

12-1-1964

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Recommended Citation

Meyer, Carl S. (1964) "The School for Graduate Studies," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 35, Article 72.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol35/iss1/72>

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The School for Graduate Studies

By CARL S. MEYER

EDITORIAL NOTE: The substance of this article is taken from a forthcoming book on the history of Concordia Seminary.

The history and changing philosophies of what is now known as the School for Graduate Studies illustrate in capsule form the changes and struggles which the seminary itself has experienced during the past years.

At the 1920 Detroit convention of the Missouri Synod, in which the delegates voted to build a new seminary plant, "an elective year for graduates was authorized after the adverse recommendations of the committee had been rejected."¹

Before the faculty was ready for this step, however, extensive studies had to be made. Ludwig Fuerbringer and John Fritz were asked to serve as the committee to bring in proposals as soon as possible regarding a graduate school (*postgrad. Kurs*). The faculty resolved that Fuerbringer should take over the duties as dean for the post-graduate department. It was Fuerbringer, too, who was to bring the recommendation whether or not the graduate degree should be the master of sacred theology or some other academic degree.² Steps were taken to provide scholarships. Theodore Lamprecht suggested, according to L. Fuerbringer's report, "that scholarships be created for designated disciplines." A Graduate-Support Association was organized.

¹ Missouri Synod, *Proceedings*, 1920, Engl. ed., p. 19; *ibid.*, 1920, Germ. ed., p. 43.

² "Fakultäts Protokolle, 1907—23," Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in *Concordia Historical Institute*, p. 222, Oct. 23, 1922, and p. 225, Feb. 5, 1923.

The graduate school became a reality in the 1923—24 school year with six students in attendance.³ George Stoeckhardt Hall in the new seminary in Clayton provided dormitory facilities for graduate students, and two classrooms on the second floor of Wyneken Hall over the northwest entrance were constructed for the "post-graduate department's" use. Twenty-eight men received the S. T. M. degree between 1923 and 1931. Among these 28 were Leroy Rincker, Arthur Klinck, O. P. Kretzmann, Alfred O. Fuerbringer, Richard R. Caemmerer, and Alexander Heidel, noted Semitics scholar, who died in June 1955.⁴

The graduate school became a victim of the Great Depression. The official reason given for its close during the 1931—32 school year was "the small number who had enrolled."⁵ There are reasons to believe

³ Missouri Synod, *Proceedings*, 1923, Engl. ed., pp. 13, 14.

⁴ "Degrees Conferred," records in the graduate school office, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

In 1929 the report stated that 63 students had enrolled in the postgraduate department during the first seven years of its existence, of whom five came from other synods. Missouri Synod, *Reports and Memorials*, 1929, p. 2.

In a letter addressed to Dr. Oscar L. Olson at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, on Feb. 4, 1931, Theodore Graebner said regarding the conferring of the S. T. M. degree by Concordia Seminary: "Students originating from Lutheran bodies outside of the Synodical Conference may receive such degrees upon a study of our doctrinal position, when they have declared themselves in a manner which will permit us to look upon them as standing *in statu confessionis*." Theodore Graebner Papers, CHI, Box No. 24.

⁵ Missouri Synod, *Reports and Memorials*, 1932, p. 3.

that it did not quite meet the expectations of the students in offering a wide enough choice of subjects. Very little effort was made to solicit students. In view of the fact that some of the graduates in 1930 and in 1931 went on to universities for further study, it cannot be said that a lack of means was the sole reason for students not enrolling. In the thinking of many, even before it was organized, the graduate school was to perform a protective function. Liberal tendencies in the graduate departments of divinity schools and universities were bringing "great harm" to the Christian church, it was said.⁶

Synod was not minded that graduate work should be discontinued at Concordia Seminary. At the convention in 1935 it resolved "that this department be resumed as soon as possible." Nevertheless, it took three years before the graduate school was reopened. The large seminary enrollment, it was said, required "the entire energy and time of the faculty," and did not allow it to take up added classes. In 1938 the graduate course was again introduced and a full course of studies was offered during the 1939—40 school year.⁷ When the graduate school was reorganized in 1938, a graduate committee was appointed, consisting of Ludwig E. Fuerbringer, Frederick E. Mayer, and Alfred M. Rehwinkel.

