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The Attitudes and Experiences Encountered in Developing a Minority Student Program at Concordia University Wisconsin

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A MAJOR APPLIED PEOJECT SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

THE REV. KERMIT H. RATCLIFFE

April 20, 1998

Advisor: Dr. Victor A. Raj	9/1/98 Date
Reader: Dr. Glenn A. Nielsen	8/2/98 Date
Director, Doctor of Ministry Program Dr. Glenn A. Nielsen	9/2/98 Date

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PREFACE

As I searched for a major applied project which could help me to become a better minority director and to complete the requirement of the Doctor of the Ministry program, I looked for three things. First, I wanted to pick a project that would strengthen my ministry to Concordia's students, particularly minority students. Secondly, I wanted to pick a project that would focus on the area of ministry where I needed help. I wanted this project to challenge me to grow in knowledge and understanding of students and their needs. Thirdly, I wanted to select a project that could serve as a tool to bring the majority and minority communities of Concordia together.

Because of the great need for understanding and accepting people as God's creation, I began to think in terms of developing a project related to this area. When I came to Concordia in 1991, we developed a one day workshop on Racism in which most of the faculty and staff participated. Some great and lasting benefits came to Concordia as a result of that workshop. As I began to read on the subject of minority students and their needs on college campuses, I began to understand the tremendous opportunities available in developing a program in which faculty, staff, and students could participate together in bringing about racial reconciliation on campus. In other words, I came to realize the pratical application of the truth that God was in Christ reconciling the whole world unto himself. Thus the question that remained fixed in

my mind, and lay at the heart of this project was: "What can I, as a minority faculty member, do to help the university I serve to understand the barriers that are blocking some of its students' progress?"

My answer to that question is stated in this document in five ways. First, I needed to help the minority and majority community to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the minority student needs (Chapter One). Second, we needed to focus attention on the history of the minority in America, in American colleges, and LC-MS colleges. The entire campus community needed to become aware of the many opportunities that would be missed by some, if we did not together develop a caring and loving campus where all of the students, staff and faculty could live together in a loving and caring community (Chapter Two). Third, we need to focus on the theological considerations and the cultural barriers (Chapter Three). In the fourth place, we needed to develop and implement a minority student program at Concordia University (Chapter Four). The Fifth Chapter offers recommendations on how a campus after starting and and operating a minority student program can remain focused on its mission and faithful to the promises of the mission to make disciples of all people.

THE ABSTRACT

The question which this Major Applied Project seeks to answer is this: "What can a Minority Director do to encourage the university he serves to become aware of the barriers blocking minority students' persistence?" I intend to identify the growing needs that minority students have by (1) presenting a purpose and design for this project; (2) presenting a historical background on African American life, their difficulties on American colleges and LC-MS colleges; (3) focusing theologically and culturally on the barriers; (4) planning and implementing a minority support program on CUW campus that will create identity, meaning, and security in the lives of students; and (5) to make recommendations for future development and implementation on college campuses.

I can do every thing through him who gives me strength.

St. Paul, Philippians 4:13

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I do not undertake this project to develop a minority students program as an unbiased observer. I am a minority who attended our Concordia Seminary during the days when integration in our nation and church were front page news. African Americans have been a part of the Lutheran Church since 1669. There are no less than 133,000 African Americans in the Lutheran churches today, and, like them, I have a sense of appreciation for the opportunity and freedom that the church and the country provide, although like Cordelia in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, mine is a loyalty that eschews extravagant profession.

My inclinations are strongly anti-racist and sympathetic to minorities. My great grandparent experienced slavery, and my grandparents and parents experienced segregation and discrimination. I am not a stranger to xenophobia, prejudice, and discrimination. I am thankful for the civil rights movement, whose campaign on behalf of African Americans helped to expand rights and opportunities that have benefited all citizens. Yet I am not an uncritical campaigner for every cause that carries the minority banner.

I feel especially qualified to address the subject of minorities because I am a kind of walking embodiment of it. I was born and reared in Alabama and in the

Lutheran Church. My family is Lutheran; our ancestors were converted to Lutheranism by mission workers of the Synodical Conference during the early 1900s. I have served 25 years as a parish pastor and 17 years as a Chaplain in the Army Reserves prior to coming to Concordia University, Wisconsin.

I share personally the Concordia University's desire to establish an environment where minority students can promote a multicultural campus climate, free from the humiliations and injuries of racism. Moreover, I believe that I bring a unique and perhaps enlarged perspective to this project that could benefit from some new and different points of view. African Americans and white Americans live with many bizarre features of race relations that they accept as perfectly natural because they are familiar to them. By applying the Scriptural and Confessional principles beyond the usual university policies, I hope to make helpful discoveries.

Finally, the issue is not who was right in the past, but what is the right course of action for the future. My concern in this chapter is to give an overview and set in perspective some of the issues that separate and divide people. Because I am committed to the resolutions and policies of the LC-MS, my objective is not to strengthen old bigotries, but to discover a set of operating principles based on Scripture and Confessions in this multi-racial university. My ultimate purpose is to restore a basis for hope and trust in an atmosphere of deepening despair and to enable the crusade against the barriers that are blocking the graduation of minority students.

The purpose of the project is to identify variables that have tended to retard the recruitment and retention of minority students at Concordia University Wisconsin (CUW). Once those variables have been identified through a methodology of analysis, a course of action can be initiated to enhance and accelerate the admission and retention of minority students. Concordia needs a specific program that addresses the needs of minority students from freshman year to graduation. The students' faculty mentoring program has been designed specifically to meet the needs of minority students enrolled at CUW. This program's goal is to reduce the attrition rate of minority students while enhancing and enriching their lives and experiences at CUW. This project will also help educate the campus community about the problems, concerns, and other basic issues facing the minority community. A survey of the field indicates that the experiences that contribute to the growth and development of this population will contribute to the growth and development of all the students attending CUW.

Completing this MAP and implementing the minority students' faculty mentoring program assumes several facts. First, Concordia University Wisconsin has not had sustaining success in attracting and graduating minority group members. Second, the Concordia University Wisconsin minority group population has dropped significantly during the past 14 years, since the school moved from down town Milwaukee to an affluent suburb. Third, Concordia University Wisconsin has a number of required theology courses which enhance the students' formation. Fourth, most of

Concordia University minority students are not Lutheran. Fifth, Concordia University Wisconsin is the fastest growing Missouri Synod university in the U.S. Sixth, all minority students entering the program have an equal chance to succeed, and all are encouraged to and will participate in the program to the fullest extent. Seventh, Concordia University is deeply committed to the Scriptures and Confessions. Eighth, most of Concordia University's administrators, faculty, and staff are LC-MS members and will give enthusiastic and financial support to the program and the people involved in running it.

This project is important for several reasons. First is the fact that many of our minority students come from non-Lutheran and non-Christian homes, and from urban inner-city high schools. A project of this kind implemented on the CUW campus would aid in the recruitment and retention of minority students. Second, the number of minority students needing help as they enter college is growing, and the trend seems to indicate that it will continue to rise. Losing students would mean a loss to the university in terms of reaching the lost with the Gospel message as well as a loss of revenue. This would also mean that the students could lose their chance to complete their educational goals. Attrition and retention become important because human lives are at stake. Many new jobs that are available today and in the future will require higher education. Higher education institutions are responsible for the proper training and cognitive development of America's future work force. For a minority student,

completing college is a way to reach the American dream. Concordia's mission statement in the 1998-99 catalog states, "Concordia provides a variety of educational opportunities for students who are preparing for various professional and business careers in the community and . . . promotes intellectual development and self-knowledge for the student's personal growth and well being." Until a student has successfully completed his or her studies and has graduated from CUW, that mission will remain incomplete.

More than 34 years have passed since the enactment of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and higher education has made real progress in opening up this nation's campuses to minority students. For example, in 1960 there were 150,000 African American students in higher education; by 1975 that number rose to approximately one million. Nevertheless, progress since then has slowed down, and national commitment to equality and access seems to have faltered. African American enrollments have remained stagnant since 1975. This is not to say that institutions have failed to address the problem; indeed, campuses across the nation have put in place a variety of programs and policies to promote the recruitment and retention of minority students, faculty, and staff. However, these efforts have not produced sustained success. The gap between the participation rate of majority students and minority students is growing, and attrition continue to be a major problem. What then has gone wrong? Why have these efforts not worked?

There are several possible answers to this question. The first relates to the importance of sustained efforts to improve primary and secondary schools. African American and Hispanic students are more likely to be poor. Heavily concentrated in inner-city public schools, they frequently receive an education inferior to that of more affluent and majority students. American Indian students have a far lower graduation rate from high school than African Americans and Hispanics. They, too, are handicapped by poor preparation. Students who come ill prepared to college begin at a disadvantage—and may never catch up.

The national movement to improve primary and secondary schools for minorities has gained considerable momentum in the last 15 years. Higher education institutions have joined this effort by working with public schools to expand the pool of prepared students; these initiatives will require time to bear fruit. A sustained and serious school reform movement may have its real payoff in 10, 15, or 20 years.

A second reason for the lack of progress is the piecemeal approach many institutions have taken to increase minority participation. Isolated programs to attract and retain minority students, faculty, and staff keep the effort marginal to the central mission of the institution. Comprehensive, institution-wide policies and programs, nourished by vigorous leadership from the president and the governing board, are key to institutional change. Real progress requires that increasing diversity become an integral part of the institution's mission, its planning process, and its day-to-day

activities.

The design of this project is to test and validate if the minority student support program at CUW better integrates students of diverse ethnic and racial background into its campus life. It is also designed to develop a climate where all students can feel a sense of belonging, wholeness, and togetherness. Within such an atmosphere students will receive the care, support, and encouragement needed to succeed in the University.

This project will also provide a dimension that has been missing within the University setting: meaningful dialogue between majority and minority students on issues that affect campus life. This will serve as a basis for further discussion within the University. In Concordia's efforts to build a diverse cultural identity on campus, we seek answers to this question: Is the Concordia University system of education equipped enough to have more than one cultural tradition? It is hoped that this project can enhance the discovery of the gifts that minority students offer to the University's community.

Research has shown that minority youth entering college often lack a clear idea of why they are doing so; for most of them career goals are usually undefined. Since many are unsure exactly what a college degree will do to further a career, and since for them the definition of "career" is often at best a foreign idea, they do not feel as if they have lost something tangible when they drop out of school. Clearly, if students feel that they will be missing something important should they leave, they need to be completely

integrated into campuses. Involvement of students in organizations is one way to make the connection to campus more attractive and realistic.

Two of the most important factors influencing student retention are grades and student involvement. If ways can be found to involve students more in the environment and life of the institution, then the chances of their staying in college are improved. Increased contact and involvement with the faculty can address both of these factors.

Minority students tend to drop out at higher rates than majority students because minority students fail to perceive that their needs are being met. They are generally more dissatisfied with services, the environment, relationships, and the curriculum. It is clear that retention of minority students is a complex task. It is complex because there are so many interacting variables, including:

- the culture and ethnicity of students;
- socioeconomic background;
- family background;
- gender
- personal attributes, skills, and abilities;
- the developmental state in which the students encounter higher education (adolescence, young adulthood, or mature adulthood);

- the institutional culture of a particular college or university campus;
- the personal coping strategies of students and personal relationships;
- the formal institutional strategies to educate the students and the informal community activities in which the students are engaged;
- the students' personal sense of power and locus of control and self- esteem;
- the social forces or power exerted by the society affecting the institution and the institutional power to change;
- the individual goals set by the students themselves and patterns to achieve those goals;
- the institutional goals and strategies related to minority students' development or the lack thereof;
- the personal meanings, ideals, values, and commitments students make toward their goals; and
- the institutional values, ideals, and commitments to

aid the students in their quest for an education.[1]

The task here is to identify those areas in which the faculty can exert influence and/or control in order to make a difference in the lives of the students. Attrition is a complex result of all the above variables. Any attempt to isolate one cause or factor is a misguided approach to the issues.

At CUW students enroll from many places of the world. Sixty-two percent of CUW's students come from Midwestern states, and six percent comes from other states. Five percent of the traditional students enrolled at CUW are from international countries. Twenty-seven percent come from various Lutheran high schools within the United States. Within these geographic regions, students who enroll are from rural and urban areas and large and small high schools.

Students who come to CUW from different areas and cultural backgrounds bring with them many different needs. How well CUW meets the needs of its students will play an important role in their success at the college level and whether or not they choose to complete their education at CUW.

Some of the problems associated with dropping out on the part of minority students may be difficult for CUW to correct. These would include lack of family

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1 A. R. D'Augelli and S. L. Hershberger, "African American Undergraduates on a Predominantly White Campus: Academic Factors, Social Networks, and Campus Climate," *Journal of Negro Education*, vol. 62 #1 (1993): 67-81.

and/or peer support to continue their pursuit of higher education, lack of full financial support and resources, and lack of college preparation courses during high school. Some problems within CUW's scope would include providing an atmosphere and climate conducive to learning, financial aid and/or assistance, and academic and social support—in and out of class experiences.

When a minority student enrolls at CUW, certain risks result from the type of environment that exists on the campus. Most of the Anglos raise the question, "Why don't those minority students simply study harder, go to class and do their homework?" Many African Americans see Concordia's campus as hostile, alienating, socially isolating, and less responsive to their needs and interests. These perceptions lead to feelings of isolation and can cause discomfort in interactions with others. They also feel mistrusted and ignored academically. Because African American students come to college expecting less prejudice and more social integration than they find, their consequent anger and despair contribute to a desire for separation and withdrawal from the majority students.[2] Rather than integrating into the society as a whole, they turn to others similar to themselves for support and social ties. This is not always a negative response. Having an ethnic group to belong to allows the student to remain in

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2 A. C. Taylor, *The Second Handbook of Minority Student Services* (Madison: Praxis Publications Inc., 1990), 23.

contact with his or her culture. Being involved in a support group gives them a sense of identity, a place in the world, pride, and security.

A study was done to find what causes African Americans at predominantly white institutions the most stress.[3] The biggest issues did not involve racism, but academic confidence and the ability to bond with the university. Academic stress results from doubts about success, feeling inferior, and academic under-preparedness. Integration stress can result from a low number of other African Americans on campus and low expectations of how the majority students will treat them. According to these same authors, intervention strategies will be successful if they help minorities understand the interplay of the additional social and academic stresses they will face from their peers and from faculty besides providing academic support services.

Many minority student program models have been developed to help minorities at predominantly white institutions. Most have similar traits. A first step is to have the goal of the program as consistent as possible with the school's mission statement and enforced by the administration. This will result in confronting racial and gender issues which should be of importance to the entire campus. When this type of atmosphere is fostered, cultural diversity will be created, and the institution will become a society that

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3 F. L. Burrell and T. B. Tromsley, "Academic Advising with Minority Students at Predominantly White Campuses," *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 24 (1983): 121-127.

acknowledges and includes the ideas and contributions of many cultures represented in this country.[4]

A second step is the institution's ability to offer assistance to African American students. Institutions need to be aware that the high school education may have been faulty for many of the minority students, which leads to academic under-preparedness. Helping African American students means having programs that not only meet their academic needs, but their social and spiritual needs as well. Minority students need to be "anchored and involved in the college environment."[5] The prevailing attitude on campus should be that all students can succeed. A positive environment where the student feels comfortable can enhance the minority student's academic performance. J. B. Love states, "the interaction between students and the campus environment affects students' physical behavior and affective domain. These interactions constitute an important student-institution relationship that affects to varying degrees student satisfaction, academic achievement, and persistence in the institution."[6] Counseling can benefit minorities in this area by helping them identify anxiety and frustration. The students

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4 W. C. Martin, *Project Start: Three year student data analysis* (unpublished Muncie manuscript, Ball State University, 1991): 16-25.

5 Ibid., 55-67.

6 B. J. Love, "Issues and problems in the Retention of Black Students in Predominantly White Institutions of Higher Education," *Equity and Excellence in Education, vol. 26 #1* (Apr 1993): 30.

will then be more confident, more likely to try to accomplish their goals, more realistic about their skills and academic ability, and many become more involved in leadership roles.

The review of literature highlighted some needs and concerns of African American students on predominantly white campuses. The literature focused on the areas of self-esteem, alienation, the need for more African American faculty, counselors, and administrators at predominantly white institutions. The effects of an adverse racial climate can eliminate the success of African American students seeking support services, counseling, and ways to interact successfully in the campus.[7]

African American students are still often dissatisfied with their campus experience on predominantly white campuses. If change is to occur, the university needs to take a stand on those areas of dissatisfaction over which it has some degree of control, such as: (a) increasing the number of African American faculty and administrators; (b) offering more African American and other ethnic courses/programs; (c) involving African American students in programming of activities handled by the student government association; (d) hiring more African American clerical and professional staff; (e) improving the housing situation for minority students by hiring African American resident hall directors; (f) offering African American cultural events and

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7 Ibid., 28.

activities throughout the year and not just during Black History Month; (g) recruiting more African American students; (h) seeking to provide African American counselors in the counseling center, career services, financial aid, and so forth; (i) providing additional financial aid; and (j) providing academic support services for all students on campus.[8] If the institutional leadership would take a strong stand on these concerns, the remaining areas such as racial climate, the racial climate surrounding the campus, opportunities to render services, and extracurricular activities may be directly or indirectly affected.

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8 K. K. Manzo, "Priorities: Retention Programs More Visible After Decades of Neglect," *Black Issues in Higher Education, vol. 10 #24* (January 27, 1994): 16-25.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. History of Minority Difficulties in American Colleges

African Americans were first brought to the United States in 1619 when a Dutch ship landed at Jamestown, Virginia, with 20 slaves of African descent.[9] During the first 244 years of their presence in America, African Americans were used exclusively as slaves in most parts of the country, especially the South. Most African Americans lived on plantations and worked in the fields or houses of whites without receiving wages. On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation which freed all black people from the bondage of slavery.[10] The 13th amendment abolished slavery; the 14th amendment gave blacks the right to vote.[11]

Although slavery ended in the United States more than a century ago, its legacy continues to be disputed among scholars and underlies contemporary debates about public policy. The reason for the controversy is that slavery is considered the classic expression of American racism, and its effects are still viewed as central to the problems faced by African Americans in the United States. As the African American

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9 Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1993), 20.

10 E. Franklin Frazer, *Race and Culture Contacts in the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), 149.

11 W. E. B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1935), 55-83.

scholar Michael Eric Dyson observes, "Slavery continues to exert its brutal presence in the untold sufferings of millions of everyday folk."[12] Andrew Hacker writes, "Must it be admitted at the close of the twentieth century that residues of slavery continue to exist? The answer is obviously yes."[13]

For Hacker, slavery is responsible for the high levels of black residential separation from whites today.[14] Stephen Steinberg writes in *The Ethnic Myth* that ghettos are nothing less than the shameful residue of slavery.[15] Alvin Poussaint blames slavery for contributing to high rates of black births out of wedlock. Patricia Williams, Molefi Asante and others assert that slavery is responsible for many of the social pathologies in the black community such as chronic homelessness, single-parent households, and youth violence.[16] Scholars and activists also argue that slavery has undermined contemporary black identity, causing many African Americans to internalize

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12 Michael Eric Dyson, *Reflecting Black: African American Cultural Criticism* (St. Paul: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 183.

13 Andrew Hacker, *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1992), 14.

14 Ibid., 17.

15 Stephen Steinberg, *The Ethnic Myth: Race Ethnicity and Class in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 293.

16 Alvin Poussaint, *Why Blacks Kill Blacks* (New York: Emerson Hall Publisher, 1972), 99.

racist stereotypes invented by slave owners, and even to fear a possible restoration of slavery. The case of legal scholar Patricia Williams illustrates how slavery continues to shape black identity as she imagines herself as a slave sexually exploited by a ruthless Southern planter.[17] Cornel West argues that slavery has produced in African Americans "an airborne people" still consumed with "self-contempt, self-hatred, self-affliction, and self-flagellation."[18] Adopting a more extreme position Derrick Bell contends that for blacks the restoration of slavery is a real possibility. "Slavery is . . . a constant reminder of what white America might do."[19]

The entire period of American slavery, and what took place in America thereafter, is indeed an African American experience. It has always been interesting to note that many historians attempted to gloss over much that was bad about slavery and the traditional treatment of African Americans by contending that they were accepting of and happy with such treatments. However, if any cogent words were needed to dispel such a false contention, they would be the words of Frederick Douglass, who wrote:

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17 Patricia Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 18-24.

18 Cornel West, "Philosophy and the Urban Underclass," in *The Underclass Question*, ed. Bill Lawson (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 195.

