol40/iss3/2>

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## A Special Kinship

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You will not find a document anywhere that outlines a formal partnership between Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and Lutheran Hour Ministries. But LHM cherishes a unique connection with the Seminary that goes back to—well, even to before *The Lutheran Hour* program first aired in 1930.

Concordia Seminary's Dr. Walter A. Maier was a professor of Old Testament and an expert in ancient Hebrew, but he was also a visionary in the use of technology to spread the gospel. As early as 1923 he was asking, "Why not a Lutheran broadcasting station?" "It seems," he wrote in the Walther League's *Messenger* magazine, "that the radio sermon is destined to play a somewhat important part in American life."<sup>1</sup> Out of this vision came station KFUE AM—funded in part by the Lutheran Laymen's League, historically considered LHM's founding organization. KFUE's first studio was an attic room at the old seminary campus on South Jefferson Avenue in St. Louis; later KFUE was given its own building at the Seminary's new campus in Clayton.

Dr. Maier went on to blaze more trails in Christian broadcasting, beginning with *The Lutheran Hour* program on the CBS national radio network. Broadcasts of *The Lutheran Hour* originated from the KFUE studio on the Concordia, St. Louis campus; Maier was the program's speaker, and the Concordia Seminary Chorus performed regularly on the program.

When station HCJB in Quito, Ecuador invited Maier in 1940 to place English- and Spanish-language versions of *The Lutheran Hour* in its lineup, Maier recruited two Spanish-speaking students from Concordia, Manuel Morales and Alfredo Saez, to help translate his sermons and serve as announcer and speaker.<sup>2</sup> These early efforts in international broadcasting had at least two results. First was the establishment of the *Spanish Lutheran Hour* program, which broadcasted original Spanish-language sermons delivered by the Rev. Dr. Andrew Melendez from 1941 to 1972. The second, broader result was expansion of *The Lutheran Hour* program and its related ministries beyond North America. LHM now has ministry centers in more than thirty nations in Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Lutheran Hour Ministries enjoys a kinship with Concordia Seminary today as well. Dr. Dale A. Meyer, who was assistant professor in homiletics and New Testament from 1981 through 1984 and who now serves as the Seminary's president, was speaker of *The Lutheran Hour* from 1989 until 2001. He also hosted Lutheran Hour Ministries' television program *On Main Street* from 1995 until 2003.

This special relationship is something that we earnestly pray continues! Concordia Seminary's mission to serve the church and world with theological education and leadership through the formation of professional church workers is consistent with LHM's mission of *Bringing Christ to the Nations—and the Nations to the Church*. Our complementary tasks of educating church workers and of equipping the church's laity for effective witness have the same aim: to "proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pt 2:9). We look forward to many oppor-

tunities to serve the Concordia Seminary community as *Your Partner in HIS Mission* and we are thrilled to be able to partner with the Seminary in this edition of the Concordia Journal. God bless our ministry together.

Kurt Buchholz  
Executive Director  
Lutheran Hour Ministries

### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Walter A. Maier, "Why Not a Lutheran Broadcasting Station?" *Walther League Messenger* 31 (March 1923): 314.

<sup>2</sup> Edith Pankow and Fred Pankow, *75 Years of Blessings and The BEST is Yet to Come!* (St. Louis: The International Lutheran Laymen's League, 1992), 60.