In 1942 a change was made in the requirements for the master of sacred theology degree, when the system of major and minor requirements was set up. These were closely geared to the courses which

the student had taken toward his bachelor of divinity degree. The requirements, however, were moving definitely in the direction of strict graduate study, rather than simply an additional year of residence work. Then in 1944 Alfred M. Rehwinkel was appointed as director of the graduate school. In the same year the program for the degree of doctor of theology was set up. Permission for a student to pursue the doctoral program was contingent on the quality of his work during the first year of his graduate studies, the caliber of the thesis which he had submitted for his S. T. M. degree, the superior quality of his examinations, his ability in languages, and his general attitude. Requirements for completing the degree were set in terms of a major and three minors, plus the dissertation, language requirements, and examinations. The general requirements read:

In general the requirements for this degree shall not be measured so much by hours and credits as by the evidence that the candidate possesses in a high degree a scholarly attitude, is able to do independent research work in the field of theology, has a comprehensive knowledge of the whole field of theology, and has successfully concentrated in some particular field.⁸

The first earned doctorate was granted in 1946 to the Rev. Roy Suelflow, at that time missionary to China. Three doctorates were awarded in 1953. Between 1946 and 1956, inclusive, only 7 doctorates were awarded; between 1957 and 1964, inclusive, there were 24 doctorates. No longer was the school open only to Lutherans.

⁶ *The Lutheran Witness*, XXXV (Oct. 17, 1916), 325, 326, criticized a half dozen schools without, however, advocating a graduate school at Concordia Seminary.

⁷ Missouri Synod, *Reports and Memorials*, 1941, p. 2.

⁸ Concordia Seminary, *Catalog*, June 1944 to January 1945, p. 41.

Shortly after the inauguration of the doctoral program the board of control reported to the Synod that manpower shortage, lack of adequate classroom facilities, the lack of suitable living quarters for graduate students, and a shortage of attractive scholarships were preventing the full development of the graduate program. It stated:

We have improved the pretheological training of our clergy, but have done very little toward the development of our theological training beyond the traditional three years. Other Lutheran bodies are beginning to feel the serious need of a stronger graduate theological school in America because of the situation of the church and Lutheran scholarship in Europe, and because even now many Lutheran scholars and theologians are doing their advanced theological research work in Reformed and even highly modernistic theological schools. The effect of this on the future of the church is inevitable. We have made a humble beginning in establishing a graduate school, but much more must be done before our goal has been reached.⁹

It was in this same year, the centennial year of the Missouri Synod, that the Kansas District (Walter H. Meyer, President; William J. Stelling, Secretary) presented a lengthy, forward-looking petition to Synod asking for the establishment of an Institute for Postgraduate Study and Research.¹⁰ At the same time a petition from the Lutheran Academy for Scholarship, of which Martin H. Scharlemann was president, asked for the furthering of theological research.¹¹

Both petitions were referred to the *Prae-*

sidium (the President and the four Vice-Presidents of the Synod), who, it seems, did not take up this particular matter. The petition of the Kansas District was a strongly worded one, pleading for research and for the training of men on a high professional level as leaders within Synod, professors, and research scholars. Even after almost two decades these goals have only been approximated; the vision has not yet been encompassed. World relief demands, mission expansion, problems of Lutheran union and unity were seemingly more pressing.

Nonetheless, an emphasis was being placed also on the need for scholarship. "We must do both—train pastors and missionaries and also Lutheran scholars," the 1950 report of the board of control stated.¹² Emphasis, too, was being placed in the post-World War II era on the pastoral proficiency and the theological equipment of those who were seeking further education in the graduate school. It was stated:

Our seminary ought to aim to exert a greater influence in the theological world today. In God's own providence the disturbed nations of the world have helped to bring our Synod and Concordia Seminary to the attention of Lutheranism in the world. The Lutheran Hour and other factors have also contributed to make our seminary known here in America. The time is, therefore, most propitious for us to take the initiative in bringing our influence to bear on Lutheran and Protestant theology. . . . The influence that Concordia Seminary can exert through its graduate school is beyond calculation.¹³

⁹ Missouri Synod, *Reports and Memorials*, 1947, pp. 5, 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1947, p. 41.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1947, p. 86.

¹² *Ibid.*, 1950, p. 9.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1950, pp. 9, 10.

This plea was repeated in substance by President Oliver R. Harms when he spoke to the St. Louis faculty on Sept. 3, 1964.