19 Derrick Bell, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 12.

> If at any one time of my life, more than another, I was made to drink the bitterest dregs of slavery, that time was during the first six months of my stay with this man Covey. We worked all weathers. It was never too hot, or too cold; it could never rain, blow, snow, or hail too hard for us to work in the field. . . . The longest days were too short for him, and the shortest nights were too long for him. I was somewhat unmanageable at first, but a few months of this discipline tamed me. Mr. Covey succeeded in breaking me—in body, soul, and spirit . . . the dark night of slavery closed in upon me, and behold a man transformed to a brute!
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> . . . I shall never be able to narrate half the mental experiences through which it was my lot to pass, during my stay at Covey's. I was completely wrecked, changed, and bewildered; goaded almost to madness at one time, and at another reconciling myself to my wretched condition.
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> . . . I suffered bodily as well as mentally. I had neither sufficient time in which to eat, nor to sleep, except on Sunday. The overwork, and the brutal chastisement of which I was the victim, combined with that ever-gnawing and soul-devouring thought—"I am a slave—and a slave for life—a slave with no rational ground to hope for freedom"—rendered me a living embodiment of mental and physical wretchedness.[20]

In many ways, these words of Douglass represent that part of the African American experience which took place during the long period of slavery. One cannot glean the full meaning of the African American experience unless he understands the meaning of slavery in the light of that experience. This knowledge can be acquired and appreciated when slavery is seen from an African American frame of reference.

Throughout history, slavery had very few defenders for the simple reason that it had no critics. The institution was uncontroversial, and that which is established and taken for granted does not have to be justified. It would be unthinkable for Muslims to

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20 Frederick Douglass, *The Life and Time of Frederick Douglass* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 124.

launch an antislavery crusade, Bernard Lewis writes, because slavery is specifically permitted by the Koran and the prophet Muhammad owned slaves.[21] The American South was virtually unique among slave societies in history in that it produced a comprehensive pro-slave ideology.[22] In part, this was because slavery was under assault to a degree unrivaled anywhere else in the world.[23]

Southerners were familiar with a European tradition, going back to the Crusades, which held that it was permissible to enslave pagans but not Christians. In response to this, the leading forces of the South formulated an identical justification: Africans were heathens, so slavery would serve as a kind of moral education to introduce them to Christianity. But there was a serious flaw in this argument: once slaves embraced the Christian faith of their masters, other excuses became necessary in order to justify keeping them in servitude. Here many Southern divines intervened to offer a racist rationale. They promulgated a dubious interpretation of the story in the book of Genesis (9:24-27) in which Noah curses the descendants of his son Ham, who impudently looked upon his father's nakedness. Thus, in this account, the children of Ham were condemned to blackness and future enslavement. This argument too was

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21 Bernard Lewis, *Race and slavery in the Middle East* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 78.

22 Eugene Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyon University Press, 1988), 131.

23 Larry Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987), 13-24.

absurd; in fact, the Bible does not state that the children of Ham were black. But since slavery proved to be such an expedient institution, for a long time there was little challenge to this innovation in Biblical eisegesis.[24]

Since the 1860s the history of African Americans in the United States has been affected significantly by court decisions and congressional legislation. In *Plessy vs. Ferguson* in 1896, the Supreme court upheld the doctrine of "separate but equal"[25] educational facilities for African Americans, a decision which resulted in over 50 years of segregated education in the South and contributed to the migration of many African American people to the North in the early 1900s.

Another outcome of *Plessy vs. Ferguson* was the development of predominantly black colleges and universities.[26] During this period African Americans were influenced by two significant figures in African American history, Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois. Washington's contention was that African Americans could be more progressive if they learned skills or trades in agricultural and mechanical fields while continuing to live and work in rural areas of the South.

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24 David Brion, ***Slavery and Human Progress*** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 114.

25 Plessy v. Ferguson, *163 U.S. 537 (1896) Editorial, Justice Harlan Concurring* (New York: New York Times, May 23, 1954), 1-3.

26 Ibid., 3.

DuBois, on the other hand, believed that African Americans should pursue education in professional fields and become leaders of the race. Both men inspired African Americans to acquire more education in a wide variety of occupations during the period between 1900 and 1950.

A similar position was elaborated on by Booker T. Washington, who was born a slave but went on to become the most powerful African American statesman and educator in the United States:

> Think about it: we went into slavery pagans; we came out Christians. We went into slavery pieces of property; we came out American citizens. We went into slavery with chains clanking about our wrists; we came out with the American ballot in our hands. . . . Notwithstanding the cruelty and moral wrong of slavery, we are in a stronger and more hopeful condition, materially, intellectually, morally, and religiously, than is true of an equal number of black people in any other portion of the globe.[27]

Washington's argument echoes the earlier writing of the poet Phillis Wheatley that slavery proved to be the transmission belt that nevertheless brought Africans into the orbit of modern civilization and Western freedom, so future generations of African Americans would be far more free and prosperous than their former kinsmen in Africa. Washington's conclusion seems hard to deny: slavery was an institution that was terrible to endure for slaves, but it left the descendants of slaves better off in America.[28]

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[27] Booker T. Washington , *The Negro Problem* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 33.

[28] Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 16.

It took a civil war to destroy slavery, and with it much of the infrastructure and economy of the South. More than half a million whites died in that war, "one for every six slaves freed,"[29] C. Vann Woodard reminds us. Although the question of slavery in the United States was ultimately resolved by force, for Lincoln, as for Douglass, the triumph of the Union and the emancipation of the slaves represented not the victory of might over right, but the reverse: justice had won over that of expediency. The principles of American founding had at long last succeeded.

Segregation in school systems lasted until 1954 when the Supreme Court declared racial segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional in *Brown vs. Board of Education.* For the first time in 335 years African American students were permitted to attend the same schools as whites. This integration led to a larger number of African Americans being educated in such professional fields as law, medicine, business, and engineering. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 provided African Americans with basic human rights that had been previously denied. African Americans were able to eat in any public restaurant and stay in any public motel. In 1965, through the Voting Rights Act, Congress gave African Americans in the South the right to vote, a right which had been denied in past years. In the Bakke decision of 1978, the Supreme Court ruled that race could be used as a factor in admitting students to

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29 Vann C. Woodard, *The Future of the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 149.

colleges and universities. These institutions were permitted to use affirmative action measures to increase the numbers of African American students admitted to undergraduate and graduate programs.[30]

Many of these court decisions and congressional acts have had both positive and negative effects on African Americans. Although most African Americans are beginning to perceive themselves as equal under the law, some majority group members have not accepted those Supreme Court decisions and congressional acts and still view black people as inferior.[31]

The history of the African American population in the United States has been dismal. It has been filled with oppression, discrimination, and unfair treatment. While it is true that the plight of African Americans in 1997 is better than it was in 1619, many still find themselves in a society that does not fully accept them. This fact continues to manifest itself in their minds, and the results are mistrust and dislike for some majority group members.

Robert Leslie in this thoughtful monograph, *Counseling Across Cultures*, writes about the life of the noted African American singer and writer, Maya Angelou.

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30 Derrick Bell, "Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest Convergence Dilemma," 93 *Harvard Law Review* (1980): 518.

31 McGeorge Bundy, "The Issues Before the Court: Who Gets Ahead in America," *The Atlantic vol. 240 # 5* (November 1977): 44-45.

During the time when she was experiencing emotional distress, she made an appointment with a white psychiatrist who started the session by asking her if she was troubled. Leslie quotes Maya's feelings as she expressed them in "Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas":

> Yes, I was troubled; why else would I be here? But could I tell this man? Would he understand Arkansas, which I left, yet would never, could never leave? . . . How would he perceive another who, in a desperate thrust for freedom, left her only child who became sick during her absence? A mother who upon her return, felt so guilty she could think of nothing more productive than killing herself and possibly even the child? . . . No, I couldn't tell him about living inside a skin that is hated or feared by the majority of one's fellow citizens or about the sensation of getting on a bus on a lovely morning, feeling happy, and suddenly seeing the passengers curl their lips in distaste or avert their eyes in revulsion. No, I had nothing to say to the doctor.[32]

Immigrants from many different countries have come to the United States in search of the "American Dream." African Americans are different from all other ethnic groups in that they did not come willingly to North America, nor was the "American Dream" made available to them. The predominant distinguishing factor for African Americans is the history of social, economic, and political oppression experienced because of color discrimination. This factor pervades every aspect of social institutions within which they participate. No aspect of the life of African Americans can be understood without giving consideration to the issue of racism that they have experienced.

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32 Robert Leslie, *Counseling Across Cultures*, (New York, UMHE Communication, 1979), 1

From a contemporary perspective, African American society has not gained the social equality intended through legislation and Civil Rights movements. In 1972 James Banks, director of the Center for Multicultural Studies at the University Washington, made the sobering observation that

> The black man's status in relationship to whites has actually worsened in recent years. While the gap between whites and nonwhites is narrower in educational achievement than it was a decade ago, the gap in all other major areas—income, employment, health and housing—has increased in the last ten years, despite the symbolic and legal gains which accrued from the black revolt of the 1960s.[33]

More than 30 years later, African American United Methodist theologian James Cone sounded an even greater alarm:

> But despite the program in middle-class black America, the black underclass are poorer today than they were in the 1960s. One-half of black babies are born in poverty, and nearly twenty-five percent of the black men between the ages of nineteen and twenty-eight are in jails, prisons, or awaiting their day in court. With no respect for themselves or for anybody else, black youth are dropping out of school, having babies, joining gangs, selling drugs, and killing each other with a frequency that boggles the imagination. These obvious and continuing inequities demonstrate the unsettled and continuing tensions in North American society. In spite of this, black Americans experience continued advancement across a broad social front.[34]

The African American experience in America is basically an experience of repression and oppression, but it is also an experience that has given African Americans a tough and rugged faith, a new understanding of the meaning of love,

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33 James A. Banks, "Racial Prejudice and the Black Self-Concept," in *Black Self-Concept: Implication for Education and Social Science* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), 6.

34 James Cone, "Demystifying Martin and Malcolm," *Theology Today 51* (April 1994): 28.

universal compassion, soul, identity, and a faith tested in suffering. An understanding of this experience gives to African American theology and practice its essential emphasis: The recognition and appreciation that even in unjust suffering God turns upside down human categories and puts down the proud and exalts those the world despises. God is known not in success and triumph, but in failure and defeat.[35]

B. History of Minority Attendance in LC-MS Colleges

It has been said that the Missouri Synod is the story of a tight subculture held together by significant historical forces—the forces of ethnic identity, linguistic solidarity, and theological sameness.[36] German in heritage and culture, the Synod remained separate from the American mainstream. She developed a siege mentality, similar to the American Catholic experience and other ethnic religious groups.[37] German language set apart Missouri Synod Lutherans from other American neighbors and remained dominant in the Synod until the 1920s:

> In 1877 Ferdinand Sievers shared his beliefs concerning a broader missionary spirit. He writes an editorial in *Der Lutheraner* in which he states that the home forces are being strengthened as the message of the

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35 Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, vol. 31, ed. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), 40-43. Hereafter, *Luther's Works* are designated *LW*

36 F. E. Meyer, *The Religious Bodies of America* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1954), 178-187.

37 Walter Bouman, *Christianity American Style* (Dayton: George A. Pflaum, 1970), 65.

> Kingdom was shared with the masses of incoming Germans. He makes this claim because of the undercurrent and restlessness he sensed among synodical parishioners. He states the concerns this way, "One thing lies heavily upon our hearts constantly. We do not have our own mission to the heathen anymore. For more than ten years now our synod has stood idle in the marketplace with regard to the mission to the heathen. We have missed that direct, fresh, joyous participation in the mission field. Many a heart beating for the cause of missions to the heathen has been saddened over this and has sighed often to God concerning our failure. Many have silently wished that the former times of love for missions would return . . . but the field of foreign missions we have let fall, and all the excuses which claimed that our full capacities are demanded in the building of the Lutheran Church within our already existing German Lutheran congregations here in our new fatherland are only of relative validity. The admonition presses home to us all the more, 'We should do the one, and yet not leave the other undone.'"[38]

At this organizational meeting, a committee drew attention to an overture submitted by the retiring president of the Norwegian Synod, the Reverend H. A. Preus, grandfather of J. A. O. Preus, a past president of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. In this overture Preus questioned, "Whether the time had not come for the Synodical Conference to direct its attention to the mission work among the heathen and to start missions, perhaps, among the Negroes and the Indians of this country."[39] This proposal was in full agreement with the objectives in the constitution of the Synodical Conference, specifically the paragraph on the scope of activities which mentions "Matters pertaining to home and foreign mission work, as also to mission work among

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38 F. Dean Lueking, *Mission in the Making* (St. Louis: Concordia , 1964), 85.

39 Richard C. Dickinson, *Rose and Thorns* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1977), 39.

immigrants."[40]

In 1872 mission and ministry concerns caused four synods to come together and form the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference organized around the following purposes:

> To give outward expression of the unity of the spirit existing among the constituent synods; to encourage and strengthen one another in faith and confession; to further unity in doctrine and practice and to remove whatever might threaten to disturb this unity; to co-operate in matters of mutual interest; to strive for true unity in doctrine and practice among Lutheran church bodies.[41]

What has all of this to do with teaching the faith to those who were not yet Lutherans? From the very beginning the educational strategy of the Synod grew directly out of such a unified theological position. A correct theology had to be transmitted in a safe place, in the Lutheran school system.[42] There was a developing "Christ against culture" attitude on the part of the church, though not for the same reasons suggested by Niebuhr's classic study.[43]

One could conclude that separation was for cultural reasons. Lutherans preserved their separateness through their educational systems. The strategy of

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40 Ibid., 62.

41 Robert King, *African American and the Local Church* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1996), 126.

42 Steven H. Schmidit, *The Theology and Pedagogy of P. E. Kretmann.* Unpublished Ed.D. Thesis, Columbus Teacher College, 166.

43 H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row Torchbook, 1956), 45- 82.

education was the choice of a private education, in contrast to the American public education system.

Lueking summarizes the initial efforts of the Mission board of the Synodical Conference as follows:

> This survey of the records of the early [Synodical Conference] missionaries to Negroes during the 1880s reveals the remarkable consistency in outlook and practice which prevailed among the [missionaries]. Their letters and articles supply cogent proof of the almost insurmountable difficulties encountered by the consistent maintenance of the goal of remake Negroes in the Lutheran image. Berg and Wahl held out for two years at their respective posts. Buehler stood fast for six years. All left the work because they requested to be released, and the reports about their leaving were always candid enough to state that the missionary left "because he had lost enthusiasm for the work and wished to return to the parish ministry" or, as in the case of Berg, "he became sad and discouraged."[44]

According to Johnson, the first successful attempt to train African Americans for the Lutheran ministry began with Nathaniel Burkhalter, who entered Concordia Seminary at Springfield, Illinois, in 1882. Between 1882 and 1903, other young African American men, such as John McDavid, Lucius Thalley, and Wiley Lash attended the Springfield seminary.[45]

Immanuel Seminary and College were established specifically to train African American professional church workers. The college opened in 1903 with five young

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44 Lueking, 102.

45 Jeff G. Johnson, *Black Christians: The Untold Lutheran Story* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1991), 169.

African American men, and was located in two rooms on the second floor of Grace Lutheran School in Concord, North Carolina. The larger room served as a classroom by day and a dormitory for male students at night. An old house in the rear of the church was used as the kitchen and dining room.

Immanuel consisted of three departments: a theological seminary, a two-year normal department (for teacher training), and a high school. That same year (1903), Luther College, modeled on the same pattern as Immanuel, was opened at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in New Orleans. After the first year, both schools became coeducational.

Immanuel moved to Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1905 and continued to operate for the next 56 years. John F. Nau, son of Immanuel's second president, pictured the main building at Greensboro:

> Immanuel's administration building was a monstrosity. A government survey of the original administration building at Immanuel Lutheran College described it in the following words: "The building is a two-story granite structure of an inconsistent, mixed, and wasteful type of architecture. It is heated by stoves. The interior shows bad workmanship, inexperienced planning, and poor material." It had numberless small towers gracing the roof, with an enormous tower in the center. It was a very ornate and picturesque building; but, as stated in the documents of the school systems of North Carolina, a building which was an excellent example of how not to build a school. In the basement were the commissary and the boiler room. On the second floor, which was also the ground floor, were the offices of the faculty members, a large hall for devotional services, several classrooms, and a small library. On the second floor were more classrooms, and the third floor was finished on the inside with beaver board, which was in terrible condition. The Naus referred to the monstrosity as "the castle on the Rhine."[46]

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46 John F. Nau, *Mission Inspired* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1978), 55.

In 1904 the Synodical Conference passed a resolution that all blacks who sought to become pastors or teachers should be educated at Immanuel or Luther College. In the 1920s Eugene Stoll (a young black man who could easily pass for white) completed the first year of his theological education at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. After that he was sent to Immanuel to complete his preparation for the ministry. The effort to send all black students to Immanuel was effective until 1942 when a prospective black candidate for the ministry entered Concordia College in Oakland, California. Ultimately, he completed his preparation for the ministry at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.

Theologically, Missouri vacillated between evangelical and scholastic confessionalism,[47] if not approaching a position similar to American fundamentalism.[48] However, to make such a bold generalization is not attempting to understand sympathetically the nature of that movement. Emphasis on correct doctrine was in part a response to uncertainty and an affirmation of historical and cultural continuity. The analogy to Missouri Synod's contemporary scene is all too evident. The urge for law and order follows invariably on the heels of violent protest. The urge for rigid structures follows the slightest hint that things are in flux. Change creates the need for law, and rapid change creates the response of radical reactionary conservatism.

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47 Schmidt, 36-51.

48 Ibid., 70.

As perceived threat increased about Missouri (i.e., Americanism, Protestantism, and Roman Catholicism), there was a gradual de-emphasis on the evangelical and a gradual emphasis on the intellectual. Two streams of confessionalism threaded their way through Missouri's history, and there is little question which appeared to dominate.[49] By 1900 Missouri was understood as a major denomination in American Protestantism, created of conservative, biblicistic theology and dogmatic practice. Missouri Synod theology was carefully formulated and passed from one generation to another by a system of higher education in general. *The Christian Century* referred to the Missouri Synod as a place of rabid orthodoxy governed by a "corporate pope."[50] There was very little left to chance, and generation after generation of churchmen were educated into the synodical system. These policies and practices enabled Missouri to stand united in thought, word, and action.

However, the essence of the Synod's past can still be celebrated, for the net result of that history has been the inherited strength of the church's present position. Winthrop Hudson, an American church historian, states it this way:

The final prospect for a vigorous renewal of Protestant life and witness

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49 Lueking, 13.

50 Carl Mundinger, *Government in Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1947), 215. See editorial, Paul Huchinson, "What is Disturbing the Lutherans," *Christian Century, XLII* (July 22, 1926): 909-911.

> rests with the Lutheran churches which had overcome much of their fragmentation by 1960, and had grouped themselves into three main bodies. All had exhibited an ability to grow during the post World War II years, with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod making the greatest gains. The Lutheran churches are in the fortunate position of having been, in varying degrees, insulated from American life for a long period of time. As a result, they have been less subject to the theological erosion which so largely stripped other denominations of an awareness of their continuity with a historical tradition. . . . Among the assets immediately at hand among the Lutherans are a confessional tradition, a surviving liturgical structure, and a sense of community which however much it may be the product of cultural factors, may make it easier for them than for most Protestant denominations to recover the "integrity of church membership," without which Protestants are ill-equipped to participate effectively in the dialogue of a pluralistic society.[51]

Whenever the history of African Americans in Alabama is discussed, the name Rosa J. Young will surface. How did the Lutheran church and its influence reach Alabama? What was the circumstance that brought it about? In 1912, Miss Rosa J. Young organized the Rosebud Literary and Industrial School at Rosebud, Alabama. By 1914 a boll weevil infestation had brought her school, and Wilcox County, to the brink of bankruptcy. On the advice of Booker T. Washington, the founder of Tuskegee Institute, she wrote to the Synodical Conference for aid and support for her Rosebud School. In her correspondence with the Board she states her concerns:

> I am writing you concerning a school I have organized. . . . I am writing to see if your Conference will take our school under its auspices . . . I hope you will see your way clear to aid us.[52]

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51 Winthrop S. Hudson, *American Protestantism*, ed. Daniel T. Boorstin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 176.

52 Rosa J. Young, *Light in the Dark Belt* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 104.

Within a 12-month period, the Synodical Conference became the second group of Lutherans to begin missions among African Americans in Alabama. The joint Synod of Ohio opened its first mission at Prattville in 1915. The Synodical Conference opened its first mission at Rosebud in 1916. Had the Synodical Conference planned its strategy according to generally accepted standards of mission outreach, Wilcox County (the site of Rosebud) would have been one of the least likely places to begin. Few places in the United States were more poverty stricken, more rampant with ignorance and superstition, or more ingrained with hopelessness than Wilcox County.

