



Dear Brethren:

The Apostle Paul exhorted Timothy: “*The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also*” (II Timothy 2:2). By way of those words given by the Holy Ghost and “*written for our learning*” (Romans 15:4), he teaches also **us** in these latter days concerning **our DUTY** and **GREAT PRIVILEGE** to **train** for the office of the ministry qualified men who will be fit and prepared to undertake the office as “*work[men] that [need] not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth*” (II Timothy 2:15). The Lord Jesus also states, as if in understatement, “*The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few*” (Matthew 9:37). We have work to do, brethren, a lot of work in perhaps a short amount of time, to **train** well-qualified laborers for the Lord’s vineyard. Jesus continues: “*Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest*” (v. 38). Truly, He *sends* the laborers; but He does not *train* the laborers, nor does He promise to do so. That’s OUR job as His instruments, whose work we beseech Him to bless! And that is the task that is before us today, as we meet once again to plan our training strategies and to execute the seminary program which we in our beloved Conference have designed. May the Lord of the Church richly grant His blessings upon our labors, that the sheep and lambs of His local flocks in our precious fellowship may never lack a faithful shepherd’s leading!

At our last convention, we resolved in the fear of God upon *several changes*, not in the content of our curriculum but in the mechanics of our program, changes which will permit us more efficiently to undertake the training of more men —specifically of married men with families, who must support them according to God’s ordinance (I Timothy 5:8), faithfully discharge the duties incumbent upon the head of a household, and bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4), and of men who must work at some secular job in order to “*eat their own bread*” (II Thessalonians 3:12) while studying for the ministry. To that end we made our program more flexible, no longer requiring students to relocate from place to place in *peripatetic* fashion but making it possible for them to be trained where they are by their respective local pastors. And, in order to “qualify” our experienced pastors as instructors, we asked each of them to assess and evaluate his own ability to teach the various theological courses, to report the results of his self-assessment to the committee, and to seek and, if possible, to gain the written consent of his local congregation to be co-opted and employed for this important work in addition to his pastoral duties. We also fine-tuned the duties and responsibilities of the Committee on Theological Education by means of a constitutional amendment unanimously passed by the delegates to our convention and ratified in a referendum of our congregations, and we went on record as committing ourselves to the reasonable compensation of our theological instructors as commanded by God Himself (Jeremiah 22:13). Shortly after the convention, on June 30<sup>th</sup> to be precise, your chairman sent out to the pastors who had served as *peripatetic* instructors a “self-assessment” form, soliciting their willingness to serve again in the same capacity, should the need arise. This request was made to fulfill the chairman’s commitment to the convention that he would not eliminate *peripatetic* instruction as a possibility but would seek to ascertain the willingness of our former instructors to teach their same respective year’s curriculum in a *peripatetic* rotation should students enroll for that mode of instruction. Since Pastor Stallings, the former 3<sup>rd</sup> year instructor, left our fellowship in 2004, your chairman solicited Pastor Worley as a possible replacement. As of this writing, the following pastors have positively responded regarding *peripatetic* instruction; and their respective congregations have granted approval for their participation in that program:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Year — Pastor David T. Mensing (as of 11/13/05)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year — Pastor Mark W. Dierking (as of 9/24/05)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year — Pastor Edward J. Worley (as of 5/19/06)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Year — Pastor M. L. Natterer (as of 8/19/05)
- 5<sup>th</sup> Year — Pastor David T. Mensing (as of 11/13/05)  
— Pastor Robert J. Lietz (as of 6/13/06)

Then, when it was evident that the referendum on the proposed constitutional amendment had passed by the required margin, your chairman, on October 20, 2005, solicited the experienced pastors of the Conference regarding their ability and willingness to teach *first year students*, should such apply for admission in their geographical location and be unable to move from place to place in the typical peripatetic rotation. A “self-assessment” form was enclosed, as well as the portion for the pastor’s congregation to indicate its approval or disapproval and the list of first-year courses and the typical textbooks and other materials to be used. As of this writing, the following pastors have responded positively regarding *local first year* instruction, certifying themselves to be qualified to teach the courses of the *first year curriculum* (with the exception of German in three out of the four cases), and including the signed, written approval of their respective congregations for their participation in that program:

