

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

After almost three years of work, it is important to consider at least some of the lessons learned and to ponder the future impact of the project. It is to those two issues that we turn as this report concludes.

Lessons Learned

I can think of no way better to gather into a organized way the lessons learned in this project (and indeed, in my whole six-year journey toward the doctor of ministry degree) than to use the words of the Apostle Paul. “We rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us” (Rom 5:3-5).

I know the Apostle Paul in those words is summarizing the whole of the Christian life and not specifically my journey toward completing this project and all the other requirements of the doctor of ministry program at Trinity. And yet, not surprisingly, what fits our Christians lives as a whole also can summarize well any small part of that whole. That means my lessons learned begin with sufferings. This part of my journey as a Christian individual, husband, father, and public minister has had no small amount of suffering—most self-inflicted! How often I have created struggles by failing to balance wisely and well my responsibilities as

husband, father, professor and small cog in school and synod administration, as well as my role as student. The sufferings that come from wrestling with too many plates spinning all at once was nothing new to me when I added the title “student” to my resume. I have often failed to learn the boundaries of when saying “yes” is an appropriate use of God-given talents, and when it is an arrogant over-estimation of my own place and importance in the kingdom of God. But Paul is right—such sufferings can even be cause for rejoicing, so long as they drive us back into the life-giving Word and so long as they lift up our eyes to the hills from where comes our help (Ps 121). We cannot be defeated no matter who or what challenge or enemy has taken aim at us (even when the enemy is self) when we take refuge in the saving power of the Word, and when we take all God’s wondrous promises and repeat them back to him in our prayers. These sufferings have even taught me a little better when I must say “no” so that I can continue to say “yes” to what is already on the plate.

And what does such suffering produce? Paul told us. It produces perseverance. The times have been many when I was almost sure that I was hopelessly moribund in completing this final project. Having designed and researched a project that provided more input than I could fully make use of in five projects, the thought often occurred that the monster I had created was going to consume me for its first meal. But again and again God supplied the strength not to grow hopeless. He who enables us to have the feet of deer (Ps 18), in ways I cannot fully explain, saw to it that fresh insight and revitalized energy would somehow find its way to revive a discouraged heart. He saw to it that years of study and many thousands of dollars supplied by the gospel-empowered hearts of WELS members did not go to waste.

And what does Paul tell us such perseverance yields? Character. Since I am convinced that the heart of Christian character is humility that recognizes what beggars before the throne of grace we are and always until heaven will remain, I recognize that I am treading on very thin ice here. In preparing to write this part of “lessons learned,” I reread C. S. Lewis’ exquisite chapter on pride and humility in *Mere Christianity*. As he well said, the beginning of humility comes with recognizing our pride (Lewis 2001, 141), and I will make no claims to having mastered humility (which would, of course, be the essence of pride!). Yet a strange progressive revelation has dawned on me more and more through the sufferings and perseverance that God granted me in this whole process of studying for the degree and completing this capstone project. I certainly entered this program with the hopes of growing in knowledge. Who would spend six years of toil and effort in order to grow more ignorant! And I certainly pray I am wiser in things homiletical than I was when it all began. But a key character lesson learned for me was not how ignorant I could become, but how ignorant I was and still am. In fact, that dawning realization has almost had the downside of paralyzing my progress on many occasions! It has been a very humbling experience to be confronted day after day with all that I yet do not know, not only about the many wonders in all other fields of learning that are far beyond me, but even about what still lies beyond my grasp in homiletics. Almost without fail, every resource that has proved useful and helpful impressed on me yet again how much I have to learn. Such resources opened up whole new depths of growth in preaching and in understanding the art of preaching. While I’m sure my inborn nature’s arrogance has still bled through the pages of this report in more ways than I know, I thank God for the lesson in my own ignorance that he has handed me again and again. Such a dawning realization allows a

wonderful two-fold blessing. It allows me, I pray, to share what I have learned with much greater humility, and it teaches me to treasure the insights of others who have insights I do not possess in preaching. These revelations have helped spare me the deservedly humiliating experience of approaching my brother pastors as if I were the great big homiletical eyeball that sees all in preaching and needs no other part of the body of Christ to be complete. I pray that there indeed suffering and perseverance have combined to produce character.