Young outlines the reasons she is interested in a teaching ministry:

> As a general [rule], there were no schoolhouses [in rural Alabama]; for the most part the public schools were taught in the churches. Most of the churches were dilapidated and so exposed to the elements that one might as well teach outdoors under an oak tree. There were big holes in the roofs and in the floors. Many a time during a heavy shower of rain the large children would have to hold an umbrella over me while I heard a class recite.
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> In some of those churches there were small heaters, but no flues; so we had to take out a window pane and run the stovepipe out through the side of the wall. When the wind was high on a cold day, the smoke would turn us all away from the fire. In churches where there were no heaters we were obliged to build big fires outdoors. Then I would have to watch the little fellows to prevent their clothes from catching fire.
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> The educational advantages offered these children by the state were entirely inadequate. The school terms lasted only three or four months year. Before the children could get a good start in school, the term was over. During the long vacation of eight or nine months the children would forget most, if not all, of what they had learned during the previous year.[53]

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53 Ibid., 112-126.

Today, Dr. Rosa J. Young is credited with achieving what many conceived as impossible—bringing the Lutheran Church to the black belt of Alabama. Her work is credited with the start of no fewer than 50 churches, several elementary Lutheran schools, and one college (Concordia College, Selma, Alabama).[54] This action is a reminder that God is alive and active in history and in persons, calling people to more openness and more humanity. We are called to celebrate life fully because we have hope. Michael Novak writes:

> The purpose of the Christian life is to become all that a human being can become, to become more human. Man was made in the image of the word, and through the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus yet more wonderfully restored in that same image. The outmost bounds of that image have never been explored. We do not know what it is that Christians, like other men, are capable of becoming. The old cocoons must give way to fresh life in every historical epoch. We are not yet human beings, only striving to become so.[55]

At the end of WWII, the Synodical Conference was in a position to evaluate the work and its effectiveness in African American missions. In 1946 the Synodical Conference voted to terminate the supervision of African American missions. The Conference recommended that all subsidized African American congregations and future plans be administered by the home mission committees of the Missouri Synod. Funds would be provided by the Synodical Conference. This meant that for the first

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54 Ibid., 104.

55 Michael Novak, *A Theology of Radical Politics* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 120- 121.

time African American pastors and congregations could hold formal membership in the Missouri Synod. It should be pointed out that this was also a long and tedious undertaking by the church.

During the following year, the Missouri Synod accepted this proposal and made it official policy. Before its adoption, African Americans within Missouri had opportunities to discuss the issues. Some were skeptical about the new policy and others voiced serious reservations. The proposal to integrate the Synodical Conference work into the districts of the Missouri Synod passed by one vote. The reason given for the reservation was fear of fragmentation and isolation.

Beginning with the 1956 national convention, the emphasis of the church focused more on race relations than it had in the past. The two resolves listed below give a general sense of the direction to which the church wanted to direct its future.

> Memorial 409-Re: establishment of congregations on a Non-Segregated basis: Resolved, that The Lutheran church-Missouri synod in convention assembled in St. Paul, Minnesota, June 20-30, 1956, be petitioned to declare as its policy that all congregations of its constituency include in their missionary outreach all persons within their geographic area, without discrimination based on racial or ethnic grouping.
> Resolved, that we acknowledge a fourfold responsibility of the church in the area of race relations:
> a) To teach and to practice the unity of faith which transcends the barriers of race or ethnic origin;
> b) To condition its members to work in the capacity of Christian citizens for the elimination of discrimination based on race or ethnic origin, in the home community, the city, state, and nation;
> c) To teach the Word of God so that specific application is made to what is God-pleasing in the Christian's relation to his fellow man of a different racial or ethnic origin, so that in these modern times, when the whole world has become one neighborhood, Christian people may be found establishing a pattern of social living in

keeping with justice and equity according to the Second Table of the Law;

d) To make such application of Christian teaching to life (in keeping with the foregoing) not only to help men in their temporal needs, but primarily for the sake of the kingdom of God, so that man may, as our Lord has taught, "see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."[56]

The 1960s brought racial turmoil to the United States, which affected many aspects of American society. The LC-MS' African American membership was no exception to these events. The decline in membership was more than eighty-five hundred baptized persons and more than 55 congregations and pastors.[57]

Today the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has approximately 50,000 African American members, which means that the church has begun to regain some of the losses from the past.

For a fuller understanding of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's present relations with African Americans, look at the 1977 convention's resolutions. The emphasis changes to recruitment and retention of people in the church, particularly minorities. The resolves listed below demonstrate that concern. Resolution 10-07, adopted at the 1977 Dallas convention, reads as follows:

> Resolved, that the Synod encourage Districts to fund, develop, and/or utilize evangelism programs, efforts, resources, and personnel for

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56 *Proceedings of the 1956 Convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), 212-213.

57 *Statistical Year Book of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), 89.

> congregation that either anticipate or are involved in racial transition in their communities.[58]

At the 1979 St. Louis convention, Resolution 1-23A, "To Recruit Workers for Ethnic and Special Ministries," which was adopted, speaks of setting up both recruitment and training programs:

> Resolved, That the District of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod be encouraged through their respective mission committees and boards to consult with the synodical Commission on Black Ministry when prioritizing new mission starts in areas which are black, with the synod-wide goal of establishing at least one new mission station each year in a predominantly black area.[59]

One more example, Resolution 6-10A, entitled "To Consider Employment of Black Faculty and Professional Staff" (which was adopted) stated

> Resolved, That each college and seminary be encouraged to continue considering employment of at least one black faculty or professional staff member.[60]

The words of Christ are very appropriate at this time and place: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (Luke 10:2). The key words in these resolutions are the words "encourage" and/or "urge." These resolutions underscore two very

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58 Proceedings of the 1977 Convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977), 752-757.

59 Proceedings of the 1979 Convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 201-206.

60 Ibid., 199.

significant facts. Synod is only advisory in its role; therefore, nothing is mandated or required. And since it is the Gospel that motivates, the resolutions typically omit reference to any timetable for the accomplishment of the objectives. Our prayer is that God's Spirit will give us the means for implementation, whether it is structural, monetary, or personal.

What kind of leadership emerged in the LC-MS during these periods? The kind of leaders who entered the professional church during these difficult times can be compared to Moses, as to the qualities of their leadership. Therefore, say to the Israelites, "I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you . . . and I will redeem you . . ." (Ex. 6:56, NIV).

Effective leaders persevere through tough times. When Moses gave God's message of Law and Gospel to the people, they were too discouraged to listen. The Hebrews did not want to hear any more about God and His promises, because the last time they listened to Moses, all they received was more work and greater suffering. Sometimes a clear word from God is followed by a period when no change in the situation is apparent. During that time, seeming setbacks may turn people away from wanting to hear more about God's love in Christ. The leaders of the past did not give up. They kept bringing God's message of Law and Gospel as Moses did. By focusing on God's love in Christ, they were able to see beyond temporary setbacks and reversals.

CHAPTER THREE

THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CULTURAL BARRIERS

One of the most critical issues facing Concordia University Wisconsin today is the identity of minority students. Who am I? Who am I in Christ? Who am I in my role as a non-Christian in a Christian university? The search for authentic identity requires minorities to discover their own spiritual depths and relate them to the functions of life. Since most of our minorities are non-Lutherans, they do not take full advantage of the spiritual life ministry offered on campus.

What has this meant for the development of a cross-cultural ministry on campus? How has the social, economic, racial, and political experience of various interpreters of the Bible affected or colored their understanding of the faith? Have they really a written universal theology for all Christians, or have they written theologies for specific races, middle and upper classes of the imperialistic nations of the world? In short, just how crucial to the theological endeavor and to religious understanding is the socioeconomic experience of the theologians? These are typical of the pressing questions that minorities bring with them to college today.

A. Martin Luther's Experiences

Luther saw that the total nature of human beings is distorted and affected by sin. Against those who believed that human reason had been unaffected by the Fall so reason could show the existence of God and reveal something of God's nature, Luther

argued that reason is tainted by sin so that the God our reason discovers is the God we *want* to discover. Against those who believed that in the inner experience of God they heard clearly and purely the voice of God, Luther warned that inner experience is also corrupted with sin and the God human beings experience is the God they want to experience. For these reasons, Luther held to the principle of the Scriptures alone; they must check all of their reason and experience by the clear word of God's revelation. Nevertheless, they must carry Luther's analysis even further. People's attempts to test their reasons, experience by Scripture ordinarily requires them to interpret the Scripture, and their interpretations are always tainted by sin. People end with the interpretation they want to find. Even if they grant the premise that the Scriptures are the inerrant words of God, when they try to interpret those words, sin blurs their understanding.

Luther also emphasized that people can never find salvation or assurance of salvation from looking to themselves. They cannot find it by looking to their interpretation of Scripture. Luther's theology of the cross was based on his understanding that people are always unworthy before God. As a result, their attempts to know and express God are inevitably frail human attempts that sin infects. This, in part, is why God is always hidden, even in revelation. Human nature wants something that it can hold and control to give security and assurance. So while Christians may be ready to confess a theology of the cross at many points, they always

try to keep one point of triumphalism. They may be prepared to admit that God's revelation contradicts our expectations. Nevertheless, in our search for security we become triumphalist at another point. In our experience, we claim, we have known God purely and clearly, or in our Biblical interpretation we have grasped God fully and completely. It is difficult indeed for human nature to quit looking at itself to find assurance.

It was when Luther fell into despair that he heard the good news that what he could not find by looking at himself had been given to him by God. Luther had not been able to justify himself by his good works, but God had justified him by grace. Luther said that sin was "total" in the sense that every aspect of human life is affected by it. It is necessary, therefore, to see that justification is also total; it affects the whole life. The sinner who has failed to do good works is justified. The heretic who has misinterpreted the Bible is justified. The person whose inner experience has no feeling of God is justified. The one who doubts is justified. Also, what could not be found by looking to the self has been given by God's grace.

Justification by grace through faith means a renewing of human life. Because God forgives sinners, our human works are motivated by His grace. Knowing that human beings have been accepted by God despite their failure to be righteous, they can no longer thank God that they are not like the other sinners around them. Similarly, their experiences are not necessary. Some may have had more ecstatic experiences than

others, but that is no reason for feeling superior. No one's experiences are good enough to depend on. Some may have interpreted the Bible more profoundly than others, but none of them can depend for salvation on their interpretations. Paul brings this out when he says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Thus, what human beings find in themselves is not the basis of their place before God.

When Luther came to understand justification by grace, he came to see good works in a new light. They were not the prerequisites of salvation; they were the means by which we could express our love to God and our gratitude for what God has done for us. Because one has been freed from the anxious concern to save oneself by works, one could perform works more freely without continually worrying if they were proper, correctly motivated, and so on. More importantly, one dared to be honest with oneself and to confess the shortcomings in one's works. This in turn could lead to a true repentance through which one might change one's works and the ways of doing them.

The point that we are making is illustrated well by the spiritual autobiography of C. S. Lewis. He calls his autobiography *Surprised By Joy* because he was brought to Christian faith through an ecstatic inner experience that occurred from time to time. This experience, which defied description, he simply called "joy." At the end of his

life's story Lewis asks what about the place of joy in his present life. He says, "To tell you the truth, the subject has lost nearly all interest for me since I became a Christian."[61] It is not, he says, that the experience no longer occurs; it just does not seem so important to him. At the beginning, the inner experience served as a pointer to God who was "other and outer." When God remained in doubt, the pointer naturally loomed large in his thoughts. The inner experience of joy has been like a signpost. When we are lost, a signpost is a great matter; it points us in the right direction. Nevertheless, when the right road has been found and signposts are passed every few miles, little attention it paid to them, says Lewis.[62]

What Lewis is pointing out here is that the Christian life cannot be lived by looking at the self or its experiences. Although some feel that inner experience may have played an important role in bringing them to faith, mature faith must cease being preoccupied with the self and must look outside the self for its assurance. When people find their assurance beyond themselves, they have the confidence that allows them to look at the self, its experiences, its works, and its interpretation of the Bible, and to put all of them into the proper perspective. People dare to be critical of

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61 C. S. Lewis, *Surprised By Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1968), 238.

62 Ibid., 136.

the self's attainments precisely because their assurance no longer rests there.

This is an age that emphasizes inner experience. As such, it provides neither more nor less of an opportunity for Christian faith than other ages. It is neither more nor less a danger or a temptation to Christians than any other age. In all ages faith may arise from hearing the good news that God accepts all people as they are. In all ages people are tempted to look at themselves both for salvation and assurance. In different ages, with different emphases, the form of the dangers and temptations varies. In all ages people need to remember "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord. For it is not the man who commends himself that is accepted, but the man whom the Lord commends" (2 Cor. 10:17-18).

As people read the Gospel, they see that these insights from research are in harmony with the way Jesus carried out his earthly ministry. Jesus did not save people from far off. He came down to this sin-polluted earth and took on the limitations of human flesh. He was born under the law and obeyed the law to redeem all who had forsaken the law. And in His ministry to particular people, many see a Jesus who knows nothing of a partiality mentality. He walked and lived with the people and shared their daily burdens as He taught them and redeemed them. Even more specifically, consider how He worked and served so that his "hosts" could perceive themselves as people for whom He cared deeply. When the leper came to Him in Matthew 8:1-3, Jesus did not pinch His nose, hold up His hands and shout, "keep

away! I can heal you from here." No, "Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man . . . `Be clean!'" Jesus knows all of His people intimately.

B. Human Dignity in Scripture

It has been encouraging to witness the openness of the group to confront cultural, academic, and spiritual issues. Being the only minority group on campus made this a struggle at times, but the growth and the strength of the minority group has made it a worthwhile struggle.

The dignity of human beings is asserted in three successive sentences in Genesis 1:27, 28. First, "God created man in his own image"; second, "male and female he created them"; and third, "God blessed them and said to them, `. . . fill the earth and subdue it.'" Human dignity consists of unique relationships that God established for His creatures by creation, which together constitute a large part of mankind's humanness, and which the Fall distorted but did not destroy.

The first is our relationship to God. Human beings are Godlike beings, created by His will and in His image. The divine image includes those rational, moral, and spiritual qualities that separate mankind from the animals and relate him to God. As a consequence, people can learn about God from pastors or teachers (it is a basic human right to hear the Gospel); come to know, love, and serve Him; live in conscious, humble dependence upon Him; understand His will; and obey His commands. So

then, all those human rights they call the freedom to profess, practice, and propagate religion, the freedom of worship, of conscience, of thought, and of speech came under this first rubric of our relationship to God. It is striking that even the deistic leaders of the American and French revolutions knew this instinctively and referred to the "Supreme Being" from whom they ultimately derive human rights.

The second unique capacity of human beings concerns our relationships to one another. The God who made humankind is Himself a social being, one God comprising three eternally distinct modes of personhood. He said, "Let us make man in our image" and "it is not good for the man to be alone." So God made male and female and told them to procreate. Sexuality is His creation, marriage is His institution, and human freedoms which are called the sanctity of sex, marriage and family, the rights of peaceful assembly, and the right to receive respect, whatever our age, sex, race, or rank come under this second rubric of our relationship to each other.

Human value depends then on God's view of them and His relationship to them. Human rights are limited; they are limited to what is compatible with being the humans God made and meant for people to be. True freedom is found in being true selves as authentic human beings, not in contradicting ourselves. That is why it has been essential to define "human being" before defining "human rights." This principle will be a helpful guide when people come to the demands for "feminine rights" and "gay rights." The question these demands pose is how far feminism and homosexual

practices are compatible with the humanness God has created and intends to safeguard.

The tragedy is that "human rights" have not always meant "equal rights." The good gifts of the Creator are spoiled by human selfishness. The rights God gave to all human beings equally easily degenerate into personal rights only, rights on which one insists, despite the rights of others. So the history of the world has been the story of conflict between individual personal rights and the rights of others, between the good of each and the good of all, and between the individual and the community.

The quality of human beings is clearly expressed in the familiar Authorized Version words, "no respect of persons." This could be a misleading translation of the greek because, of course, persons must at all costs be respected. The original Greek expression means "God does not favor one person over another" (Rom.2:11). In other words, we must show "no partiality" (NIV) in our attitude toward other people and give no special deference to some because they are rich, famous, or influential. The biblical authors insist on this. Moses declared, for example, "The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality . . ." (Dt. 10:17). Therefore, Israelite judges were to show no partiality either, but rather give justice "to the small and to the great alike" (Dt. 1:16, 17; cf. 16:18, 19).

The same emphasis occurs in the New Testament. God is the impartial Judge. He does not regard external appearances or circumstances. He shows no favoritism, whatever our racial or social background may be (e.g., Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; 1

Peter 1:17). Some leading Jews addressed Jesus (perhaps in flattery, but still with accuracy) thus: "Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are" (Mark 12:14). That is, He neither deferred to the rich and powerful, nor despised the poor and weak, but gave equal respect to all, whatever their social status. Human beings need to do the same.

Another illustration of this principle is found in the book of Job. It is Job's final appeal for justice, after his three friends have at last stopped their unfair, unkind, untrue accusations. Job still clings to his innocence, while at the same time acknowledging that God is a just judge. If he has broken God's laws (by immorality, idolatry, or oppression), then indeed let God's judgment fall upon him. He continues: "If I have denied justice to my [servants], when they had a grievance against me, what will I do when God confronts me? What will I answer when called to account? Did not he who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?" (Job 31:13-15). Job continued in similar vein about the poor and needy, the widows and orphans. People have equal rights because they have the same Creator. Both the dignity and the quality of human beings are traced in Scripture to their creation.

Some Christians often cringe when the conversation turns to human rights, for it smacks of one person asserting his or her rights against another, and so of conflict and selfishness. Clarifying the relationship between rights and responsibilities is important

at this stage.

The Bible says much about defending other people's rights, on the contrary, when it addresses people, it emphasizes their responsibilities, not their rights. Human beings are to love God and to love their neighbor. These primary requirements comprise their whole duty, for "all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments," Jesus said (Matthew 22:40). In fact, what the Bible contains, as Christopher Wright has written, is a "Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities (especially about loving God and neighbor), not of human rights. Indeed, the Bible goes further and links them. It emphasizes that their responsibility is to secure the other person's rights. Human beings must even forgo their own rights to do so.[63] Let us remember that this principle applies to all people.

Of this responsible renunciation of rights, Jesus Christ is the supreme model. Although eternally "in very nature God," He "did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness" (Philippians 2:6, 7). Throughout his life He was a victim of abuses of human rights. He became a refugee baby in Egypt, a prophet without honor in his own country, and the Messiah rejected by the religious

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63 Christopher J. H. Wright, *Human Rights: A Study in Biblical Themes, Grove Booklet on Ethic*, N (Downers Grove,: Inter Varsity Press, 1979), 16.

establishment of His own people to whom He had come. He became a prisoner of conscience, refusing to compromise in order to secure His release. He was falsely accused, unjustly condemned, brutally tortured, and finally crucified. Throughout His ordeal He declined to defend or demand His rights, in order that by His self-sacrifice He might save all people.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," wrote Paul. Paul practiced what he preached. He had rights as an apostle (the right to marry, the right to receive financial support). Nevertheless, he renounced them for the sake of the Gospel, in order to become everybody's slave and so serve their rights (see 1 Corinthians 9).

The renunciation of rights, however unnatural and idealistic it may seem, is an essential characteristic of God's new society. In the world outside, people assert their own rights and exercise authority. "Not so with you," Jesus said. On the contrary, in His community those aspiring after greatness must become servants, the leader the slave, and the first last. For love "is not self-seeking," Paul writes. And this fundamental stance, learned from Jesus, applies in every situation. For example, believers should not prosecute one another, especially in an unbelieving court. Christian litigation was a scandal in Corinth; it is still a problem in America and other countries. Christians should at the very least settle their own disputes. Better still,

"why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? Is not this the way of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 6:7).

This last point, that the nonretaliation of Jesus was accompanied by a commitment of himself to God, is an important addition. To renounce rights is not to acquiesce in wrongs. The reason people do not judge is that this is God's prerogative, not theirs (Romans 12:9). Besides, Christ is coming back, and then all evil will be judged and justice finally and publicly vindicated.

People need to accept that other people's rights are their responsibility. Human beings are their brothers' keepers, because God has put them in the same human family and so made them related to and responsible for one another. The law and the prophets, Jesus and His apostles, all lay on people a particular duty to serve the poor and defend the powerless. People cannot escape this by saying that other people are not their responsibility. People need then to feel the pain of those who suffer oppression. "Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering" (Hebrews 13:3). In order to do this, people may need to inform themselves more thoroughly about contemporary violations of human rights. Then whatever actions they may believe it right to take, they need to ensure that the methods they use do not infringe on the very human rights they are seeking to champion.

I am thinking particularly of the life of the university, which is meant to be a

sign of God's rule. The university should become a community in the country in which human responsibility for each other is accepted; the rights of others are sought and never intentionally violated, while their own are often renounced; there is no partiality, favoritism, or discrimination; the poor and the weak are defended, and human beings are free to be human as God made them and meant for them to be.