One of the needs, which had been urged repeatedly, was met when the "Graduate Hall" was erected in 1951 and dedicated on Jan. 20, 1952. Following the death of President Louis J. Sieck in the latter year, the building was redesignated "Sieck Hall." The need for men to teach in the graduate school remained. Attractive scholarships and the enrollment of qualified men, particularly instructors in the preparatory schools of Synod, were further needs of the school. One change in emphasis might be noted. It was urged that previous to about 1930 all instructors in the preparatory schools of the Synod's system had received their entire education in Synod's schools. By 1953 this condition no longer prevailed. Many men had received their training in secular colleges or universities. While the desire for self-improvement and the readiness to equip themselves better for their professional tasks on the part of these men were recognized, it was felt that this situation embodied in it a danger that in the course of time might "affect the spirit of our schools and the character of our theology." It would be better if these teachers received graduate training at the seminary. The need for men qualified to teach theology in the theological seminaries of the church was also recognized and advanced as a reason for furthering the graduate school.¹⁴

Scholarships were provided, at least in part, by the Advanced Scholarship Fund under the direction of the Board for Higher Education. A program of fellowships was set up in 1944 and became a permanent

part of the graduate school program. A research scholarship of \$500, known as the LLL Centennial Scholarship of the South Minnesota District, was awarded in 1951. The William Scheele Scholarship Fund and the Aid Association for Lutherans scholarships were established in 1960. With these stimuli the school is growing in numbers and in effectiveness. Within 15 years after its reopening it is on decidedly solid ground.

On Feb. 1, 1954, Martin H. Scharlemann became director of the School for Graduate Studies, replacing Alfred M. Rehwinkel. With the change in the directorate a change was also made in the name of the school. The new name, School for Graduate Studies, was explained in terms of broadened objectives:

1. To give qualified seminary graduates and pastors an opportunity to acquire the content and method of theological scholarship, under the guidance of a faculty motivated by reverence for the Scriptures as the Word of God and by loyalty to the Lutheran Confessions.
2. To provide the opportunity for qualified individuals teaching at the seminary and college levels to acquire advanced credits and degrees in theology for increased effectiveness in their classroom activities.
3. To serve as an instrument in developing active leadership for the church in doctrine and practice; and
4. To serve as a theological research center for The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod.¹⁵

The need for highly trained personnel to lead toward a more excellent ministry in several areas of Synod's activities was urged as a strong reason for the further expansion

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1953, pp. 8—10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1956, pp. 4, 5.

of the School for Graduate Studies. A new program was inaugurated in 1956 with the establishment of the master of arts in religion program. It was stated: "The development of this further program should make it possible for selected graduates of the teachers colleges and the Springfield seminary to continue their professional studies and preparation toward a further goal." Men and women holding a bachelor's degree with a concentration in religion could enroll. The first degrees were conferred in 1957 on Ernest J. Dycus and James E. Seim, two non-Lutherans. Between 1957 and 1964, 14 men and 4 women have earned the degree.¹⁶

A broadened horizon is evident in the 1959 report of the School for Graduate Studies. The report speaks not only of the need for a greater number of instructors in the educational system of the church, but also points to the need of theological seminaries in the Asiatic and African countries. It talks about the need for theological experts "serving the parish ministry" who would act as resource persons at conferences and conventions. It calls attention to "the complex demands of the church today, relations with other church bodies, educational and synodical administration, and religious journalism" as factors which call for leaders with specialized and advanced theological training. Creative scholarship is mentioned for the first time as an active ingredient in the requirements for promoting the School for Graduate Studies, and that in order to give "an increasingly effective witness to our age."¹⁷

¹⁶ "Degrees Conferred," records in the graduate school office.

¹⁷ Missouri Synod, *Reports and Memorials*, 1959, pp. 4, 5.

Paul M. Bretscher was appointed professor of graduate studies in 1955. The synodical convention in 1962 urged that two more graduate professors be appointed. In 1963 Arthur Carl Piepkorn became the second graduate school professor. In 1960 Carl S. Meyer was named director of the School for Graduate Studies, after having served one year as acting director, during the absence of Scharlemann on sabbatical leave.

The total research activities of the students in the School for Graduate Studies can only be inferred. Up to June 1964 a total of 240 M.S.T. degrees and 31 Th.D. degrees have been conferred. Eleven men wrote their doctoral dissertations in the New Testament area; seven in Systematics; five each in Old Testament and Historical Theology; and three in Practical.

The research function of the School for Graduate Studies received impetus when in 1962 the Committee for Concordia Archaeological Studies in the Near East was organized. This committee together with the American Schools for Oriental Research, through grants from the Research Committee of Synod and particularly the Aid Association for Lutherans, sponsored the archaeological expedition at Ta'annach in 1963 and hopes to sponsor a "dig" in alternate years for an indefinite period. Again, with the aid of a grant from the Committee on Research a special study on "Church and Ministry" was inaugurated under the auspices of the School for Graduate Studies.¹⁸ In cooperation with the Wheat Ridge Foundation a program for

¹⁸ The first publication to come from this study is the volume by Richard R. Caemmerer and Erwin L. Lueker, *Church and Ministry in Transition* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964).

training six selected pastors as clinical psychologists at the University of Minnesota, with advanced training at Concordia Seminary, was inaugurated in 1962. In 1964 another grant from the Research Committee made possible the start of a research project on Inerrancy, Inspiration, and Revelation, a study urged by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations. The 1962 convention of the Missouri Synod also specifically asked the School for Graduate Studies, particularly through its research committee on church and ministry, to take up a number of other questions.¹⁹ The 1959 resolution of Synod encouraging Concordia Seminary to become "a greater center of research also in the Biblical manuscripts," however, was not implemented immediately.