And the final lesson learned that I will include in this report is the end of Paul's powerful chain of gracious blessings. It is hope. I am convinced that God has given me some awesome glimpses in these past six years of how wisely and well he guides our lives in ways beyond our planning and usually beyond our knowing. By the power of the Spirit through the gospel, I have known that by faith and confessed that to be true my whole life. But God has condescended to this doubting creature some stunning insights into that during the pursuit of this degree and the completion of this project. As reported in detail in chapter 1, God has guided me through twists and turns of where I thought this was all headed, while creating simultaneously by his work in the hearts and lives of others openings of doors of opportunity in my school and church body where I wouldn't even have known enough to have tried the handle! What he plans to accomplish through all of this I do not know. But this I know, if God grants this world and me an extended time of grace, I have never had a clearer vision of what, God willing, will be the next decade or more of my public ministry. And Paul was correct: none of this should surprise me. He who poured out his love into my heart by his gracious Holy Spirit has been at work to give me hope ever since he taught my heart to trust in him. In the midst of a growing secular and post-Christian culture, he has given me in

particular a renewed hope that blessings beyond counting are in store for shepherds and their flocks as we take him at his Word and proclaim his gospel without fear.

Considerations for the Future

As reported earlier, two closed doors have repeatedly hindered the progress of continuing growth for WELS pastors. There has been a lack of funding and manpower devoted to a focused effort to partner with pastors as they seek to grow after graduation from WLS. For years WLS' catalog has stated that we have a twin purpose for existence (undergraduate preparation of pastors and continuing education for those serving), but the lion's share plus of manpower and money flowed to our undergraduate program. Some wonderful things still happened with CE, while some great beginnings were left to languish. But that creaking sound in the background is those two doors unlocking. As this report was being written, God allowed a foundation to grant WLS \$70,000 for each of the next three years to begin to further advance the cause of our CE program. Very soon WLS will have one professor devoted with half of his ministry time to advancing the cause of WLS' CE program. It is the stated intention of the president of our seminary that this project will serve as a template for what can happen when money and manpower are devoted to worthwhile CE efforts. What was at the beginning of this project only a prayer for future blessings has become a present reality for which to give thanks to God!

In relation to this project, what do I pray this all means? When the program outlined in these pages has run its course, what will be the end result? My prayer is that even the enemies of the gospel would feel compelled to say about WELS preachers what the enemies of the gospel in the time of the apostles were compelled to say about them. "They took note

that these men had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13). If even those who hate the gospel say that about WELS preachers, then we can be assured that God has indeed granted the blessing of providing ever more beautiful feet to run on the hills of Zion!

APPENDIX 1

TWO SAMPLES OF GOOD WELS PREACHING

This sermon on John 3:1-22 was delivered by Aaron Christie (a pastor in Antioch, IL) on September 23, 2008 at the closing service for the WLS Symposium on Church and Ministry.

For almost 1,000 years, the music of the church's worship was chant. Everyone in the church might not always have been on the same page, but they were certainly on the same note. Suddenly, around the time of Charlemagne, a simple idea took sound. This simple idea revolutionized Western music. Why not split the octave and start singing in harmony either a 5th above or a 4th below the chant tone? A few centuries later, two priests named Leonin and Perotin at Notre Dame in Paris would perfect this primitive harmony and write it down for posterity. The Beach Boys would have sounded far different if the Notre Dame boys hadn't done their pioneering work in music theory. Musical harmony: a simple idea. Profound consequences.

For over 2,000 years, Western society worked on the premise that every person had his or her place. There were the pure-blooded nobles who owned the land and ruled it. There were the free men who worked to put food on the nobles' tables, money in the bishops' coffers—and keep a little for themselves. And then there was that vast majority of humanity. They were slaves—or little better. Suddenly, a little over 200 years ago a red-headed Virginian wrote down a simple idea that had been swirling about in radical circles. The idea? “All men are created equal.” Those were fighting words. And slowly over the years—through civil war and social unrest—those words have shaped American life as we know it today. Human equality: a simple idea. Profound consequences.

For over 4,000 years, people waited with bated breath for Messiah to come. From Eve to Abraham, from Isaiah all the way down to Simeon, Israel's eyes strained to see God's salvation. Yet when Messiah came, things seemed anything but simple. He spoke of camels going through needles' eyes and a kingdom not of this world; he spoke of gouging out eyes and hacking off hands. And in this morning's Gospel Lesson, Jesus' speech seems downright certifiable: old men needing to be born again, the capricious blowing of the wind, a Son of Man going up and down from heaven to reveal heavenly things that trump earthly things, the necessity of a thing called faith and the sure destruction of those who don't have it. Suddenly, things don't sound quite so simple. They certainly didn't for Nicodemus.

I'm not here this morning to teach you a lesson in music theory. It isn't my job as a called servant of the Word to proclaim the Declaration of Independence. But there is something simple, yet profoundly deep that needs to be shared with you. It is simple enough to be referenced in football end zones and recited by Sunday preschoolers. The words are so simple, that some of you are already wondering if this sermon will keep your attention, because—after all—you know all this stuff. But may it please God to use me—to encourage you—to KEEP IT SIMPLE, SAINTS as we discover the profound depths of a simple passage. Words so simple, that the faith of children is founded on them. Words so deep, that theologians regularly drown in them.