Martin Luther's experience was certainly an important factor in causing the Reformation. Caught up in the general feeling of insecurity of his time, Luther searched for religious security and assurance. He wanted desperately to know what saved him. After his traumatic experiences with the death of a friend and his own narrow escape from lightning, Luther took the most radical route to security available in his world. He entered a monastery and dedicated himself with zeal to all of the good religious works encouraged by the church of his time. Luther was so zealous that he confessed his sins daily until his bored confessor finally told him to go out and commit some sins worthy of confessing before he came back. Nevertheless, in all of this Luther failed to find a sense of security.[64]

Luther was ruthlessly honest with himself and the scriptural message.[65] Luther knew that even when he had done the most rigorous of good works, his motivation for

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64 *LW*, vol. 30, 55.

65 *LW*, vol. 24, 79.

doing them was self-centered. He was not acting because he loved God with his whole heart and mind and strength; he was acting because he wanted to save Martin Luther's eternal soul. He was serving God because it was good for himself. Nevertheless, when Luther read the scriptures, they evidently called for a quite different kind of righteousness. For example, Paul said, "If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing" (1 Cor. 13:33). Paul's point, as Luther saw it, was that even if one does heroic acts of goodness, such as giving away all possessions or dying a martyr's death, it is not the righteousness that God seeks unless it has been done for love. Jesus criticized those who gave to charity to establish a reputation for themselves (Matt. 6:2-3). Luther saw that while a person is serving God to benefit the self this is not the righteousness that God seeks.[66]

Faced with this understanding of Scripture, Luther saw his own passionate search for salvation to be as selfish as that of a person who sells his or her soul to make a worldly fortune. This led Luther to despair. If we can please God by doing certain meritorious actions (good works), then by an effort of the will we can bring ourselves to do some amazing things. We can make sacrifices and perform incredible feats. Nevertheless, if God is interested not in what we do, but in why we do it, then what can be done? By an effort of will, we can make ourselves do various things, but

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66 *LW*, Vol. 22, 241.

by no effort of the will can we make ourselves do them for the right motives.[67] If we are acting out of self-interest, how can we remove our self? Rather, we must pay attention to it. The more we become concerned with it, the less we focus on others or on God. The Middle Ages, in its search for security, put considerable emphasis on self-denial—fasting, celibacy, and poverty. Surely such actions remove the self from the center. Luther saw that these too may be done to win something for the self. Often religious people of the Middle Ages emphasized that what they gave up in self-sacrifice was really worthless compared with the reward that was gained. As Luther saw it, this gave the whole show away. The seeming acts of self-denial were really an affirmation of the self on a more subtle level.

Luther's study of Scripture forced him to see that he was helpless to build his own security. He was "curved in on himself," and any effort that he made to overcome this problem simply intensified his concern with himself. In short, his will was in bondage. He could do nothing to free himself from the shackles of egotism. He fell deeper and deeper into despair. His only hope was that something outside him could liberate him from his bondage.

It was at this point that Luther read the words of Habakkuk, "but the righteous shall live by his faith" (Hab.. 2:4). As the Quakers would put it, they "spoke to his

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67 Ibid., 189.

condition." The Bible took on a wholly new meaning for Luther. It was not a law, laying a demand upon him that he must fulfill to win God's favor; it was "gospel," good news. The good news was that what Luther could not do for himself, God had already done for him in Jesus Christ. He saw the doctrine of justification to mean that God would accept him as he was. At last Luther experienced the peace and sense of security for which he had searched so long. His peace and security were not based on anything he had done or was; they were based on what God had done and is. Therefore, because it was God's grace that had saved him, Luther could have the assurance that his own works could never have brought to him.

Truly, therefore, the Reformation was born in Luther's experience, both his experience of failing to achieve peace and security by his own works and in his having found peace and security by relying upon God's acts. As Bengt R. Hoffman sums it up:

> Does God meet us in wrath or goodness, as death or life, through law and gospel? This became Luther's problem with the nature of God. This problem was resolved, insofar as it can be resolved in human existence, by the way in which Luther experienced God.[68]

Luther's theology of the cross led him to interpret the Scripture in a way that many modern biblical studies have verified. The Bible does not have a dualistic view of either matter and spirit or body and soul. Luther recognized that the Bible presents

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68 Bengt R. Hoffman, *Luther and the Mystics* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976), 131.

the human person as a whole or a unity, not duality. In a passage in which he is explaining the Incarnation, Luther illustrates the unity of Christ by using the unity of the human being as an analogy. He says,

> You cannot indicate a special place or space where the soul is present alone without the body, like a kernel without the shell, or where the flesh is without the skin, like a pea without a pod. On the contrary, wherever the one is, there must be the other also. Thus you cannot shell the divinity from the humanity and lay it aside at some place away from the humanity.[69]

Luther affirmed that the works of the "Spirit" bear no relation to a body-soul dualism. Instead, "all that our body does outwardly and physically, if God's Word is added to it and it is done through faith, is in reality and in name done spiritually."[70] This means first for Luther that the material elements of the sacraments—water, bread, and wine—take on spiritual significance when the Word is added to them. Those who disdain the material elements of the sacraments to be more spiritual have thus missed the biblical meaning of "spiritual." Luther charges that Carlstadt, for example, "is bent on making spiritual what God wants to be bodily."[71]

The emphasis of Luther on the spiritual working through matter and the body results in more than a defense of the sacraments. He also argues that they most truly

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69 *LW*, vol. 37, 219.

70 *LW*, vol. 37, 92.

71 *LW*, vol. 40, 187.

served God through the everyday material world and its operations. The triumphalist, trying to be spiritual, assumes that activities must be found which are "different and out of the ordinary" and such a one turns to the ascetic or celibate way of life that denies the physical and material expression. "And they are quick to deduce from this that rearing children, doing domestic work, etc. is not a holy life. For they look solely at the outward appearance of the works and are unable to judge by the source of these works and their origin in the Vine."[72] What marks a work as spiritual and pleasing to God is not a question of whether it is a work of the "soul" or of the body; it is a question of the motive behind it. When it is done out of faith in God, it is a good work no matter how humble and ordinary it may seem.[73]

C. Racism

According to *Webster's New World Dictionary*, racism is a "doctrine or teaching . . . that claims to find racial differences in character and intelligence, that asserts the superiority of one race over another, that seeks to maintain the supposed purity of a race," and "any program or practice of racial discrimination or segregation

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72 *LW*, vol. 37, 231.

73 Ibid., 232.

based on such beliefs."[74] The most common definition of racism is a scheme of oppressive social classification based on physical features, mainly skin pigmentation, that suggests that its roots are in the biological realm. There is a history of scientific attempts to define races from such distinctions. Related to this is the history of defining races on the basis of blood, or at least along certain "blood lines." Such attempts fill both literature and popular language. Kings and queens have "royal blood"; some say that aristocrats possessed "blue blood." In the United States, laws have been passed to guard against the mixing of bloods. For many years an acceptable definition of an African American was anyone who had a "quantum of Negro blood." The effects of this law still linger in some parishes. The key here was the contention that certain hereditary characteristics were carried through the blood. The actual definition of racism, however, is far more differentiated and complex.

1. Meanings of Racism

a. Relation to Nationalism

Many writers relate racism to certain theories of nationalism. This definition often shares certain pseudoscientific opinions about racial characteristics or potentials with theories about the role or calling of particular people. Western societies have incorporated racism into their ideologies. When it functions as part of a political

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74 *Webster's New World Dictionary* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1994), 1106.

system, racism becomes a significant part of the ideology of white supremacy. As such, it developed as part of a colonialist rationale in the mid-eighteenth century.

The theory that some races are inherently inferior to others was deemed a necessary support for colonial exploitation on the part of European powers. As an ideology, racism functions as an official position by which people and their governments arrange their societies and policies to further their self-image and vested interests. When combined with religion, the ideology of white supremacy becomes a powerful civil religion in which God or the gods are said to be the source and protector of such a system. Logically, these writers could oppose such a system, so conceived. The most blatant expressions of this nationalist ideology in the past 60 years are Nazism in Germany and the past government policy of apartheid in South Africa. Both systems share the same view of nationhood: a theory of ancestry based upon blood, often reinforced with religion. These views are buttressed by or interpreted through the application of selected Scripture references that seem to offer divine sanction for racialist practices.

b. Relation to White Supremacy

Distinguishing between racism and white supremacy is important. The latter has become official doctrine in some countries, whereas racism can occur without having a systematic supremacist rationale which is even more common. Racism, at a popular level, is rarely subjected to the rigors of rationality. This attitude, often

unconscious and always undisciplined, is based upon erroneous assumptions about others. Gordon Allport referred to them as "stereotypes" or pictures in our heads. These mental attitudes can easily be translated into forms of discrimination. Nevertheless, some form of official sanction for racialist attitudes is necessary if personal hostility toward others, based upon racial characteristics, is to become institutionalized. The most recognizable forms by which racism expresses itself are patterns of segregation, attitudes of stereotyping, and ordinances of discrimination.[75]

c. Racism as Attitudes and Values

Some define racism in terms of the attitudes and actions of persons or institutions toward others, based upon color or ethnic origin, with a view to deprive them of access to the rights and privileges of those in power. Central to this definition is the issue of power. To maintain a racialist position over others, the racist must have some access to power. Or, if lacking power, he/she must manipulate the system to give the oppressed the impression that power is possessed. To be successful in either case, a racist can manipulate the image-building apparatus of a society. Those in power must carefully manage reality.

Thus education, politics, the arts and sciences, and even religion are the multiple ways in which a given culture expresses its fundamental values, serving as

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75 Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Reading, MA: Allison-Wesley, 1979), 6, 27.

channels for its reigning ideology. It has been shown, for instance, that the dictionary can be used to reinforce the values of the dominant group, or conversely, to reinforce the dominant group's negative images of the subgroup. References to "black" or "blackness" are associated with negative qualities, whereas "white" or "whiteness" are associated with positive characteristics. By this means, language serves as a major conveyor of a nation's cultural values.

These values (held as early as the 16th century by some Europeans), when wedded to Scripture, which seems to identify whiteness with salvation and cleansing (e.g., Isa. 1:18), became the basis for racial discrimination anchored in Holy Writ and the divine will. Later, an elaborate theology developed which sought to base discrimination and segregation on God's "curse" upon Ham. This theology, though long discredited by both science and responsible exegesis, persists among supremacists in the Christian community.[76]

2. Effects of Racism on Persons

Minorities within racist societies are systematically exposed to negative images of themselves, to the extent they are exposed to the majority culture. These negative images become internalized. Such exposure is the chief source of various forms of

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76 Chancellor Williams, *The Destruction of Black Civilization: Great Issues of a Race from 4500 B.C. to 2000 A.D.* (Chicago: Third World Press, 1987), 26, 157, 284.

self-abnegation on the part of minorities. Self-doubt, self-hatred, and "compensatory grandiose behavior" are only several ways in which negative self-image is internalized and acted out in minority behaviors.[77]

The effects of racism in any society are too many to mention, but appreciating the ways in which persons have come to terms with this reality in society is important. For many victims of racism in American society (who are usually people of color), internalizing the definitions, explanations, and expectations of the majority is all too easy. Their hard work in school or the workplace often yields disproportionate benefits compared with the efforts of their white counterparts.[78] It is all too easy, when confronted by daily reminders that one's efforts are not good enough for even a modicum of success, to assume that the fault lies within oneself. This is often followed by harder work, and, if this proves unfruitful, the resultant despair often leads to alcoholism, violence toward loved ones, or various forms of dropout.

For others, adaptation takes the form of accommodation, the acceptance of the values, styles, and behaviors of the dominant culture. The price of such an accommodation has often been a form of ethnic schizophrenia, or at least a struggle

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77 Ibid., 205.

78 Ibid., 205.

for an identity that no longer can be defined internally or in terms of one's cultural heritage. W. E. B. DuBois referred to this as the black person's attempt to mediate between "is-ness' and "two-ness," what one knows oneself to be as an African American and the definition of identity pressed upon one by the oppressing culture, a wrenching split that produces rage and violence in the victim.[79] Violence is the consequence of this prolonged loss of well-being in powerless persons. Thus violence is not an expression of power, but of powerlessness. Its source is in frustration, impotence, and an inability to assert oneself in human relations.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that power in the service of racialist attitudes is not merely personal and private in its expression, but also institutional. It is in its institutional forms that the minority person is most likely to encounter repeated denial aimed at his or her personhood. The school room, the court room, the factory, and the corner store can exhibit attitudes that tend to reinforce majority attitudes of superiority and power. In the riots that shook American cities in the late sixties neighborhood "mom and pop" stores were torched because they were perceived as perpetuating powerlessness in those neighborhoods.[80] Churches have also

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79 W. E. B. DuBois, *The Soul of Black Folks* (New York: Pilgrim Books, 1969), 34-68.

80 Ibid., 31.

contributed to the climate of racism in the society by remaining segregated, often by the simple device of white members moving when people of color occupied the same neighborhoods. Thus is communicated to the community that Christianity is incapable of relieving racialist attitudes. The aim of the civil rights movement was not revolution; it was integration.

D. Separatism

Many victims of discrimination have found recourse in various forms of separatism. For some, this has taken the form of self-imposed segregation, that is, the refusal to have any more social intercourse with the majority than necessary and the refusal to cooperate in any political options such as holding political office. This is a form of self-determination and in its most extreme expression was championed by the former black Muslims in the decades of the sixties and seventies, when they made demands of land grants to secure a status of independence from the oppressor.

E. Integration

Another attempt at coping with racism has been integration. The strategy carries certain assumptions about the good will of the oppressor and confidence in the oppressor's willingness to abide by the laws of the land where those laws seem to provide equal protection for all its citizens. Experience has shown, however, that

people who have power over others rarely live up to their stated values unless they can show that it is clearly in their best interests to do to. Therefore, integrationists have taken care not to appear too aggressive in the pursuit of equality while pressing claim to the benefits of the legal system. The civil rights movement changed even this strategy in the main when nonviolent confrontation forced the issues of power and vested interests to the fore, and they caused the white majority to see that its interests were clearly in jeopardy if they refused to live up to their laws.

Integration is illusory for many. At best it holds out the prospect of resolving racial conflicts in the most radical way—by getting the victims and victimizers together, or at least within proximity. Attempts have been made to integrate neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces. Pressure has been applied to effect changes in the image-making industries such as those responsible for writing textbooks and television commercials. But after years of legislation, busing of children, and multicolored images on TV screens, integration has achieved only a modest success.

Integration is limited in its ability to effect the necessary resolutions between antagonists. The chief shortcoming is that integration requires that the victims make most of the adjustments. When this is resisted by minorities, the majority has only to recall its good will. Or when the majority feels they have gone as far as they can, they suspend the arrangement. They simply walk off or change the rules of the game. This can be done legally by outvoting or outspending the minority. These are

expressions of majority power.

F. Interpersonal Ministry

Racism is, more often than not, irrational. It is based upon sinful images in the mind. Nevertheless, these images, given enough time, can become reality. As a first step in helping the person afflicted by these images, it is important to trace the origins of these images. In a pastoral conversation with the author, a college football player, upon hearing the Old Testament story of the tower of Babel, recalled another story of Noah's "curse" of Canaan. I could tell he was trying to find a connection between that dimly recalled story and race relations on the team. "Where did I hear that story?" he asked. I asked about his background, and he mentioned a Southern state. When I asked him if he had ever attended church, he replied that he had gone to Sunday school as a boy. As we talked, it became clear that his earliest recollection of teaching about the supposed inferiority of African Americans came from his religious teachings in Sunday school.

Related to these mental images about others is fear. People need help to identify these fears. Often they ground them in the person's own sense of guilt for past failures in human relations: "I know how I would have behaved toward people who have done me wrong if I had the chance" (the chance, of course, to get even). Such a person needs to realize that not everyone who has been wronged because of

racist actions or policies wants to get even. African Americans, for instance, have generally not sought to get even but to catch up in the arena of opportunity. But then that may be another fear—that if given opportunity, "they" will take over. This needs careful analysis, for this fear may mask the real issues, that of a pervasive sense of powerlessness in being racist. The issue may never have been racial in nature, but embedded in deep personal, family, and social inequities. A classic illustration was the emergence of the doctrine of apartheid in South Africa. When the budding Afrikaner nation severed itself from Holland in 1806 the issue was not racialist hostility toward the neighboring Xhosa people to the east. Rather, it was an understandable reaction to an alien British administration bent on Anglicizing them. This was a beginning of an intense struggle for self-definition on a national scale. Only later did a native *berrenvolk* nationalism develop into an official ideology of apartheid aimed at native Africans. The origin of the ideology was fear and a deep-seated sense of national insecurity.

Racialism of the right and left seems related to the need to be in control, especially when social circumstances suggest that others, unlike themselves, threaten to supplant or marginalize their social position. Here it is important to help racists to see that by surrendering stereotypes and relinquishing the need to dominate others, they are acting in their own best interest. This suggests that, finally, the best way to deal with racism is to expose racists to their victims. If part of the problem is ignorance

and social isolation, ways must be structured to expose people who fear others to those very people whom they fear. Assistance must be given to assure that the enemy has a face, a name, and an identity. One way to do this is to identify a task or problem that affects most people, the solution to which is not possible except in a cooperative effort. United by such a problem-solving venture, people often discover that past feelings of animosity and stereotypical thinking do not hold up under the dynamics of cooperation.

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, for example, has adopted many resolutions over the years regarding racism and racial discrimination. Typical is 1992 Res. 3-03, in which the Synod

> Resolved, That The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod urges its members to repent of any attitude or practice of racism as individuals and congregations; and be it further
>
> Resolved, That the Synod repudiates all racism and urges its members to celebrate God's love in Christ and their forgiveness and acceptance as God's children by loving and serving all their fellow humans as they have been loved and served, without any exception of persons, and to work toward social justice in their neighborhoods and workplaces and all areas of society . . . .[81]

This resolution brings the Scriptural truths and principles to bear upon a contemporary issue that is not only of ecclesial but also of social and political concern. Whenever and wherever the church faithfully carries out its God's given duty of proclaiming the Gospel, it will also influence the society in which its members live,

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81 *Proceedings of the 1992 Convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House*, 1992), 113-114.

work, and interact with others.

In 1994, for example, the CTCR adopted and distributed a report on racism and the church that addresses such topics as "Racism and the Necessity of a Christian Response," a "Biblical Perspective on Racism," and principles for "Combating Racism in the Church." As with synodical resolutions addressing this topic, the CTCR's report is based on the presupposition that racism involves fundamental principles to which the Scriptures speak clearly, but that society's response to racism involves any number of political complexities that invite the church to speak clearly.

> We in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have before us a wonderful opportunity to commit ourselves to strive toward making racism a thing of the past, and to demonstrate before a watching world how people of all cultures and groups can become one in Christ, who has made of many one body for the edification of all.[82]

This report speaks, therefore, primarily to individuals within the Synod itself, and it does so from biblical and confessional resources without specifically addressing the specific societal policies and regulations that are best suited to dealing with racism.

Many African American students have been exposed to institutional, cultural, and psychological racism.[83] These racist encounters have negatively affected their personality adjustment, self-esteem, and motivation. According to some researchers,

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82 *Racism and the Church, A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod* (St. Louis, 1994), 58.

83 *Racism and the Church*, 18.

African American students' entrance into the public schools is preceded by a social typing as "underachievers," "unmotivated," and "culturally deprived," which literally ensures their failure through a self-fulfilling prophecy.[84] This statement suggests that because of one's culture and race he or she is deprived—that, again, devalues the person.

The church's response to racism is complicated by the lack of agreement among sociologists and anthropologists regarding certain facets of this issue. In fact, there is less than complete consensus regarding the very definition of the term "racism." It is difficult to disagree with Andrew Hacker's claim that "something called racism obviously exists,"[85] but what exactly does racism mean?

Racism is a faith. It is a form of idolatry. It is an abortive search for meaning. In its early modern beginnings, racism was a justificatory device. It did not emerge as a faith. It arose as an ideological justification for the constellations of political and economic powers that were expressed in colonialism and slavery. But gradually the idea of the superior race was heightened and deepened in meaning and value so that it pointed beyond the historical structures of relation, until it emerged into human existence itself.

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84 Hacker, *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*, 19.

85 Ibid., 20.

G. Coping with the Power of the Oppressor

The issue in the conflict between victim and oppressor is power. Oppressed persons are typically powerless. They lack the ability to say "no" or "yes" to their oppressors. Power is derived from the Latin *posse*, meaning "to be able," and connotes the ability to affect change in one's life or in the lives of others.[86] It is crucially related to a sense of being. It is the legacy of racism that its victims are denied the right to be.