- Pastor David T. Mensing (as of 11/13/05)
- Pastor David G. Redlin (as of 2/3/06)
- Pastor Edward J. Worley (as of 5/19/06)
- Pastor Robert J. Lietz (as of 6/13/06)

With praise to the Lord of the Church we joyfully report at this time the application of TWO prospective students for matriculation into our theological program: **Mr. Jason A. Mabe**, a communicant member, voting member, and secretary of Peace Ev. Lutheran Church in Oak Forest, Illinois, and **Mr. John F. Breinig**, a communicant member, voting member, trustee, deacon and treasurer of Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church in Oak Park, Illinois. Both men have applied for *part time* study beginning in September, 2006. At present, their application dossiers are incomplete; but any missing forms and/or exhibits are in process of being completed.

It is anticipated that, until the men determine by way of experience how many credit hours of course work they can handle on a part time basis, we offer them two of the most basic and fundamental courses from the first year curriculum, namely, **New Testament Greek** (3 credit hours) and **Dogmatics I** (3 credit hours). A three-credit-hour course normally meets three hours per week (unless an “accelerated” program has been approved); and, because of the work schedule of these particular brethren, we are suggesting for consideration two days per week for instruction with classes running 1½ hours each in length. A typical schedule might be (subject to final approval and mutual workability):

S U N D A Y	T H U R S D A Y
3:00 - 4:30 p.m. — N. T. Greek	6:00 - 7:30 p.m. — N. T. Greek
5:00 - 6:30 p.m. — Dogmatics I	8:00 - 9:30 p.m. — Dogmatics I

As to the choice of instructor(s), either one prof (teaching both courses) or both profs (dividing the coursework) would be reasonable. Both Pastor Lietz and Pastor Mensing are qualified for both courses and have their respective congregations’ approval to teach. However, due to the

fact that Pastor Mensing has *already taught* the first year curriculum and has made the preparations necessary to teach all the courses on that level, while Pastor Lietz would have to work up his preparations on the basis of previous experience in the F. L. C.'s theological program, the committee is considering Pastor Mensing as *first year* professor for ALL the courses, and Pastor Lietz as *second year* professor for all the courses on that level. This would give Pastor Lietz approximately two years to have his preparations completed (given the fact that the students are proceeding on a part time schedule). Looking ahead then, while Pastor Lietz is teaching the *second year* courses, Pastor Mensing would be preparing to teach the *third year* curriculum, etc.

The possibility of a summer session will be considered during the course of the coming year, perhaps to offer one course with intensive instruction over the two months, July and August. Suggested for this mode and intensity of study has been German – two years in eight weeks.

Regarding the composition of the new C. T. E., we would respectfully suggest that the delegates consider inaugurating as a matter of policy that, in determining slates for election, at least one member, preferably a laymen, be slated from the local geographical area where classes are currently being held, so that the committee can ascertain firsthand the activities of our on-going courses by means of periodic personal observation in the classroom.

Brethren, as one can easily see from even a brief look at the five-year curriculum offered in our seminary program, it will take at least *twice that long* to complete the curriculum on a *part time* basis —depending upon how many courses our students can reasonably, comfortably and competently handle per semester. Our proposed professors are both sixty-six years of age as they begin instructing these students, and we beseech the Lord of the church to grant both of them continued health and strength for the present and for many years to come, that they may be able, on behalf of all of us, to commit what they have been taught to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also (II Timothy 2:2). In the meantime, those of our pastors who have no theological student at present should study even now with zeal and diligence to show themselves approved to undertake this important work on short notice. We desperately need men who sincerely “*desire the office of a bishop*” (I Timothy 3:1) to begin earnest and committed theological study without delay, considering the time it will take to prepare them. We dare not take our present pastors and their health and strength for granted! We need to prepare pastoral candidates **now** so that competent workmen will be available confidently to answer the Holy Spirit's call: “*Here am I! Send me!*” (Isaiah 6:8). God grant it for Jesus sake! Amen.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. David T. Mensing, Chairman  
Rev. Edward J. Worley  
Mr. Stephen P. Bloedel  
Mr. Daniel M. Bloedel