

New Seminaries Needed

The Problem with ELCA Seminaries. It's simple: All **eight ELCA seminaries** support the ELCA Constitution which was amended in 1999 to require the Episcopal historic episcopate.

Professors now have 2 options: They can teach and preach against this *required* episcopate, or they can accommodate to it.

What would happen if professors came out against the ELCA? If they advised seminarians not to go into the ELCA because this *requirement* subverts the all-sufficient cross? What if they preached that truth is more important than unity?

ELCA leaders would be really angry. They would blast these professors for not being team players.

Sadly, the seminary faculties have all accommodated and are preparing Lutherans to serve in the ELCA which includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Seminarians will not be taught Luther's one-priesthood-of-all-believers but the special priesthood which the ELCA and the Episcopal Church *require*.
- Seminarians must accommodate to the exclusive powers of ELCA bishops to ordain and "safeguard" doctrine and unity (CCM ¶5).
- New pastors must accept their role as "priests" who, because of their ordination, have special grace to make Christ present in communion.
- They must accommodate to ELCA racial and gender quotas.
- They must accommodate to the ELCA's *de facto* policy that same-sex clergy and families are good for kids.
- They must learn to financially support the ELCA in order to protect their future mobility.

Good-bye to all that. Like the Edsel, the ELCA has become a clunker to many who remember the glorious heritage of freedom that once was theirs.

How to recover this heritage? New seminaries are needed to train pastors to think and preach like Luther.

21st Century Opportunities. A century ago, even forty years ago, starting a seminary meant property: buildings and dormitories. It doesn't mean that today. With existing seminaries, libraries, cars, and the Internet, starting a new seminary is a doable project.

The Place. The Twin Cities for starters. A new seminary could rent space in an existing Metro-area church, just as many day care centers do.

The Program. The seminary would teach Lutheran basics: law/gospel, one-priesthood-of-all-believers, the two kingdoms, the freedom of the Christian, etc. The core of the program would be a weekly seminar in which Luther's way of doing theology would be applied to all subjects: Bible, church history, youth ministry, worship, and pastoral care. This training would yield a crop of pastors who can preach the gospel in this multi-culti world without getting lost along the way.

The Faculty. Initially the seminary could be run by a single dean who would teach the core seminar with help from a cadre of professors and pastors who have broken free from the ELCA.

The new seminary could use the many libraries that are already in the Twin Cities – at Luther, United, St. Thomas, Bethel, and the University of Minnesota. There is no need to invest a ton of money in real estate or another huge library.

What about Accreditation? On the one hand, with solid courses and requirements, the new seminary would quickly become accredited. On the other hand, because this seminary exists for the sake of the church and not for secular academic careers, accreditation is not a primary concern. The concern is to produce solid, skilled pastors for congregations.

What's the Cost? Start-up costs may be \$10,000 - \$20,000 for rent, computers, arrangements, etc. Initially the seminary would need to hire a full-time dean and a part-time secretary. All other courses could be arranged on a contract basis. The multi-year accreditation process would cost about \$50,000.

A Centrist Lutheran Future. The ELCA has left the Reformation for unity with the hierarchical, gay Episcopal Church. The Lutheran Church Missouri-Synod is caught in a wooden Biblicism, including, among other things, refusing to ordain women.

The US needs a seminary and a church that stands with Luther in the radical center. There are huge challenges out there – radical Islam, aggressive secularism, moribund medieval churches. Time is running out. We have to get the gospel out. Let's roll.