The oppressor is also oppressed by the power he or she assumes. This is not always perceived by the oppressed. There is something illusory about power also. It promises more than it can deliver to those who possess it. They can be likened to a prison-house syndrome: those who keep others imprisoned are themselves incarcerated. Thus the genius of the civil rights struggle was Dr. King's realization that the oppressor must be set free if the oppressed were to be liberated.[87]

Groups of Christians who had not traditionally contributed to the theological scene began to do theologies on a major scale in the sixties. Three groups are especially important. First, were the theologians of the so-called "Third World."

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86 Randall C. Bailey, *The Recovery of Black Presence* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 51-68.

87 Ibid., 34.

These people, coming out of what many had called the North American and European "mission fields," look at Christian faith from the perspective of their experience as citizens of exploited nations. Second, within North America, the African American Christians developed "black theologies" based on the experience of being black in a racist society. Third, most women graduating in theological studies began to write theologies from the experience of being women within a sexist church. Central to these groups was a concern to see Christian faith from the perspective of the poor and/or the oppressed. Hence, they have found that the Bible speaks of liberation in a way that traditional theology has failed to see. So they can apply the term "liberation theology"[88] to the work of all of these groups.

What it means to write theologies from a particular experience of oppression is well illustrated by James Cone's early work, *God of the Oppressed.* A contemporary theology seems to agree, says Cone, that the theological task is to bring the Gospel to bear on the problems confronted by the present generation. In the United States one problem stands out—the enslavement of black Americans. Nonetheless, contemporary white theologians have been mostly silent about this situation: "There has been no sharp confrontation of the gospel with white racism." To Cone this means that there is a desperate need for a black theology to apply the freeing power of the gospel to the

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88 Ibid., 8.

black experience.[89]

For Cone the purpose of a black theology is to ask, "What does the Christian gospel have to say to powerless black men whose existence is threatened daily by the insidious tentacles of white power?"[90] Unfortunately, even theologians who were black have not done this task, says Cone, for they have allowed white theologians to define the theological questions and tasks. Christianity came to the black people through white oppressors and came in a form that required blacks to deny the significance of their blackness. As a result, the black intellectuals have become increasingly suspicious that Christianity is a tool of their oppressors. Thus the question has to be raised as to whether affirming one's blackness is possible while still retaining any identity with the Biblical tradition.

When Cone turns to the Scripture with the questions that come from the black experience, he finds that Jesus came to free humanity from the oppressive powers that crush people. He emphasizes Jesus' own definition of His ministry in Jesus' quotation from Isaiah:

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering the sight to the blind, to set at liberty

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89 James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 24-61.

90 Ibid., 29.

> those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19)

From this and other New Testament passages, Cone concludes that Jesus' work was essentially one of liberation:

> It is the age of liberation, in which "the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleaned, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the good news preached to them" (Luke 7:22). This is not pious talk, and one does not need a seminary degree to interpret the message. It is a message about the ghetto, and all other injustices done in the name of democracy and religion to further the social, political, and economic interests of the oppressor. In Christ, God enters human affairs and takes sides with the oppressed.[91]

Cone concludes that in the United States today Christ is in the ghettos taking the side of the poor and the oppressed. In that situation, "Christianity is not alien to Black Power; it is Black Power."[92]

Cone claims that if the Gospel is essentially a word about liberation, the white churches in American are un-Christian. As in the early church one could not apparently be both Aryan and Christian, in contemporary America one apparently cannot be both racist and Christian. Yet the white church supported slavery and has been only feeble to aid the plight of the black population. It has been more concerned with alcohol or Sunday closing than it has with babies being attacked by rats in the slums. Its theological seminaries only introduced a few black studies when black

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91 James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (New York: Seabury, 1969), 32.

92 Ibid., 38.

students forced it on them. Why have the white church and its theologians been so blind to racism, a major problem of American life? To Cone, the church and the theologians have evidently been blinded by their experience, which has tied them so close to the structures of a white racist society that they are unable to see how that society contradicts the Christian faith. America has produced no great theologians to compare with the Europeans, in part, at least, because its theologians "are too closely tied to the American structure to respond creatively to the life situation of the Church in this society. Instead of seeking to respond to the problems that are unique to this country, most Americans look to Europe for the newest word worth theologizing about."[93] In short, the white American experience has made it impossible for white theologians to see how the Gospel applies to the major problem of American life.

On the other hand, Cone believes that black theologians can see what white theologians have missed.[94] This is not because he claims that black theologians are more wise or virtuous than the white theologians. They can see it because their experience has been different. They have seen life, and so come to Christianity from the experience of being an oppressed and exploited people. The black people of

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93 Ibid., 85.

94 James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1970), 33- 34.

consequences; they write these theologies from the experience of oppression.[97] As Cone writes from the experience of being black in a racist society, women write from the experience of being women in a sexist society, and third world theologians write from the experience of being oppressed under colonialism. A liberation theory, therefore, is concerned with oppression and is dedicated to political means for removing the oppression.

H. Conclusion

After looking at Liberation Theology, what approach should CUW take toward this Theology? That Liberation Theology is a reality among many minority students attending Concordia University is a given. That its style incorporating elements from the world of politics along with economic methodologies and contemporary issues are appealing to a significant portion of the minority students who attend CUW is obvious. That it is recognized as meeting the needs of many minority students, who are touched by the societal weakness of their contemporaries, and by their own moral weakness, is evident by the number of minorities it attracts and the actions of those who read it.

The Administrators of CUW might well conclude that the concerns expressed about Liberation Theology are sufficient to warrant its criticism and avoidance. It certainly does not explicate the truth in terms that Lutherans are accustomed to reading and

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97 Dorothee Soelle, *Political Theology*, trans. Joan Shelley (Philadelphia: Fortess Press, 1974), 38-49.

America have known slavery from the point of view of slaves.[95] White Christians, knowing slavery from the point of view of the masters, could rationalize slavery and find ways of reconciling it to Christianity. The black church, however, born in slavery, could not "accept white interpretations of Christianity, which suggested the gospel was concerned with freedom of the soul and not the body." Black preachers found themselves in "a state of existential absurdity." They could not understand why God even permitted slavery. So from the beginning the black church was open to hear the liberating message of Scripture that had fallen upon the deaf ears of the white church.[96]

A theme similar to Cone's runs through the various currents of liberation and political theologies. The two terms, "liberation" and "political," describe quite similar movements in contemporary theology. Dorothee Soelle is known as a leading exponent of political theology. However, when she spoke at a conference on political theology at the University of Saskatchewan, the theme of her address was "Liberation." Liberation theologians make it clear that their theology is meant to have political

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95 James H. Cone, *Spiritual and the Blues* (New York: Seabury, 1972), 58-64.

96 James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 122-178.

hearing. It does not seem to point out the power for Christian living in Baptism and the Lord's Supper. It does seem heavy on the law and emphasizes the ability of people to decide to do better. It seems to assume that all Christians accept some core level of doctrine and thus only need to express a unity that already exist.

Nevertheless, the language of Liberation Theology at least at some level also expresses the opposite of these criticisms. The Good News of Jesus Christ is at least assumed and is often written and spoken by some of these writers. CUW can use the strengths of Liberation Theology to assist minority students to grow in their Christian maturity; our strong Law/Gospel witness will be richer for it. Cuw will be richer for embracing this theology to the extent that it can without compromising what it means to be Confessional and confessing Lutherans, we can more richly express our true catholic heritage.

CHAPTER FOUR

A MINORITY STUDENT PROGRAM FOR CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY WISCONSIN

The purpose of this chapter is to share the planning and preparation that went into developing the minority student program. I will give information on the site of implementation and a description of the program components.

To develop a successful minority student program on Concordia University Wisconsin's campus, it was necessary to look at the research and to observe other institutions of higher learning to find information on minority student programs. After doing some preliminary research and visiting most of these institutions, their program directors, and minority students, I decided to develop a minority student program at CUW. The program was modeled after Dr. Erik Erikson's eight-stage developmental framework,[98] which provides an adequate framework for envisioning developmental, cultural, and theological crises and thus the tasks of developing a mature spiritual person. It is my intention to examine two of Erikson's eight stages (one and eight) and listen for the invitation to academic, social, and spiritual growth in both.

Perhaps the best way to approach the Erikson theory is with a statement of the epigenetic principle. Erikson states, "anything that grows has a ground plan, and that out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy,

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98 Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1963), 247-274.

until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole."[99] The human organism grows according to a ground plan written into the structure of its being. Out of the ground plan the different parts arise, and each has its special time to emphasize a stage of development until the organism forms a whole. Erikson employs this biological principal as a model for psychosocial development. People not only develop bodies but basic attitudes, confidences, images of self, and competencies to act in human relations and in the larger social environment. This series of psychic developments shapes the recipient of God's grace.

> In his book, *The Christian Faith*, Robert Kolb states the following: The contemporary Harvard psychologist Erik Erikson has affirmed what the biblical writers told God's people centuries ago. He has developed an eight-stage basis for analyzing human development, the course of human life. The first fundamental stage of human existence (in the years between birth and age two), according to Erikson, revolves around trust or faith. This fundamental orientation largely determines the way in which individuals view the world. Learning to trust—or learning not to trust—the world around us determines much of our personality and the course of our life, Erikson insists.
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> We trust first of all our mother and then our father, Erikson observes, because we are first of all children, infants, dependent creatures. Born into the world, we are at the mercy of those around us. They become objects on which we depend. How they perform as objects of our dependence determines how we view ourselves—and everything around us.
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> From those whom we trust we gain a sense of identity, security, and meaning. Without a sense of who we are, without a sense that we are safe and that we will continue to exist, without a sense that our lives have purpose and worth, we die. People wither when they have little or no sense of identity, security, and meaning. Being unsure about our identity, our security, and the meaning of our lives takes a tremendous physiological toll—to say nothing of the psychological damage such uncertainty inflicts upon us. We cannot survive without a sense of our

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99 Erik Erikson, *Identity—Youth and Crises* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1968), 92.

ultimate identity, security, and meaning.[100]

In working with minority students, it is essential to give them this foundation of identity, security, and meaning. During the time that I have had the opportunity of working with minority students, we sought to engender identity, security, and meaning.

The institutions that were surveyed (Stritch, Marquette, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee [UWM]) offered social, academic, and financial opportunities to their minority student population. These efforts and needs were appreciated, but something was missing. Spiritual formation is the missing ingredient needed by many minority students, and especially the African American students. Spirituality as a human capacity includes being aware, naming, interpreting, remembering, connecting, narrating, anticipating, and ending. Urban Holmes offers a good generic definition of spirituality, which I will use as the definition of spirituality:

> I am defining spirituality as (1) a human capacity for relationship (2) with that which transcends sense phenomena; this relationship (3) is perceived by the subject as an expended or heightened consciousness independent of the subject's efforts, (4) given substance in the historical setting, and (5) exhibits itself in creative action in the world.[101]

A. Other Institutional Models

I selected three institutions of higher learning to help in developing Concordia's minority student support program: a large urban Catholic university, located near the

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100 Robert Kolb, *The Christian Faith* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1993), 8.

101 Urban T. Holmes, *Spirituality for Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982), 12.

heart of downtown Milwaukee, Marquette University; an institution very similar to Concordia University in size and location, Cardinal Stritch University; and a large urban state university near Lake Michigan, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). The question I sought to answer was, "What programs at these three institutions meet the needs of their minority students?"

At Marquette University, Manuel Santiago,[102] director of the multicultural center, maintains that minority students will remain at that institution if Marquette successfully integrates those students into the academic and social environment. If this particular type of integration does not occur early in the students' academic careers, they are likely to drop out. Marquette has developed three important time periods to monitor the progress of minorities as they integrate successfully into the environment.

The first time is when minority students become aware of the painful separation from their comfortable surroundings. This includes the separation from the students' old friends, habits, families, and community settings. Transitioning through these periods of concern is very difficult for most minorities, and especially for those who are first-generation college students. The next time is the move from high school and local community to the university's environment. This is a most difficult transition because the

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102 Mr. Manuel Santiago has recently taken over the Multi-cultural Center. Dr. J. G. Standford, his predecessor, was the person directing the program when I came to Milwaukee and did give many helpful ideas in setting up our minority student program.

standards, lifestyles, norms, values, and behaviors of the minority students are often radically different from those of the majority students at Marquette University. The final stage of concern is full integration in Marquette University's campus climate. To help students to assimilate, Marquette offers students assistance, which often includes some type of campus support service.

At Cardinal Stritch University, Reverend Trinette McCrey, director of the multicultural center,[103] shares the belief that behavioral intentions of the minority students to stay or leave will result in predictable persistence. She shares some factors that can influence a student's beliefs, such as courses offered by the institution, friends of the minority students, and instructional quality. These beliefs can often shape the student's behaviors. An acceptable match often occurs between the students and Cardinal Stritch when the campus beliefs are similar to those of the minority students. This relationship will result in persistence when the minority students intend to remain with Stritch's campus. The director also feels that noncognitive factors, such as family approval, have a significant impact on the student's intent to stay or leave Cardinal Stritch.

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103 Reverend Trinette McCrey is also the Dean of chapel and has directed the Multi-Cultural Center during the time before 1991 to present. Both universities have a close working relationship.

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's program[104] is based on the idea that minority students can shape their university environment in accordance with their own beliefs, goals, expectations, and plans, deferred to at UWM as students' life tasks. The director shares the opinion that when UWM does not offer options to the minority students that coincide with their life tasks, the minority students will not persist. Therefore, discovering the minority student's life tasks is very important for UWM.

These three institutions share commonalities in their approach to minority students' persistence. They base persistence on these three factors:

1) the result of academic and social interactions,

2) how background characteristics affect a minority students' adjustment, and

3) the acceptable match between the minority student and the institution.

Studies at Marquette University and Cardinal Stritch University tested their predictability of attrition. Marquette University found these ideas to be most helpful:

1) social integration,

2) academic integration,

3) institutional commitment,

4) goal commitment, and

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104 Dr. Gary Williams is a new person in the office of Multi-Cultural Center. Dr. Adrian Chan was the director when I cam to CUW. I worked closely with him during my early years in developing the program.

5) intent to persist.

Cardinal Stritch found these factors to be reliable predictors:

1) parental approval,

2) financial attitudes.

3) opportunity to transfer,

4) courses offered,

5) encouragement of friends, and

6) an institutional quality and acceptable match.

Marquette and Cardinal Stritch agree on these predictors.

It is evident that once a minority student enters the university system several new dynamics enter the picture. The first is the student's living arrangement, that is, whether he/she lives on campus or at home. The second is the classroom experience and how satisfied the student is with the academic environment. The third dynamic is satisfaction with the advising procedure. The fourth is the amount of extracurricular activities offered. The fifth is the amount of faculty and student interaction. This type of interaction often increases satisfaction with the institution, creates a sense of belonging, and strengthens commitment to the institution's educational goals and standards. Sixth is the student's college grade point average.

A factor that can also predict attrition for some minority students is whether or not the student establishes a network of support. The support between the faculty and

peers is important both inside and outside the classroom. Another factor in minority persistence is how well the students are academically prepared. C. Ascher states the following:

> Students from poor, minority neighborhoods, whose parents did not themselves have a college education, and whose schooling was inadequate, may find their preparation too meager for the precarious transition to higher education, and years of boredom and failure in public schools may make the prospect of college-level work frightening or unappealing.[105]

For many minority students the key issues are academic and social. Researchers have focused specifically on a few of these indicators and their relationship to persistence. They include the noncognitive issues of self-esteem, adjustment, involvement, and isolation. Some writers believe that retention efforts need to focus on these issues and the person, not just the cognitive, side.

When a student comes to college, he or she takes risks, such as feeling alone and changing goals, peers, and normal environment. The results can be positive or negative. These risks are directly affected by self-esteem. If a student comes to college with a high academic self-concept, that is, the belief that he or she will do well, the chances are greater that he or she will not drop out. The same applies to those minority students who experience communication apprehension or have difficulty

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105 C. Ascher, *School-college Corroborations: A Strategy for Helping Low-income Minorities* (Report No. V002-6-803) (New York: Clearinghouse of Educational Research and Improvement [ED] Eric document Reproduction service No. ED 308-258, 1988), 34.

speaking in certain situations.

Adjustment is another issue that affects the environment of the institution. Adjustment will vary according to the size, curriculum, faculty, mission, and institution type. The belief systems of the institution will also affect how well they integrate the student into the environment. What makes adjustment difficult is the need for the student to learn new social and intellectual skills. Vincent Tinto also believes that if "a mismatch or lack of fit between the needs, interests, and preference of the individual and those of the institution occurs, attrition will result."[106] Also crucial is a good fit between the academic abilities of the student and the perceived academic demands.

If a student feels isolated, he or she is unlikely to remain enrolled at the institution. The feelings of alienation can eventually lead to stress and poor academic performance. Involvement in campus life then becomes the most critical issue. Involvement on campus must include interaction between students and faculty. Those institutions with high rates of retention are most frequently those which are marked by relatively high rates of student-faculty contract. Some interaction must occur not only within but also outside the classroom setting.

Beyond student-to-faculty interaction institutions must also integrate the

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106 Vincent Tinto, *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1987), 23.

minority students into the social life of the institution. Even if they only integrate a student into a subunit of the campus population, such as an athletic or minority group, the integration would be beneficial. Involvement is sufficient when students feel that they belong in the institution, both academically and socially. This academic and social integration will cause higher GPAs and successful encounters with college peer groups, administration, faculty and staff, and a greater commitment to the college and the goal of graduation.

The Journal of Higher Education reports that most minority students who drop out do so within the first year.[107] This leads to a third characteristic, that of "front loading." Front loading is providing the students the best experiences early in their college career. An example of this would be to have the most effective professors teaching first-year student level courses. Joel Heck suggests other ways that an institution can front load the first-year student's experience.[108] The admissions office needs to set the stage in forming the new student's expectations by finding students who will fit within the institution. To do this, the admissions office must honestly portray the environment, faculty, staff, and students they will encounter once the

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107 John A. Centra, "College Enrollment in the 1980s: Projections and Possibilities," *Journal of Higher Education, 51*, January-February, 1980, 18-39.

108 Joel Heck and John Paul Vincent, *Evangelism and the Christian College* (Mequon, WI: *Evangelism*, 1994), 130-133.

student enrolls. At this point they orient the student to the university. Questions are answered and information is disseminated that will help them adjust to their new environment. Transition then occurs into the social and intellectual settings within the first semester. Finally, they can give long-term assistance to those who run into academic, social, and career barriers.[109] During these initial stages, maximizing the student's comfort is important, as is developing correct expectancies, measuring academic preparedness, and building the student's chance for success.

An institution needs to find out who is leaving and why. Nonthreatening exit interviews can aid in this process. Documenting reasons for attrition can allow an institution to measure how effective present programs are or enable them to design a new program to increase the retention rate. Evaluation of teaching quality, student-to faculty interaction, student background characteristics, social integration, academic integration, and overall satisfaction must be a priority.[110] An institution must also know which types of dropouts to focus on by defining what a dropout is in their particular setting.

Having set forth guidelines for proper evaluation of programs, institutions can establish the evaluation criteria whenever a minority student support program is

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109 Ibid., 3, 4.

110 Ibid., 132.

implemented. Of key importance are the actual retention rates that result because of the program. Evaluation should be ongoing, allowing people to participate, relate to the mission of the program, and be succinct. Once the information is gathered, it should be shared with others and used to formulate a plan of action. Collecting data regularly will allow the institution to develop an overall picture of prevailing attitudes, levels of satisfaction,and amount of student involvement on the campus.[111]

Because of the evaluation process, minority student programs often tend to become institution-specific. Success with a certain type of minority student program at one institution does not guarantee success at another institution. In the end, the minority student support programs are only as good as their ability to function effectively within a specific institution.

B. The Institutional Setting

Concordia University Wisconsin is an accredited private liberal arts university at 12800 North Lake Shore Drive, Mequon, Wisconsin. It is owned and operated by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and controlled by an elected local Board of Regents. It began as a four-year high school and two-year preparatory school for pastors and teachers in 1881 for the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The high

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111 Ibid., 89.

school program was discontinued in 1973, and Concordia became a four-year college in 1978.[112]

The early 1980s offered many challenges, difficulties, and disappointments for minority students. Until 1983, CUW was an inner-city campus, limited in facilities and student body growth. Before 1978, Concordia was a two-year accredited liberal arts college that concentrated on preparing pastors and teachers in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The Concordia student body did, however, have 17% minority students, funded primarily by Basic Educational Opportunity and Pell grants. The disappointment came when the school moved to its new location. This problem and many others contributed to the decline of Concordia's minority student population.

Several factors have decreased the minority student population. First, the move to the new 126-acre campus in the suburb of Mequon; second, the Federal reduction in funding for minority students; third, the lack of public transportation to the new site; and fourth, a rapid growth in the student body from 500 students in 1982 to more than 4,400 in 1997 have changed the make-up of the student body to include 7% full-time students of diverse minority backgrounds. While the raw number of minority students increased, the percentage decreased.