What led to Jesus speaking these famous words? Well, a man named Nicodemus, a man who sat on the Jewish ruling council, came to speak with Jesus one night. Nicodemus was a leading Pharisee—a man who reeked with gravitas. Nicodemus was no slouch when it came to the text of the Old Testament. He would have delighted in debates, on which of the commandments was the greatest, on which was the best way to classify God's laws. He knew the contemporary religious and political scene like the back of his hand.

Publicly, Nicodemus reeked with gravitas. Privately, Nicodemus was perplexed. He may well have counted and catalogued all the laws in the Old Testament, but he simply didn't know where to paint Jesus into the picture. He could *hear* that Jesus was a teacher who had come from God. Because of the miracles, he could see that Jesus wasn't your run-of-the-mill rabbi. He recognized that God was with him and was working through him. Nicodemus the religious expert needed to know more about Jesus of Nazareth. And when he visited, the heart of Jesus' message was simple. Instead of engaging Nicodemus in a chapter and verse debate on the letter of the law, he sewed simple Gospel seeds in Nicodemus' heart. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Keep it simple, saints: GOD. Who is this God? He is the God who created heaven and earth in six days by the power of his Word. He is the God who stretched out his hand and cracked open the waters of the Red Sea to lead his people from a land of slavery to a land oozing with milk and honey. He is the God who brought mighty Babylon to her knees and led his captive people home. He is the God who created the stars, yet lay on Bethlehem's hay. He is the God who walked on water, yet knew the pangs of human thirst. He is the God who used a boy's picnic lunch to feed 5,000 hungry stomachs, yet was no stranger to the pains of hunger. He is the God who will come again at the end of time to the shouts and songs of saints and angels! What a God you worship!

This awe-inspiring God loved the WORLD—Well, of course God loves Mother Theresa, and apple pie, and grandma and grandpa—God bless America! Of course God loves all good church-going folks. It goes without saying that God has a special niche in his heart for the people of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and their pastors in particular. And who can't help but love the stuffin's out of a Sem student! My, how God loves us! But that isn't what Jesus says. Jesus says that God loved the *world*.

You remember the world, don't you? How are things going these days in the world that God loves so dearly? Well, here are a few choice headlines from the *Chicago Tribune* last week: "Georgians flee as friends die and villages burn ..." "Aborting females common in India ..." "Columbian gang is suspected of \$1.5 million theft ..." "The sweet smell of sex-cess ..." "Saudi Sheik: It's OK to kill broadcasters of immorality ..."

Perverts and pill-poppers, thieves and thugs, wars and the butchering of baby girls—and God loves them? From Eve's apple down to the present, the world has been heading to hell in a handbasket in ever more ingenious ways. And God is determined to love it? That's precisely what Jesus says. It is a simple truth that blows the four pounds of fat that make up the human mind!

But here is the rub: the gang members, the abortionists, and the Sheiks that encourage violence are not signed up for this symposium on Church and Ministry. You are. They aren't standing in this pulpit. I am. It will not do to kid ourselves into thinking that we are a band of brothers—standing in the gap as a last bastion of biblical morality in the face of the world's wickedness. Brothers: hell is paved with the skulls of pastors who lambasted abortion doctors for their butchery, but never got around to the far more difficult task of holding themselves up to the scrutiny of God's law!

God loved the WORLD. But will God love me? Me with the mouth that sings "*Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken*" and then turns around and jammers about my brother in a corner? God loves me? Me with the hands that are virtuosos at helping themselves? My hands that have left my brothers and sisters standing all alone—their needs unnoticed and their hurts unhealed? God loves me? Me with the eyes that are daily squirted with the world's filth with nary a wink on my part? God loves me? Me with the mind that has thoughts that would make the devil blush if they were dragged into the light of day? Can God really love me? Me with the heart that prostitutes itself—free of charge—to a long list of idols? God loves the world? Will God love ME?

Yes, God loves me. He has set his heart upon you. His love caused him to do something simple, yet shocking: "God so loved the world that he gave his ONE AND ONLY SON!"

How many of you would entrust your homes to the soldiers burning their way through Georgia? Would you trust the Columbian gangsters with your grandmother's heirlooms? Would you give the Saudi Sheik the keys to our Seminary? Who would you give your children to? To those who would abuse them, beat them, laugh at them, spit at them, crucify him? "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

There is no sin you commit that Jesus was not crucified to save you from. There is no guilt that you bear that Christ does not lift off your back. There is no dark issue in your past that Jesus' death does not free you from. There is no future trial that Jesus does not prepare you for in the present. Do you want to put the meaning in life? Do you want to put the joy in

your service once again? Then be certain of this: Jesus died in your place to take away every single last one of your sins. There is the simple truth of the matter. It's the Gospel. You desperately need to hear it, so Jesus proclaims it. And Jesus means it!