With the inauguration of the Concordia Seminary Research Center, in September 1963, a significant step was taken in broadening the functions of the School for Graduate Studies. Efforts made by Paul W. Lange, superintendent of Lutheran high schools in St. Louis, to instigate research by Concordia Seminary on the effectiveness of Christian secondary education were matched by the interest of the educational committee of the Council of Lutheran Churches in St. Louis. A coordination of efforts resulted in the establishment of the research center with the approval of the Board for Higher Education. Ronald Johnstone was appointed as the director of the research center. The project originally suggested by Lange was adopted as the first project by the advisory committee which was set up. This committee consisted of representatives from the seminary, the

Council of Lutheran Churches, Synodical and District offices, and two laymen connected with Washington University and the St. Louis public school system respectively. The objectives of the Concordia Research Center are:

1. To devise and conduct studies . . . designed to aid in planning and evaluating the effectiveness of our system of elementary and secondary Christian education, our mission methods in the inner city, suburbia, rural areas, and foreign fields, our mission outreach to minority groups, our efforts in the field of social welfare, and also an assessment of the beliefs, attitudes, and behavior patterns of full-time church workers as well as laymen, whether child, youth, or adult.
2. To engage as a general rule in basic or primary research in which data not available from other sources are gathered . . .
3. To assist and advise agencies and groups of congregations with regard to problems they might encounter as they confront their community . . .
4. To serve as a center of information, and, to whatever extent possible, serve as a center of coordination of research being conducted within, by, and for the church . . .
5. To serve as a data and idea source for graduate degree candidates both at the seminary and at other institutions of higher learning.
6. To maintain contact with other denominational research people for the purpose of sharing ideas and study results as well as to provide the opportunity for conducting joint studies that might be mutually beneficial.
7. To report the results of studies in a form appropriate to the scope and importance of the study.

¹⁹ Missouri Synod, *Proceedings*, 1962, pp. 89, 75.

The establishment of the Publications Fund in 1956 permitted the inauguration of a series of Graduate Studies. The first of these studies was entitled *The Survival of the Historic Vestments of the Lutheran Church After 1555*, by Arthur Carl Piepkorn (1955; second edition in 1958; third edition and a translation into German in publication). A doctoral dissertation written by Henry P. Hamann, *Justification by Faith in Modern Theology*, was published in this series in 1957. In 1958 the 356-page book *What, Then, Is Man?* was published by Concordia Publishing House. This study of man as viewed in theology, psychology, and psychiatry was a team product in which Paul Meehl of the University of Minnesota, Kenneth Breimeier

and Martin Scharlemann of Concordia Seminary, and Richard Klann participated. Other works published in this series have been *Caspar Schwenkfeld on the Person and Work of Christ*, by Paul L. Maier; *Qumran and Corinth*, by Martin H. Scharlemann (New York: Bookman Associates, 1962); and *Yahweh and Baal*, a study of the conflict between the worship of Baal and Yahweh in the early history of Israel, by Norman C. Habel. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964)

The constantly growing enrollment in the School for Graduate Studies makes it very evident that it is destined to play a key role in developing men for a more excellent ministry.

The Fieldwork Program at Concordia Seminary

By KENNETH H. BREIMEIER

In a sense, there has always been fieldwork at Concordia Seminary. Ever since the beginning of the school, students have been preaching, teaching, and generally exercising the skills of the pastoral ministry. In another sense, the beginning of the fieldwork program might be reckoned from the inauguration of the required year of vicarage, or internship. In the early 1930s Synod asked the class that would have returned for its senior year to stay out for one year to work in the parish. The reason behind this plan seems to have been the need to cut down on the oversupply of pastors during the depression years. Students benefited so much from

this extra year, however, that the vicarage has ever since been required of all students for graduation.

In a stricter sense, though, the concept of fieldwork is of more recent origin and, in its full development at Concordia Seminary, is almost unique among theological schools. Fieldwork generally came into its own around the time of World War II. At Concordia Seminary a compulsory summer fieldwork program was instituted during the war. First a part-time and later a full-time fieldwork director became part of the staff. Thereupon followed a more systematic introduction to hospital calling and required experience in local parishes.