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112 *Concordia University Faculty Handbook*, (Mequon: Concordia University Wisconsin, 1998-99), 1.

The mission of the institution has remained fundamentally unchanged from the beginning of the school in 1881. Concordia University Wisconsin serves as an educational arm of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod with primary responsibilities to offer Christian education to its students, to further the work of the church by training and educating students who will become professional church workers and lay people who will contribute to society and to God's kingdom.

The Concordia University System is a cooperative inter-campus partnership of all 10 Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod institutions of higher education. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod defines the university's mission and purposes, through the Concordia University System/Board for Higher Education, which regularly reviews the institutional mission and the administrative structure involved in decision making. Beginning in 1994, its goals were "to transmit Lutheran values more effectively; to provide enhanced quality education to college students; to attain efficiencies in operation of the campuses; and to capitalize the schools and System."[113] Its statement of mission and purpose is as follows:

> Concordia University System builds national identity, enables cooperative endeavors and enhances the strength of the colleges and universities of the Lutheran Church-Missouri synod as they engage students of diverse ages and cultures in quality, Christ-centered, value-oriented, Lutheran higher education for lives of service to church and community.[114]

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113 *Convention Workbook, 59th Regular Convention LC-MS* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1995), 80.

114 Ibid., 86.

The Concordia University System, with the Board for Higher Education, oversees the addition of new programs and has designed a "Program Approval Proces for New Academic Programs in Concordia University System institutions"[115] described in the Faculty Handbook, sections 5.010-5.030. Three principles govern the process for new academic program approval:

1. "The basic responsibility for the development of new academic programs and for the insurance of their academic integrity lies with the faculty of each college or university."[116]
2. "The basic responsibility for the determination of congruence of new academic programs with the institutional mission and for assessment of their fiscal viability . . lies with the Board of Regents of each college or university."[117]
3. "The special responsibility of the Board for Higher Education/Concordia University System Board of Directors is to ensure that new academic programs at Concordia University System institutions are consistent with

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115 *Faculty Handbook*, Sections 5.010-5.030.

116 *The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Handbook* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995), 98.

117 Ibid., 6.03d, 98.

the stated objectives of the Synod's educational system and its institutions."[118]

Thus, they carefully relate the process for adding new academic programs to Concordia University Wisconsin's offerings not only to the individual institutional mission, but also to the mission of the church body to which that institution belongs.

Because of the growth that the university has experienced, especially in the past decade, the administration has consistently focused careful attention on the institutional mission statement. Historically, CUW has viewed its primary responsibility as the preparation of students to be called to the ordained and commissioned ministries of the church. (In The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, pastors are ordained, while teacher, social workers, and lay ministers are commissioned.) The addition of professional programs that prepare students for various secular callings (e.g., business, nursing, physical and occupational therapy) and programs in the School of Adult and Continuing Education must be justified with reference to the institutional mission statement.

An important component of the pluralism in American higher education is religious identity. Colleges and universities committed to a distinct theological tradition offer a unique voice in the marketplace of ideas and have a unique responsibility to bear witness to their spiritual and ethical principles. Schools

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118 Ibid., 6.37c, 105.

committed to the Christian faith should take the lead in respecting, embracing, and acting with justice toward all human beings in all of their God-given diversity. "Concordia, in its Christian service and worship program, tries to give the students a real purpose in life, to believe more firmly in the redemption wrought by Jesus Christ."[119]

According to Concordia's Statement of Purpose, "The total program is centered in the Christian philosophy with a confessional Lutheran emphasis." The term "confessional" refers to the classical confessions of the Lutheran faith collected in *The Book of Concord*, to which The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (which owns and operates the university) strictly adheres. These confessions so define our university's identity that our very name is taken from these documents, whose Latin title is Concordia. "The Board for Higher Education will periodically review the institutional policies, programs, and curricula to decide whether they are consistent with the stated objectives of the Synod's educational system and its institutions."[120]

This Statement of Purpose also states, "Concordia University seeks to develop mature Christians in whom knowledge and understanding of the Holy Scriptures, the

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119 *Faculty Handbook*, (Mequon: Concordia University, 1997-98), 7.

120 *Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod Handbook*, 60.

inspired, inerrant Word of God and the source and norm of Christian truth, are united with personal faith in Jesus as God and Savior."[121] Because the Bible is "the source and norm of Christian truth," we must ground our practices in the teachings of Scripture. "The strength of a Christian community rests on the fact that people need one another and look to one another for support and understanding. Trained counseling personnel are available by appointment to serve students with specific problems and those interested in furthering their development through a confidential helping relationship."[122]

The Statement of Purpose further underscores commitment to diversity when it speaks of goals to foster "responsible participation and leadership in a complex society" and the university's integration of "a global experience into its curriculum so that the students can better understand the church and our nation in a truly global environment." "Concordia is dedicated to fostering and building a Christian community that is PURPOSEFUL, OPEN, JUST, DISCIPLINED, CARING, AND CELEBRATIVE. Respect for the rights of others and self-discipline are essential for the fulfillment of these goals. The student life committee designed this Conduct Code to explain the rights and responsibilities inherent in membership in this Christian

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121 *Faculty Handbook*, 7.

122 *Concordia University Wisconsin Catalog, (Mequon:* 1997-98), 7.

community."[123]

Most Lutherans believe that a confessional identity and a belief in the inerrancy of Scripture provide the basis for Concordia University's affirmation of diversity that is transcendent, morally binding, and spiritually valid. That theological grounding means that Concordia's understanding of diversity will be necessarily different in some details of implication and application from that of contemporary secular thought. While today's secular society does value intellectual diversity, we assume that it also respects the distinct perspective offered by the Creeds. We offer these theses founded on the Biblical principles for honoring diversity. These can serve as a theological guide for our university's policies and community life.

> Each faculty will develop policies, standards and programs for the out-of-class life and activity of its students so that the co-curricular and off-campus activities of the student contribute to the attainment of the educational objectives of the institution. The faculty will draw up such standards, criteria, and regulations as will be conducive to the cultivation of a Christian deportment by all students, will stimulate the creation of a cultured and academically challenging atmosphere on and about the whole campus, and will make a spiritually wholesome community life possible.[124]

The second paragraph of Concordia's Statement of Purpose reads in part as follows:

Concordia's spiritual resources are directed to the development of

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123 *Student Handbook and Academic Planner*, (Mequon: *Concordia University Wisconsin 1997-98)*, 76.

124 Ibid., 77.

> Christian faith and practice of Christian virtues so that the student can form value judgments and arrive at ethical principles required for purposeful living. Since 1881, Concordia has, as an educational arm of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, grounded all its offerings and activities in the Christian tradition. Furthermore, the "confessional Lutheran" emphasis that is the foundation of this school requires both a rigorous, analytical attention to ethical detail, and a forgiving heart in response to error. Thus, informed by a deep understanding of Christian Law and Christian Gospel, Concordia prides itself on its integrity in matters both educational and spiritual.[125]

The colleges and universities of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have faced a continuing series of challenges during the past several years. Along with most of American private higher education, they have felt intense pressure from enrollment problems, reduced federal aid for students, the slowing of tuition increases, the rising cost of operations, and the need to offer a variety of services and programs.

To some extent, the synodical colleges and universities were better prepared to deal with these difficulties by the adoption in the 1986 synodical convention of 90% of the recommendations made by the President's Commission on Synodical Higher Education. That convention saw the wisdom in the commission's proposal to restate the mission of the institutions as follows:

> . . . The colleges and seminaries of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod exist to supply the higher education services needed to accomplish the mission of the church. Central to the system of synodical higher education is the preparation of those who are called to serve through preaching, teaching, and related vocation. Strongly committed to the Lutheran idea of vocations, synodical colleges are also liberal arts institutions that provide a Christ centered and value-oriented environment for men and women who will be Christians at work in the

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125 *Concordia University Wisconsin Faculty* Handbook, 7.

church and in secular occupations.[126]

Thus, the missions of the colleges and universities are becoming more than preparing professional church workers; they are also expanding their service to those who want to enter lay occupations. Without the students for the liberal arts program, some institutions would have had difficulty in continuing to operate.

C. The Minority Student's Needs

The more I understand minority students and their needs, the more I am persuaded that God has uniquely designed Concordia University Wisconsin to respond to those needs. The most critical components of the needs of minority students are those of a supportive campus climate. The importance of this variable is related directly to the centrality of the student in the educational process, and thus to the growth and progress of the individual student. All students, but especially minority students, need to function in a nonhostile environment and need to feel accepted and respected for their own worth.

However, the basic components that make up the supportive campus climate are present to some degree on every campus and play a critical role in the development and academic success of the students.

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126 *Convention Workbook, 58th Regular Convention* LC-MS (St. Louis: Concordia, 1992), 265.

The supportive campus climate includes the following components:

1. **Campus Climate of Warmth, Trust, and General Caring.** Such a campus presupposes the presence of individuals who take a personal interest in each student. This interest must be genuine. Such individuals include faculty, staff, and all who interact with the students in any way. They relate to the students as persons and as unique individuals.

2. **Active Concern for Student Needs** and for assisting students in meeting their needs. This involves an affirming of the individual student in terms of potential abilities, skills, gifts, talents, worth, and uniqueness. This concern can be conveyed to the student only if it springs from a conviction that each student can succeed and that the role of the university is to facilitate that success.

3. **Sense of Community**, which is campus-generated and fulfills belonging needs. This condition presupposes the caring individuals described above, but also includes the interactions which the students experience in their campus life. The sense of community involves a common goal which is shared by all, and is perceived to be primarily the development and growth of the students.

4. **Counseling Services** to support needs of minority students. These include helping students with the inadequacies, feelings of self-defeat, and the fears and anxieties that may accompany their initial experiences in college life. Counselors stress the potential of each student for success, and begin immediately to develop a strong self-image for each individual student.

   Counseling services also assist the students to identify and clarify their own educational goals and aspirations. Motivation and persistence are strongly related to the meaning and importance that the students attach to careers and to the personal, social, and intellectual development inherent in the college experience.

5. **Learning Resource Center.** This campus unit is a center where the students have the opportunity to learn study skills, time management, and problem solving. It is critical to the success of the students at CUW Campus. It is through the Learning Resource Center that students receive individual and group tutoring, both from staff and from peers. It has been found advisable to require participation in the Learning Resource Center, based on the individual needs and progress of each student.

6. **Reliable Academic Advisement.** Academic advisement is a key component in the performance of minority students in the first and second years of their college education. Such advisement should be required at specified intervals during the academic term.

Academic advisement has been considered traditionally as the role of faculty, although many other individuals are engaged in this activity where faculty have been unable to handle heavy loads of advisees. It is important that the assigned advisors be extremely knowledgeable if the advising is to be characterized as reliable. For many students this advisement is the critical factor in their persistence toward degree completion.

Assuming that all faculty or staff are knowledgeable and reliable academic advisors is not sufficient. The academic administrators of the university should interact with the advisors and determine if these individuals need additional training to enhance the value and reliability of their advising. The university should be prepared to provide such support as needed to all of those who are charged with advising the minority students.

7. **Library with Adequate Holdings,** particularly in the area of multi-cultural, multi-ethnic issues. The library is an essential component of the academic program for all students, including minority students. However, it is essential that the holdings in the library show the interest and commitment of the university to the diversity of the student body. This will include publications written by people representing the minority student's points of view.

8. **Multi-Cultural, Multi-Ethnic Awareness.** Knowledge of and respect for the diverse cultural heritages of the students are fostered in most modalities, including a multi-cultural component in academic courses, student clubs and organizations, campus jobs, campus government, and the campus activity program. Some minority students may enter the university with very little awareness of their own cultural backgrounds, but through exposure to the campus programs they develop an awareness and appreciation that may be a very rich experience for them.

9. **Campus Housing.** Residential facilities may contribute substantially to the success of the minority students on the campus. Not all students can avail themselves of the opportunity for campus living. However, such living is conducive to effective study habits and always provides the opportunity for friendship and camaraderie. It is very supportive to students and is a salient factor in student persistence.

For many of the minority students, the change of environment involved in establishing residence on the campus is critical to their success. For this reason, all possible aid should be extended to those students to bring them on the campus, if possible.

10. **Financial Aid** and financial aid counseling are services that are absolutely essential to minority student success and persistence in the university. Most minority students require considerable information to understand the parameters of the available financial aid, the obligations assumed in accepting any of the educational loans offered, and the requirements of the individual institution to meet financial obligations.

    The financial support must go beyond the costs of tuition and fees. The college needs to ascertain that the support is available to fulfill basic maintenance needs for food, housing, books, transportation, and personal expenses.

11. **Social Life of the Student Body.** A campus also needs to provide socialization of the minority students, and this requires a planned program of activities, coordinated to the degree possible by the students themselves. Also, these activities must reflect the cultural diversity of the student body.

The needs of minority students, at least to some degree, are obvious to all but the most insensitive and self-centered. Even a casual consideration of the healing potential of a relationship with Christ makes it clear that the deep wounds of hurting students can be substantially healed. Concordia University Wisconsin, where Christ's holiness and love are to be evidenced the most, too often seems to be an organization just seeking to perpetuate itself, while the reasons why it should continue and grow are obscured.

When the central dynamic of living in relationship with God and each other is made secondary to concern for better facilities, expanded programs, or more staff, then the quietly enriching and excitement of life in Christ are numbed. The Christian campus life can be in danger of being reduced to an irritating set of restrictions.

Christians are to encourage one another. Because words have the power to affect

people deeply, it is appropriate to consider how to encourage fellow Christians through what we say.

Words can encourage, discourage, or do nothing. Shallow words accomplish little, death words discourage, and life words are encouraging. We need to learn to speak sincerely with positive impact, using our words to help others to pursue the pathway of love and service more zealously.

To be effective in changing the campus climate for minority students, the leader needs to enlist the assistance of an array of campus officers and resources. There needs to be the insistence of some clearly stated and unambiguous university-wide policy to deal with acts of racial intimidation, violence, and intolerance. These policies should include some form of university sanction against verbal and written slurs, since this is one of the most frequently employed methods of attack used by the mean-spirited. First Amendment rights disallow sanctions against speech; however, the leader can and should argue that the courts have pointed out that certain forms of speech can be sanctioned. Moreover, it is time for all of those in higher education to understand the fact that in some instances a word can inflict emotional damage to the individual just as rocks, clubs, or bullets can inflict physical damage. If a university will not permit someone to be brutalized physically, what rationale allows some universities to stand by idly while some of its students are brutalized verbally? The minority director should be vigorous on this issue since nothing else short of physical

violence destroys the climate as the existence of poisoned tongues. Through interaction with the conduct standards officer of the disciplinary board, the minority director can make a case for certain sanctions in cases involving racially abusive speech.

Because some minority students have a well-founded fear of physical violence, the minority director should consider means and methods to provide the best possible physical safety arrangements for these students. Here again the minority director must walk a fine line. Some minority students insist on having social events that begin at midnight or later and want to use university facilities for such events. Those personnel who deny these requests are regarded as "not working in the best interests of all the students." While we may understand the inability of young people to see all of the academic implications of a Saturday night event that starts at midnight and ends at 5:00 a.m., those in leadership positions have to advance the academic mission above any other considerations, particularly social ones. Students have to be encouraged and persuaded to recognize that while a well-rounded social life is a part of the campus experience, some social events, by their very nature, detract from, rather than contribute to the goals and objectives of students and their parents. Because this age group is generally trusting, naive, and feeling invulnerable, they often take tragic risks to their person and their academic welfare. The minority director must be active in adding balance between the social desires and the academic needs of minority students,

as well as assisting students in making wise and healthy choices.

The role of the minority director and teacher of majority group members is often ignored or viewed as invalid. Yet there is ample documentation that much of the racial antagonism and animosity are based upon ignorance, false information, and assumptions, sometimes fed by cynical leaders and sensation-seeking media. One example is the commonly held mythology in the majority community of the "African American rapist." Recent studies have shown that the vast majority of rapes are perpetrated by acquaintances of the victim, particularly on campus. The minority director should be actively involved in workshops, staff meetings, and other venues in which she or he may impact the false beliefs and negative attitudes of majority group members that may harm the students. This would have to include as many opportunities to interact with majority students as possible, since those students have the potential to make the environment repugnant or constructive.

Concordia has begun to face the reality of a changing population and all that entails. The reality of racial and cultural diversity within the student body of today and tomorrow means that Concordia has begun preparing for those students yesterday. Therefore, this means greater pressure and demands will be placed on those assigned to work with the minority population.

As the population of minority students grows, so will demands placed on the resources of the minority director. That person will rightfully be asked to serve as a

role model for all students, and as such he or she needs to exhibit the highest levels of integrity and character. As a campus leader who has vision, the minority director also needs to have the courage to challenge the status quo and the creativity to offer new and acceptable ideas for educating young people. As a campus leader, the minority director must be willing to extend her or his network of allies to include all of those who can and should provide the necessary services and goods that make the collegiate living experience a valuable and rewarding one. Sometimes this will include an outreach into the surrounding and supporting community, which may also need to understand that some changes in behaviors will be beneficial to them and to the university. The minority director's network among students will be extensive, both for the reception and the dissemination of vital information.

The keys to establishing and maintaining effective networks are reliability and trust. An unreliable leader is no leader at all, and when the minority director loses the trust of most of the minority students and staff, then that person will become so ineffective as to be a liability to the minority student group.

The minority director has one task that is so vitally important that the failure to carry it through jeopardizes anything else that may be accomplished. A leader will guarantee that if she or he is no longer in place, the mission, the values, and the objectives will go forward. To ensure that in some future time when personnel changes, when the university refocuses its mission, or when societal pressures subside,

that the hard-won gains of yesterday do not become footnotes in the university's history. The minority director needs to serve as a mentor to those who will be trained to follow. Without a next generation of courageous and committed young minority leaders willing to forgo the opportunity for megabuck salaries in the corporate sector and stake their claim as the heirs to the progress made by the seniors, lifetimes of work may be wasted and washed away. Service as a mentor to a young and committed educator may be the only guarantee that minority directors may have that their efforts will be sustained, carried further, and institutionalized in such a way as to become a permanent part of the life of the university. If we believe that the work that we do is valuable and worthwhile then we must be about the business of replicating our vision and our zeal for what we do in the imaginations of others.

Leader, teacher, mentor: these roles are a necessary and vital part of the educational process. African Americans and minority students should be served by competent professionals who understand that the challenge of education in the 21st century will be the challenge of justice and the challenge of the survivability of our society. As ironic as it may sound, the destiny of America will live in the hands of America's minority populations, so lately despised and disparaged. We have always known that our fate was inextricable from that of the society. This new reality must be taught and learned quickly. Those who would wear the mantle of leadership have an enormous responsibility and obligation in the reshaping of society. The challenge

has been issues. Who will answer?

It was an amazing sight in front of the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963. More than 200,000 persons had participated in a "march for jobs and freedom" in Washington, D.C., and gathered in front of the famous monument to hear speakers call for equal opportunity and employment for all races. The marchers, concerned with issues of civil rights and poverty, had come from all walks of life, from labor leaders and politicians, to students and teachers, rich and poor. Finally they listened as Martin Luther King, Jr., President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, came to the podium to tell them about his dream.

Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech will go down in history as one of the great messages of racial reconciliation. The crowd roared as King reached his stirring conclusion, when he told of his dream of being able to say one day: "Free at least, free at last, thank God Almighty, I am free at last." Those closing words remain the most celebrated part of his speech. Yet the beginning of the speech also contained some powerful words:

> When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
>
> It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity in this nation. So we have

> come to cash this check—a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.
>
> We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of NOW. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to arise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all of God's children. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood.[127]

More than three decades ago King delivered this speech with the belief that American was founded and operated upon biblical principles. This was not just a racial issue but also a biblical and moral one. The guiding principle of King's speech would fit well with the Apostle James's statement in James 4:17: "One who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin." [NIV]

D. Characteristics of Minority Students

In any group activity, whether it is an educational activity, a discussion group, or a committee, there is some purpose or aim, some task or goal. One major difficulty in the organization of a minority student group and in its effective operation is the development of an understanding, an acceptance, and a genuine commitment to that group objective. The minority student group is composed of individual students, each with his or her own individualized beliefs and assumptions, peculiar expectations, and ways of acting and responding. These separate individuals are living in quite different

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127 David C. Lewis, *King* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 88-101.

"private worlds." They come together in one place, exposed to the same public situations and people, listening to the same statements, looking at each other, and responding to the leader. Nevertheless, each will see a different situation, perceiving different people, hearing different words or at least giving them different meanings, and continually responding with feelings of acceptance, admiration, or rejection. Moreover, each may come to the group with the hope and expectation of finding what each might describe in the same words, but each will have his or her own version of that purpose of expectations, sometimes intense convictions about the way to organize, operate, or carry out a goal. Sometimes a student may feel that his or her ideas are right and that everyone else is wrong. There are others who lack personal convictions and eagerly seek someone to tell them what to think and do. There are many, many variations of these personal attitudes and activities, since each member of the group is a unique personality.

There are many individual personalities in every group—each with his own ideas and feelings—which the group members recognize and often find very difficult to deal with. Nevertheless, these differences are only variations around the general patterns of the minority students' culture. A visitor from another country would see these differences as of little significance compared with the underlying similarity of patterns that the group shares. It takes great originality and genuinely creative capacities to be truly different, to have original ideas and conceptions, such as are

developed from time to time by the artist, poet, scientist, or mystic.

Understanding the great importance of these individualized beliefs and actions will help all to remember that each student is striving to become a unique person and to act as a responsible individual with shared values. For thousands of years the Judaeo-Christian tradition has emphasized the worth of the individual personality as unique and precious. Many minority students grow up believing that they must somehow be individuals, defending their ideas when attacked or slighted. Sometimes people will aggressively seek recognition and prestige as a symbolic expression of their individual self.

Now most minority students are not geniuses, with original creative powers; they are normal persons with varying degrees of intelligence, skills, energies, and sometimes special aptitudes. So of necessity they must use the common stock of ideas and beliefs, the accepted and normal patterns as ways of dealing with the world and other people. Nevertheless, they may emphasize their own special versions of these common beliefs, these accepted convictions and practices. At the same time, they want to be like everyone else because they have no resources other than the accepted ways of living and thinking. Minority students often feel uneasy and even anxious when they find themselves "out of step" with others; while they are trying to be like others and to be accepted by them as normal, they are also striving to be different. Each of them, for example, will wear clothes like others they associate with, quickly

responding to changing fashions. Nevertheless, each will wear similar clothes "with some difference," varying details to accent and express their individual tastes and personal style.

These differences in beliefs, in patterns of speech, of action, and of ways of relating oneself to situations and people are basically similar and may become sensitive spots, "sanctuaries," which each strives to maintain and to defend against others as expressions of an individualized personality. These students may not be as opposed to, or resistant of, what someone says as they express an opinion or make a judgment that contradicts another person. They may take a strong negative or opposed position, rejecting what has been said, primarily for maintaining their individuality and asserting their own position to call attention to themselves. Indeed, when they often express a contrary viewpoint and find out later that they are "out on a limb," they often cannot give any reasonable grounds for their opposition.

These individualized responses are highly diversified. They are often expressive of many different beliefs and feelings, of what may be utterly irrelevant in that situation. Yet, this may be very important to the individuals who express their views and often challenge others who differ with them. Sometimes these statements arise from purely private affairs, often from relationships elsewhere (such as the family), or they may be continuations of disputes and of conflicts that began years ago in childhood. Other times the leader or another member of the group touches off feelings of anger in an individual who reacts strongly, although no one has given any

provocation or said anything directed to him or to her.

Minority students may exhibit these and many other aspects of the individuality of persons in a group as they feel threatened, worried, or anxiously look for an opportunity to assert their personal views and purposes and to oppose or combat others. At this point there is little group interaction, only a collection of individuals, each preoccupied with his or her own individuality, even when the group discusses, plans, and acts for the group. Somehow these highly individualized personalities, each almost wrapped up in his or her concerns, need to be helped to reorganize as a group and develop dynamics as a group. The leadership process must operate if the individual members are to become a dynamic group and function effectively. A first step is to remind the group of its purpose and objectives, so that these individualized persons can "organize" themselves into a functioning group oriented to its common goals.

Another way of doing this is to put some students through a series of experiences in which what they think, feel, want, and expect is not very important and must be ignored and forgotten. These students soon realize that they are part of a group, important, and valued. Sometimes highly trained athletic teams function under the hand of a coach who trains each player to do as they tell him or her if he or she wants to be on that team. They sometimes run school classrooms in similar ways. For example, the long-accepted type of authoritarian leader uses the members of a

group as instruments for whatever purpose the leader, or someone else, has set as the objective.

If, however, the group and their leader are not to function in a way that ignores and suppresses individuality, they need another way of functioning. They will need some kind of planned activity that offers an acceptable beginning for group formation. Thus a group may initially decide to take a trip, undertake a simple project, play a game, or talk over their recent experiences. The action may be one already selected, as when individuals seek to join a team or a recreational group established for a designated purpose. Or it may be a more general objective, an action to be decided upon by the group after discussion of both ends and means. Sometimes we do not declare or recognize the longer-term purpose in the beginning so that an initial, short-term goal or job serves to bring the group together. This then provides an opportunity to explore the group process where provoking undue conflicts of dissension is not likely. In this initial stage a certain amount of vagueness or uncertainty may be advantageous since it gives the members of the group to be formed some reassurance that they are not committed and are not bound by the group.

Nevertheless, eventually some kind of declared aim or purpose becomes essential since only as the members of the group accept this joint aim can they begin to relate themselves to these common goals. They can then enter group formation and begin to operate in ways that produce an organization, by developing a common set of

goals. Some jointly shared idea or objective may supersede and replace the highly individualized beliefs and aims of each member so that he or she will recognize others as engaged in the same pursuit, giving to and receiving from others what makes each a group member. If the purpose is some specific action they can all undertake, then each can retain his or her individual beliefs and reasons for joining in a concerted endeavor. He can "go along" with the others without having to accept their different opinions or surrendering his own beliefs and reasons, while they can agree on what to do and how it is to be done. They foster this seeming unanimity by the way each agrees to the formulation of their purpose, interpreting it according to his own idea and meanings of words that may be quite at a variance with others. This is frequently the case when a group of people has agreed by deliberately avoiding too much discussion and letting each make such mental reservations as he or she wishes while he/she will vote for the proposal. Sometimes this serves to hold a group together while they get better acquainted, learn to trust each other and the leader, and so begin to operate as a group.

In any kind of personal relations, especially with more than two persons, people must make some assumptions; they must take something for granted as the basis of communication. Thus, for example, they accept language with the usual common meanings and interpretations. People will ordinarily refrain from hairsplitting definitions and prolonged arguments over words and phrases if they are genuinely

eager to find some common basis for discussion and decision. Nevertheless, today many groups of people come from a variety of traditional backgrounds, and people are becoming increasingly critical of many usual assumptions and expectations. To formulate some common purposes, to develop some consensus among members of a group with different traditions and differing degrees of critical awareness, has become difficult.

Sometimes when minority students come together in a meeting that we organize and operate according to accepted parliamentary rules, difficulty arises since they are no longer a homogeneous people with common standards and goals. Thus, someone may debate a proposed resolution, according to parliamentary rules of order, and yet the group does not arrive at a consensus. Majority rule, which once operated effectively, may become a way of coercing people, of "putting things over" in a struggle for power or for mutual self-defeat. In such a meeting, the rival leaders marshal their followers to debate and vote according to the tactical needs of contending factions or parties. Voting then settles nothing, but it helps to shape the next contest for power. This procedure, while glaringly apparent in political affairs, is also found in professional associations and educational groups, where objectives and goals have become confused or forgotten in the struggles of rival leaders and factions.

Because this is so frequent, it is increasingly important for established groups to arrive at common understanding, acceptable goals, and modes of group operation.

This takes time, with often prolonged and repeated sessions that become meaningful when students realize that each member of the group must, in his or her own way and at his or her own rate of progress, achieve that common understanding and sharing of beliefs and of purposes. This alone makes it possible to participate in the group process.

Sometimes action groups, eager to decide and get started on a program, may reach a high degree of consensus but go forward with conflicting beliefs and expectations that later emerge into open conflict and disintegration of the group. This is the constant threat to any group of people who come together to pool their grievances and exert their combined pressures to get some change or improvement. Their shared resentment or anxiety holds them together, but they lack any other basis for group thinking and even for group action in any other area. At the other extreme, we find groups, such as some religious organizations, which uphold a common body of beliefs principles, and standards, though individuals may diverge about the precise meaning and applications of those shared beliefs.

A good leader will help a group to organize around a set of beliefs rather than impose that set of beliefs. They continue as individuals, but they learn to relate themselves to each other, actively participating in the leadership process by contributing to the group thinking and planning and selecting of objectives. These objectives may be as varied as there are groups of people and sponsors for such

groups, but the need for leadership will be similar in all different groups.

E. Description of the Mentoring Program for Minority Students

The goal of the faculty-student mentoring program is to enable the students to relate with a professional person on campus under informal and nonthreatening circumstances. Ideally, friendships will develop so students will feel comfortable in approaching their mentors for help with academic, personal, scriptural, and social concerns.

1. Objectives

1. To foster a relationship in which the student feels that there is someone on the faculty who cares about his or her academic success and to whom he or she can turn when the need arises.
2. To sensitize more faculty members, staff, and administrators to important issues that face minority students on the campus.
3. To help students in adjusting to campus life.
4. To foster minority student retention by creating an atmosphere where students and teachers reclaim their supportive roles.
5. To help students in finding both on- and off-campus services, as appropriate.

To broaden the support for minority students to a significant portion of the

campus community.

2. Program Structure

It is recommended that a mentor program coordinator be selected to administer the program. This person should be responsible for all parts of the program. This person will be responsible for adhering to the following structure:

A. He or she attempts to match faculty, staff, and administrators whose academic specialties or interests are similar to their assigned student's major.

B. When a prospective mentor specifies the gender of a student he or she would prefer to work with, the program will try to accommodate the request.

C. Students accepted into the program should be either first-semester, first-year students or new transfer students. Other students may request a mentor if adequate resources are available and the request does not jeopardize the first-year students' participation. Participation should be voluntary.

D. At the beginning of each semester, the mentor program coordinator will hold an orientation meeting for new students and their mentors. Afterwards, mentors and students are expected to meet at least monthly during the school year.

E. The mentor program coordinator is expected to stay in regular contact with mentors and students. They will carry any formal written correspondence between the mentor and coordinator out in a professional manner. All questions and complaints are to be addressed as they arise.

F. If appointments cannot be kept, the person experiencing conflict is expected to notify the other in advance of the arranged date. They should drop students who consistently fail to meet with their mentors from the program. In those instances where the match-up between mentor and student does not appear to be working, the coordinator will be responsible for ending the relationship and making new assignments where possible.

The mentor program can improve its credibility and faculty acceptance greatly by having the coordinator attend departmental meetings to explain the program firsthand. The coordinator should also get on the Dean's Council agenda to solicit their endorsement of the program. Similarly, the coordinator should meet with the new minority first-year students and the transfer students to explain the program. By meeting with both mentors and students beforehand, the chances of program success are enhanced.

During the meeting with potential mentors, the program coordinator will pass

out information sheets and application forms. Faculty members will probably raise the most questions and the information sheet will answer the majority of them. Typically, questions involve how students are selected and what they expect of the mentor. It is recommended that the program maintain a high level of informality and accountability.

After faculty have returned their application forms, the coordinator will follow up with phone calls to obtain additional information about the mentors that will help him or her make an appropriate match and to share information about the mentor with students. The coordinator will also obtain information about the mentor's preference for movies and social activities, academic interests, gender of student preferred, and so forth.

The director will inform the mentors that while they can discriminate by sex, they cannot do so by race. While wanting to interact with a female students is acceptable for a female mentor, the race of the student cannot be decided by the mentor.

When there is considerable faculty support, the minority director may find himself or herself in the enviable position of having more mentors than students requesting mentors. When this situation occurs, some type of screening process may have to be implemented. The director may choose to permit mentor teams (two faculty members), assign mentors for one semester only, or establish a waiting list. Ironically, a waiting list in this program adds to its prestige. It infers strong support

for the program and sends a positive signal to minority students. When screening mentors they cannot avoid, the director must make sure it is done in a sensitive fashion. Unfortunately, no agreed-upon scientific method shows beforehand who will make a good mentor. Often the people we prejudge as less than ideal candidates for mentorship surprise us and end up receiving the highest praise from students. Pre-screen questions may help flag potential problems, but they do not always make those "matches" in heaven. The decision to accept someone should be based primarily on whether he or she will meet the objectives of the program. The mentor's reasons for wanting to be a mentor may also be helpful in the screening process.

After the screening is completed and the roster of mentors is filled, the director will need to begin the process of matching mentors and students. Before the matching is done the leaders assume that the director has obtained enough information to help both the mentor and student "break the ice." While information about the mentors will come from the application forms and follow-up phone calls, the director recommends that information about the students come from the student survey. This survey can be very useful in providing an academic and social "profile" of students. Mentors will know immediately what movies, music, and speakers students prefer. It will also be evident in which academic areas students will need assistance.

When the mentor-student match occurs on paper, the director is ready to inform both parties and call a general orientation meeting. The orientation meeting will be

held off-campus, if possible. If that cannot be arranged, the meeting can be held in the student lounge or another informal setting. The director should impress upon everyone that this is an informal program that stresses personal interaction. The director should also mention the importance of keeping dates and showing up on time. He or she should discuss the type of activity students are interested in generally. They should state that, at a minimum, weekly or biweekly meetings should be held. After a question-and-answer period, ample time should be left for mentors and students to interact. Human relation activities can be used during orientation to help mentors and students become comfortable with one another. When the meeting is over, every mentor and student will have set a date for their next meeting.

F. A Support Plan for Minority Students

In this advisory capacity, Concordia University developed the minority student support program for all enrolled minority students. MSSG stands for Minority Student Support Group. The goal of the MSSG is to enhance the retention rate of African American students at Concordia University Wisconsin. The program was set up as a campus-wide effort to involve most of the faculty and staff at Concordia University Wisconsin. We employed many strategies to help African American students academically, spiritually, and socially. To keep the program running effectively, ongoing evaluations were conducted to monitor the needs of minority students and to

measure the success of the program.

Concordia University Wisconsin's mission statement reads, "Concordia's programs promote intellectual development and self-knowledge for the student's personal growth and well-being." Following the University's mission statement, we designed the MSSG to meet the needs of minorities, and particularly African American students, that would allow them to become successful college students. This program gives students the support and guidance they need to reach their full potential as undergraduates at Concordia University Wisconsin. The experiences of African American students participating in the MSSG shows a smooth transition into the college environment and motivation to complete their college educations.

The goals of the MSSG are as follows:

1. To decrease the drop-out rates of African American students who enroll at Concordia University Wisconsin by ten percent each year.

2. To provide academic support services that can help minority students in developing academic skills necessary to maintain a 2.6 GPA.

3. To monitor the weekly activities of the MSSG participants and statistically record their involvement in activities.

4. To provide the minority student the opportunity to form personal relationships with a faculty/staff member, an upper-class minority student, and other students enrolled at Concordia University Wisconsin.

5. To be a resource for resident assistance and other individuals who plan activities for students on campus by offering suggestions for activities on campus.

6. To identify specific barriers a minority student might experience at college before the student arrives on campus through a pre-enrollment survey.

7. To help African American students in building a positive self-concept and confidence in their ability to succeed by helping them find success early in their college career.

8. To identity African American students at risk of failure after the fourth week of the semester.

9. To evaluate the program yearly to find out if the program is meeting the African American students' needs.

The minority students' group adopted six areas identified by the Student Life Council. The aim of each area is to effect growth and development in minority students and therefore may be defined in the following paragraphs:

1. Spiritual Development is the foundation for the other five areas and becomes the fiber that permeates each area and binds them together. It fosters, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Christian discipleship of the campus and this leads to discipleship in the community and ultimately to the world. Spirituality includes nurturing the spiritual growth and maturity of believers, reaching out to the lost, and providing opportunities for Christian services. As Ephesians 4:12 exhorts, the group is about "equipping the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ."

2. Intellectual Development acknowledges that God is the ultimate source of all truth and, as creator of this world, has endowed us with an intellect. We affirm

that this is a blessing from God to be developed to its fullest capacity. Therefore, the division of Student Life offers opportunities to think, form judgments and draw conclusions, and encourages students to assume a personal responsibility for their intellectual development.

3. Cultural Development fosters an understanding and respect for one another's ethnicity in accordance with the University's mission of Christian education. This is achieved by offering the campus community an opportunity to learn from and to share with one another's cultural diversities. The result will be a greater awareness of racial, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds with an increased multicultural sensitivity and flexibility in dealing with one another.

4. Social Development is built upon a balance between academic and co-curricular activities. The division seeks to promote social learning through God-pleasing progressive relationships and involvement in University-sponsored events, activities, and organizations. The division will strive to provide a comprehensive program of social experiences through which students may grow, develop, and learn by appropriately balancing academic pursuits with social education.

5. Emotional Development is nurtured in an atmosphere that enhances and engenders emotional wholeness. The acceptance, growth, and development of feelings is fostered through personal and relational interpretation and integration of experiences and behaviors.

6. Physical Development promotes an appreciation for the wondrous physical gifts that have been entrusted to us and becomes the beginning of physical health. The division recognizes that each person's physical potential can be developed and enhanced through an emphasis on nutrition, movement, and conditions as positive lifestyle choices. These lifestyle choices improve self-image, reduce the risk of chronic disease, and encourage the care of the body as a temple of God.

The minority director needs to understand what most African American students are going through when they enter college and adjust to a new environment. Early planning and effective strategies for intervention are needed. These strategies help minority students to relate better with majority students, faculty, staff, and administration. Qualifications for this job include experience in student services, advising, working with college-age students, and a master's degree in a related field.

The minority director can have a tremendous impact on the lives of the students in the program. It is the director's chief responsibility to make sure that each student is receiving some benefit from the program. The minority director fills the role as the mediator between students, faculty, staff, and administration.

The minority director will have the following responsibilities:

1. Serve as an advocate for all non-international minority students and keep the President of the University and the Vice President of Student Life current on the needs, issues, and problems associated with minority students;

2. Contact each African American student who has registered for classes before the beginning of the first semester and collect data on the student's background, motivational level, and expectancies from college;

3. Keep in contact with admission officers who recruit at predominantly African American high schools and request that they strongly encourage those recruits to participate in the MSSG. If possible, the program director should meet with prospective African American students to inform them about the program when they visit the campus;

4. Identify potential minority leaders and assist these students to develop leadership skills;

5. Work with Student Life Staff to motivate and identify minority students for leadership positions such as Resident Assistants, Security Guards, and Student Government personnel;

6. Advise the Minority Student Support Groups (MSSG);

7. Work with the organization to program special events and to educate the campus community regarding minority issues; and

8. Plan and implement Cross Cultural Week with the director of the International Center.

G. Attitude of Administrators/Faculty/Community

Beliefs and values contribute to the development of attitude systems and provide some of the content of these systems. An attitude is a learned tendency to respond in a consistent way to a given object of orientation. The strength of those attitudes is dependent on the intensity of the conviction that the beliefs and evaluations are correct. Thus, attitudes prepare people to react to the objects and events in their environment. This means that they tend to avoid those things they dislike and

embrace those things they like. Attitudes are learned within a cultural context. The cultural environment helps people to form their attitudes, their readiness to respond, and ultimately their behavior.

A classical approach within psychology has defined attitude as a predisposition to respond positively or negatively to a psychological object. "Psychological object" includes not only physical objects but also ideas, symbols, other people, and concepts. This definition of attitude has been at the heart of most of the research done within this area. Many psychologists use the terms attitude, interest, value, and opinion almost interchangeable.

Jay Adams writes:

> An attitude is that combination of presuppositions, beliefs, convictions, and opinions that makes up one's habitual stance at any given time toward a subject, person, or act. It is a mind set that strongly influences behavior. In counseling, attitudes may be attacked and changed more directly than feelings, which, in most instances can be altered only indirectly through change of attitude and action (behavior). This is important, since attitudes stand in the way of solving issues. Negative attitudes may prejudice one person against another, thus making significant communication and problem solving impossible. Sometimes attitudes that trigger bitterness, hatred, anger, or fear toward another first must be removed before such problem solving is possible. Because of the confusion of feeling with attitude in the writings and techniques of some counselors, wrong approaches to counseling have been developed. Attitudes usually involve habits of thoughts; habitual ways of thinking. Change in attitudes, like changes in behavior patterns, require changes in habit that stem from the biblical discarding/acquiring (putting off/on) dynamic.[128]

Attitudes relate strongly to behavior when certain conditions are met. Those

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128 Jay E. Adams, *The Christian Counselor's Manual* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 115.

conditions include situations in which the individual is engaged in decision making about the behavior and when the situation is more strongly determined by personal preference than by values (in the sense of moral obligation). Research has shown that attitudes correlate with behavior when people are aware of the long-term consequences (and so can compare those consequences to their attitudes) and when they accept their responsibility in that situation (and so see their attitudes as relevant to their behavior). If these two conditions are not met, attitudes are unrelated to behavior.

Conscious processes other than attitudes may also influence behavior. These other processes include social norms (i.e., how we feel those people important to us will react). In the case of social norms, the term "values" is used in the sense of moral obligation. Values as moral obligations can be measured through a rating on a scale of moral obligation. Further, in situations that could be defined as morally relevant by moral philosophers, values add to the prediction of behavior over and above the classical definition of attitudes. Hence attitudes consist of one's personal predisposition to respond positively or negatively and are relatively independent of moral evaluations.

The Bible does not say why God rejected Cain's offering. Perhaps Cain's attitude was improper, or perhaps his offering was not up to God's standards. God evaluates both our motives and the quality of what we offer Him. When we give to God and others, we do so with a joyful heart because of what He has given us. We

strive not to worry about how much we are giving up, for everything belongs to God in the first place. Instead, we joyfully give to God our best in time, money, possessions, and talents.

Israel was called to be a holy nation, separate from and unique among all others (Leviticus 20:26). The Israelites' motive in asking for a king was to be like the nations around them. This was in total opposition to God's original plan. It was not their desire for a king that was wrong but their reasons for wanting a king.

As a prisoner and slave, Joseph could have seen his situation as hopeless. Instead, he did his best with each small task given him. His diligence and positive attitude were soon noticed by the jail warden, who promoted him to prison administrator. When facing a seemingly hopeless predicament at work, at home, or at school, people can follow Joseph's example by taking each small task and doing their best. Remember how God turned Joseph's situation around. He will see your efforts and can reverse even overwhelming odds.

The people were hostile and despairing, but Moses encouraged them to watch the wonderful way God would rescue them. Moses had a positive attitude! When it looked as if they were trapped, Moses called upon God to intervene. We may not be chased by an army, but we may still feel trapped. Instead of giving in to despair, we should adopt Moses' attitude to stand firm and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish.

H. Overcoming Cultural and Religious Stereotypes

Cultural values usually are derived from the larger philosophical issues that are part of a culture's milieu. Hence, they tend to be broad based, enduring, and relatively stable. Values generally are normative in that they inform a member of a culture what is good and bad, right and wrong, true and false, positive and negative, and the like. Cultural values define what is worth dying for, what is worth protecting, what frightens people, what are proper subjects for study and for ridicule, and what types of events create group solidarity. Most importantly, cultural values guide both perception and behavior. Culture is a way of thinking, feeling, believing. It is the group's knowledge stored up for future use. Louis J. Luzbetak writes:

> Culture is a design for living. It is a plan according to which society adapts itself to its physical, social, and ideational environment. A plan for coping with the physical environment would include such matters as food production and all technological knowledge and skill. Political systems, kinships and family organization, and law are examples of social adaptation, a plan according to which his ideational environment came through knowledge, art, magic, science, philosophy, and religion. Cultures are but different answers to essentially the same human problems.[129]

Arthur Ashe, a world-renowned tennis player and role model for hundreds of youths, fought against a background of gracious misunderstanding and prejudice. Sports writer Kenny Moore recounts how

every Sunday, Arthur Jr. had to go to church, either the First Presbyterian or Westwood Baptist, where his parents had met and where

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129 Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Culturals* (Techny: Divine Word, 1963), 60-61.

he would look up at a picture of Christ with
blond hair and blue eyesand wonder if God was on his side.[130]

This example is only one of hundreds illustrating one of the challenges not only to the world of higher education, but also to evangelical Lutheranism. We face two challenges: (1) how can we become more inclusive and (2) yet remain loyal to the confessional Lutheran faith? Lutheran Christians must be especially careful that their environment not become the substances of an ethnocentric message. At the same time, attempts to become inclusive cannot compromise the Christ-centered message. There are at least three guidelines that may help us in reconciling these seemingly opposing principles.

First, we must review and reaffirm our commitment to the authority of the Scriptures. Bible scholars are fond of saying that every religious question ultimately becomes a question of hermeneutics. It is the same with multiculturalism. To approach the question of diversity without a clear commitment to the authority of Scripture is to risk a hermeneutic of relativity that will leave little more than story-telling for the basis of Christian belief.

Speaking at a conference on "Reclaiming the Bible for the Church," Yale scholar Brevard Childs noted the necessity for rediscovery of the exegetical tradition of the

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130 Kenny Moore, *Sportsman of the Year: The Eternal Example*, quoted in Kelly Brown Douglas, *The Black Christ* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1994), 5.

church. According to Childs, the question is, "whether the Bible in any form can be anything more than an expression of time-conditioned human culture . . . whether any ancient text has a determinate meaning." He goes on to make an observation which directly applies to the contemporary multicultural debate: The issue of whether the Christian community of faith can claim a special relation to its scriptures as a guide to faithful living has been met by a challenge that would recognize only sociological forces at work as various communities seek to establish their identities with warrants from the past.[131]

The practical application of this principle is that we cannot satisfy social needs by recasting Christian belief in terms of contemporary social commentary. The Christian solution for humanity was, is, and will remain the cross of Christ.

Second, we must emphasize the social and psychological implications of a united view of human creation. If humanity is a special creation of God, and if humans bear His image within them, their communications with each other should conform to common patterns of communication and meaning. The Gospel becomes not the expression of one ethnic group or tradition, but rather the proclamation for all humanity. The fact that all have died in Adam, and all can be made alive in Christ, is transcultural.

The principle becomes especially important in dealing with other cultures. Many

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131 "Reclaiming the Bible for the Church," *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (Minneapolis: News Release, June 17, 1994), 2.

times Eastern thought is presented as being "qualitatively" different from that of the West. Other societies are pictured as existing outside Western categories of meaning.

There is a great deal of truth in this assumption. The history of the doctrine of the Trinity is a clear testimonial to how the East and the West can think differently. Still, the fundamental laws of human logic seem applicable to all groups. Anyone who has studied comparative religions, for example, will quickly admit that the law of contradiction is present in all religions. Without it they would not exist. The point is that the message of Christ is the same for all. The fact that Christ came to die for sinners, "of whom I am chief," has the same meaning for Christians as it did for the Apostle Paul.

Third, Concordia can implement a model of empowerment. To "empower" is simply to help others improve their lives by overcoming social, economic, and educational obstacles that have hindered their full participation in the benefits of society. Empowerment must become more than an attitude. True sharing of power must always be planned and intentional. Action must follow words. There is, however, one very critical clarification that should be made. People cannot "empower" without being willing to give up some of their power (in the case of Christians, all of it).

G. Linwood Barney has provided a hierarchy of cultural categories that is useful to our present understanding. He writes:

> By the term, culture, we refer to that acquired knowledge which one uses to interpret experience and generate behavior. The arrangement of knowledge (categories for classifying reality, hierarchy of categories, "rules" for grammar and behavior, priorities in values, etc.) is reflected in

> the patterns of behavior, language and even the material artifacts made by man. When a segment of society shares a common configuration of knowledge . . . that [shared knowledge] constitutes a culture. Those who share a common knowledge constitute a culture. Those who share a common knowledge constitute a society. Each generation of a given society receives its culture from the passing generation, modifies it, and passes it on to the following generation. Thus a culture is really not static but undergoes change constantly. There are over 3500 ethnic groups in the world and yet no two of them have identical cultural configurations. Each of these societies has a culture which is systemic and patterned. It can be modeled as a series of layers. The deepest layer consists of ideology, cosmology and world view. A second layer, closely related but probably derived from the first, is that of values. Stemming from both of these layers is a third layer of institutions (marriage, law, education, etc.). This level of institutions is a bridge to the surface level (fourth level) of material artifacts and observable behavior. The artifacts and behavior of the surface level are easily described and even borrowed. Each deeper level is more complex, abstract. It is one thing to describe or share the phenomena of the surface level but it is quite another thing to discover the functional relationship of these to the deeper levels and still more difficult and demanding to decode their meaning at the level of values, ideology, cosmology and world view.[132]

Overcoming cultural and religious stereotypes takes us to the Scriptures, in the words of our Lord, to search them diligently and to serve each other. We call each other back to the clear, pure fountain that is the sole standard and norm for teachers and teachings.

The heart and center of Lutheran theology, drawn from Scripture and reflected in the Lutheran Confessions and dogmatical writings, is the Gospel of the grace of God who in Christ has reconciled the world to Himself. Lutherans view the Gospel or the doctrine

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132 R. Pierce Beaver, *The Gospel and Frontier People* (Pasadena: William Carey, 1973), 48-55.

of justification as the article by which the whole church of God stands or falls.[133]

Akin to this statement is a definition of the word "Gospel." "We believe, teach, and confess that the Gospel is properly a doctrine which teaches man what he is to believe, namely, that Christ has made satisfaction for all sins, and has obtained and acquired for him, without any merit of his, forgiveness of sins, righteousness that avails before god, and eternal life."[134] The Gospel is nothing else than "a preaching of consolation and a joyful message which points alone to the merit of Christ." While the term is admittedly employed in the Confessions (and in Scripture) to denote the entire doctrine of Christ, the Gospel in its proper sense is "only the preaching of the grace of God."[135]

Lutherans believe that two doctrines ought to be diligently inculcated in the church of God to the end of the world: the preaching of the Law (the Law is a schoolmaster to lead to Christ, who is the end of the Law), and that people are also comforted and strengthened by the holy Gospel concerning Christ, the Lord. The purpose of the Gospel is to comfort; the proclamation of the Gospel is to declare that "God forgives all their sins through Christ. It is in this context that the true and proper

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133 *Book of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), 3.

134 Ibid., 4.

135 Ibid., 7.

distinction between Law and Gospel must "with all diligence be preserved and all confusion be diligently prevented."[136]

Such an understanding of the Gospel is presupposed in the Augsburg confession, Article IV, where it is stated that we are "freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when we believe that we are received into favor and that our sins are forgiven for Christ's sake."

On the night before his death, Jesus said to His disciples:

> In a short time you will no longer see me, and then a short time you will see me again. . . . I tell you . . . you will be weeping and wailing while the world will rejoice; you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned to you. . . . you are sad now, but I shall see you again, and your hearts will be full of joy, and that joy no one shall take from you. (John 16:16-22)

We are living in this short time, a time full of sadness and sorrow. To live this short time in the spirit of Jesus Christ means to reach out from the midst of our pains and to let them be turned into joy by the love of Him who came within our reach. We do not have to deny or avoid our loneliness, our hostilities, and illusions. To the contrary, when we have the courage to let these realities come to our full attention, understand them and confess them, then they can slowly be converted into solitude, hospitality, and prayer. This does not imply that a mature spiritual life is a life in which our old lonely hostile self with all its illusions simply disappears, and we live in complete serenity with a peaceful

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136 Edward W. A. Koehler, *A Summary of Christian Doctrine* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1952), 194-195.

mind and a pure heart. Just as our adulthood shows the marks of our youth, so our solitude bears the signs of lonely hours, our care for others reflects at times angry feelings, and our prayer sometimes reveals the memory and the presence of many illusions. Transformed in love, however, these painful signs become signs of hope, as the wounds of Jesus did for the doubting Thomas.

Once Christ has touched people in the midst of their struggles and has created in them the holy desire to be forever united with him, they will find the courage and the confidence to prepare his way and to invite all who share this life to wait with us during this short time for the day of complete joy. With this new courage and new confidence, we strengthen each other with the hopeful words of Paul to Titus:

> . . . God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and righteous lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the appearing of the glory of our God and Savior Christ Jesus. (Titus 2:11-13)

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. The Examples of Other Institutions

The American Council on Education and American Life challenged the nation's institutions of higher learning to "greatly expand their efforts to increase significantly the number and proportion of minority graduates"[137] and offered a plan by which this could be accomplished. The report advanced these concerns:

1. Recruit minority students more aggressively at every level.
2. Create an academic atmosphere that nourishes minority students and encourages them to succeed.
3. Create a campus culture that values the diversity minorities bring to institutional life; one that responds powerfully and forthrightly to incidents of racism that have occurred too often on campuses in recent years.
4. Place special emphasis on inspiring and recruiting minority candidates for faculty and administrative positions.
5. Work with educators at the primary and secondary levels to improve the education, training, and preparation of minority students.

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137 Frank H. T. Rhodes, *One-Third of a Nation* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1988), 21.

6. Establish new recruitment avenues that reach minority groups.
7. Reevaluate the screening and admission process to expand the traditional criteria to include factors indicative of minority student success, other than standardized test scores and grade point averages.[138]

These and other factors have been found to be good predictors, including leadership ability, participation in extra-curricular activities, positive self-concept, and the ability to recognize and cope with racism.

The literature abounds with similar recommendations and examples of successful programmatic strategies that provide models for institutions to change the dreadful situations of minority access and retention. Despite this large volume of literature, institutions continue to disregard the need to address these problems and fail to allocate the resources to increase the success rates of minority students. Part of this problem is the flawed perceptions that minority student retention issues involve academic inability and financial aid problems rather than the social, interracial, emotional, and institutional programmatic needs of these students that are not being met.

The increasingly scarce financial resources at institutions of higher learning have heightened the competition for these resources and dampened the enthusiasm of

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138 Ibid., 22.

institutions for establishing special retention programs to help minority students. The prevailing attitude may be that after nearly 30 years of set-asides and affirmative action, the plight of minorities has not improved dramatically, and it is now time for all minorities to "pull themselves up by their own bootstraps," regardless of past and continuing discrimination. In other words, institutions want to bow out of the affirmative action business. Yet, institutions recognize that retention programs can make a significant impact on retention and are successful when made institution-wide in their scope—that is, each academic unit can assume some of the responsibility and accountability for retention.

Many institutions across the country have developed retention programs in recent years aimed at improving minority student retention. The list is too long, and the specifics are too many to fully discuss them here. Nevertheless, there have been many successes reported from these programs, proving that minority student programs can be effective. Some examples have been reported in recent publications. What institutions have learned about these programs is that they must tailor them to meet the needs and situations of each institution's circumstances. While there are certain commonalities, dedicated administrators, faculty, and staff will recognize the program needs and understand their institution's mission.

Many writers have observed that the situation of minorities in higher education is not hopeless. These writers are stating a situation that is crucial and critical and

one that requires immediate local and national attention. They state unequivocally that many institutions are learning that the nation's response to the current crisis of minorities in higher education will have serious implications for the future viability of the state, the country, and their future position and competitiveness in the world community.

If the program development and institutional processes are filled, program designers can establish special services programs for the university campus. Readers should remember that campus environments differ radically; thus, they must make as accurate an assessment as possible to decide the preparedness of the campus for aventure such as a special services program. This requires a knowledge and understanding of the formal and informal political systems of an institution, taking the time to cultivate alliances, to compromise, and to persist. The necessary ground work, however, must be laid to assure receptivity of the proposal to create a special services effort.

Special programs for minority and disadvantaged students have been successful on many campuses across the nation. Effective programs have several distinct characteristics:

1. a committed, dedicated, and capable administrator;
2. a staff fully committed to and believing in the students' programs;
3. a well-defined, comprehensive set of services to the minority students;

4. a clear set of expectations for staff and students as articulated through goals and objectives;

5. established promotional activities;

6. the support of the chief executive's office and the program's administrative unit; and

7. a firm and stable budgetary source.[139]

Because the financial needs of minority students differ from the needs of other students, receiving guidance in order to have a better opportunity to attend a college is very important. Also, minority students appear to do poorly during their first semester, due to the emphasis placed on Anglo culture in many institutions. Minority students need help to guide them through the overwhelming bureaucracy and make sure that the students are aware of all the resources available to them. However, following through to meet all the requirements is essentially up to the students.

B. Recommendations for the Division of Student Life

Many of the experiences encountered as the Director of Minority Student Services at Concordia University have affirmed one of my beliefs. When minority students are encouraged to express their feelings in terms of unmet needs, and are invited actively to participate in the decision-making process that affects their future, they

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139 Ibid., 23-29.

become motivated and participate in most campus activities. These students are also likely to change their attitudes and work to break down racial, cultural, or ethnic barriers as they become a significant part of the Concordia University community.

It is my strong feeling that if minority campus activities are to remain effective, the director of minority students should develop programs based on needs. Then and only then can they build a strong case for soliciting financial aid and other support services from the University.

The obstacles to learning far exceed the limits imposed by student ability and background. Understanding the many reasons why minority students avoid hard work is important, but understanding alone will do little to alter these circumstances. The University can take other steps:

1. Concordia can make learning the highest priority in the minority students' lives; they have no future without it.

2. Concordia, as a Christian institution, can act to focus the attention of minority students on the educational substance they believe is critical to the institution's future and their own.

The Division of Student Life has an opportunity to learn from minority students by gaining an understanding of minority student environment, through the examination of the dynamics and interactions of these students. A clearer understanding of the minority student environment is a first step in providing effective and supportive programs and services. General services on Concordia campus are not completely attuned to the

diversity of minority student populations; therefore, these programs are not as effective as the administration believes. Because programs in place do not address many of the minority student concerns, there may be minority students whose needs are not being met.

Minority students need role models, professors, and administrators to assist in their matriculation and academic and social success while attending Concordia. Students in the minority student group often speak of their need for minority professors and administrators from similar socioeconomic classes and backgrounds. Integration of minority issues into the university curriculum was also a major concern shared by many minority students. This would reduce alienation and enhance the learning environment for all students.

A critical mass of minority students should continue to be represented in our student body. This will provide strong peer networking, a healthier environment for the students, and provide a more diverse educational experience for all students. Concordia could develop a self-study reviewing the ways in which it is responsive to the needs of its students, academically, socially, and spiritually. The expertise and training that the student life council possesses could provide the leadership in developing such a project.

Academic support services, cultural, and educational programs must also be diverse in offerings reflective of the diversity represented within the minority student environment. These support services should not have any negative stigma attached,

because a stigma would clearly discourage minority student access and usage.

Concordia needs to help minority students find additional avenues to direct their frustrations or feelings of isolation into their academic goals and aspirations, leaving no room for apathy about academic pursuits. So the desire and need would be to encourage helpful peer contact rather than negative, frustrating, or nonexistent relationships. Minority students should realize the wealth and energy they have within their environment and develop constructive means for assisting and supporting each other. The University can help in this development task.

Administrators must also review ways in which they respect and support the choices minority students make concerning their co-curricular programs and activities. To recommend student involvement in minority-oriented activities or non-minority activities only is not supportive of the student's identity development. Administrators should encourage participation of minority students in a diversity of campus programs and services. The division of student life should actively recruit for this purpose and not rely solely on the minority director and the minority student group for identifying and referring students for this type of involvement. Minority students need to feel wanted and valued as they are recruited to the university.

Based on my work with our minority student group, I recommend that the faculty, staff, and administration remain sensitive to the following issues:

1. Minority students work best with an open door policy—a closed group

seems too rigid and can be viewed as rejection.

2. More effort is necessary to help minority students use the group as a support system.
3. Faculty and staff need to learn the language of minority students and not assume that being of the same culture will enable them to be effective.
4. Faculty and staff must use more energy for outreach to these students than to the majority population.
5. Group leaders must understand the significance of members dropping in and out of groups as a control issue among minority students.
6. Group leaders need to empower minority students to deal with issues and assign them responsibility for change in the group.
7. Group leaders seek support from the institution and other campus organizations for open communication among all groups regarding racial/cultural issues.

Another recommendation is that the University consider what it knows and does not know about minority students' environment and develop questions for further study in an effort to better understand the implications of the minority student campus environment. As professionals, we also need to become educated concerning the development of diverse student populations and how they differ from the traditional theory on student development. If the minority student environment is not supportive of

the institutional mission and goals, then guidance and assistance from the student life council could provide change. If the institution is not giving the kind of support and nurturance needed to provide a positive and supportive minority student environment, then it will become far more difficult to recruit and retain minority students. The student life council can assist the administration in understanding the implications of these issues.

As we move into the 21st century, we need to acquire a genuine commitment to our minority students, encourage healthy relations, and provide opportunities to develop well-rounded and educated people capable of understanding and celebrating the differences in society. The challenge for the student life council is to accept the responsibility of leadership for the university in bringing administrative affairs, academic affairs, and student life affairs together successfully to define, understand, work with, and respond to the minority student environment of the University. The outcome should be to graduate satisfied minority students who are broader minded, culturally enriched students and who will feel so excited about their university experiences that they willingly encourage others to pursue a post-secondary education. The best recruitment vehicle is, indeed, satisfied and fulfilled alumni.

The minority student group has been an integral part of the Division of Student Life for six years, dealing with many changes and confronting many difficult issues. It has been my observation that this group has overcome many changes and challenges,

any one of which could have meant the destruction of the group. The membership of the minority student group changed after six years. Some core members chose to participate in a racial reconciliation group. The group president started a racial reconciliation group after observing more positive interaction among all students. However, the minority student group has continued to be a significant part of the University campus environment as a way to reach out and engage more minority students. I continue to be proud of the significant growth made by group members in spite of the obstacles.

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