And because Jesus teaches it and means it, the devil despises it. Because Satan can't rip Jesus off the cross or stuff him back into the tomb, he must attack the Gospel at its distribution point—which brings him to our front doorsteps. He hasn't been able to steal it away from us in a historical-critical frontal assault. So he must be more subtle. And so he is. We have all heard it said, "*All I do is preach the Gospel.*" True enough. But how easily that confidence in the Gospel morphs into laziness with the Gospel—as its vast riches remain unmined and its depths unexplored. And soon the "Great Exchange" becomes little more than a mathematical equation—On the other hand there is the temptation to over-exegeses the human creature and his culture, to discover the mind of the Spirit by statistically analyzing his work, and soon we will discover real, relational, relevant methodology that will certainly help build the walls of Zion with the Gospel—and even without it! Finally, there is the temptation to throw the car keys of gospel freedom to the old Adam, in a never-ceasing effort to prove that "we're no pietist." Keep it simple, brothers: we are walking, preaching proof that an alb and stole can only cover up a sinful man. We are in desperate need of a brand-new heart within. And God graciously gives it!

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever BELIEVES. Again, keep it simple, saints. Faith isn't something that you do. Faith is something that the Spirit of God gives. Faith isn't something you manufacture in your heart. Faith is something that the Spirit of God works in you. Believing isn't a doing. *Believing is simply receiving the wonderful gift of God's one and only Son and eternal life in him.* It is in that little word believes that the work of the Son and the Spirit intersect, the Spirit who testifies of Christ, the Comforter who comes to us with Christ, the Giver of Life who renews us in Christ, the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us and makes us into a holy temple in Christ.

Keep it simple, saints! The "Gospel in a nutshell" is what powers this entire pericope on faith and the entrance into the family of believers, the Holy Christian Church. Faith is the entry door into the Church and the Gospel is fountainhead of faith. Nicodemus came to Jesus knowing all about Torah and tithing, long tassels and wide phylacteries. *But his reasonable religion could only prove the point that flesh gives birth to flesh.* Nicodemus needed something else. And what Jesus gives him (after roughing him up with the law!) is the Gospel. Only the Gospel can bring the new birth that Jesus requires—and save Nicodemus' mother from a grisly death! It is the Gospel that flows throughout the saving bath of water and the Spirit. The Gospel is the great revelation that the Son of Man has brought from heaven to earth. The Gospel is an accomplished, historical reality through the lifting up of the Son—saving us from a death far worse than one from the fangs of fiery serpents. The Gospel is God's saving power that pulses throughout the world. The Gospel is the electricity that turns on the light of faith in the Light of the world in a sea of darkness. Luther writes: "It is necessary to look to another existence, an existence into which I am called by the Gospel and by Baptism, namely, when the Holy Spirit gives birth to me anew for eternal life, rearing,

nourishing, and clothing me anew. This calls for other breasts and nipples, a different room and different garments, to nourish me and clothe me—to nourish and clothe me for eternal life and to make me fit for the kingdom of heaven.” (LW 22.209)

God has made you fit for the kingdom of heaven, brothers! He has gathered you into his church and keeps you there in an amazingly simple way! Long ago, he took a sinful pastor by the hand and baptized you. The Gospel was proclaimed and the Spirit blew where and when it pleased him. With your baptism, you received One Lord as your Father and one Faith as your treasure. He built you on a foundation of sapphires! Angels rejoiced! As a child, you were taught by the LORD—the God of faithful grace—and great was your peace! Because Jesus loves you, this you know, for the Bible tells you so! God, in his grace, has given you a simple meal—an appetizer of the wedding banquet that will know no end. And with that simple menu of bread and wine, body and blood—there is no blessing that God withholds. He who gives his Son is sure to give you all things! Through the Word of his Absolution, tyranny is far-removed from you and you are built up in the body of Christ. How wonderful! Where the Gospel is, there you will find the Spirit and the Spirit’s gifts. Where the Gospel is in Word and Sacrament, there you will find the Communion of Saints—a communion that includes you!

Keep it simple, saints! The Father giving, the Son redeeming, the Spirit sanctifying—these are God’s gifts to you and his Church today. Let these gifts fire up your service to the Savior and his saints. Go home and preach and teach and proclaim Christ with passion. Serve as if everything depended upon you; and then as a duty-doing servant, sleep very well tonight knowing that the Spirit does his best work in spite of you! Amen.

This sermon on 2 Samuel 12:1-13 was delivered by Ken Cherney (a WLS professor) on Ash Wednesday, 2008, in the chapel at WLS.

How could David? Isn’t that the question that leaps off the page at you as you read 2 Samuel 11, one of the most puzzling and terrifying accounts in all of Scripture?

Think about who this is. This is David. This is the man after God’s own heart, whom God took from the sheep pen and sent Samuel to anoint as king. This is David, whose friendship with Jonathan is one of the tenderest stories in Scripture. This is the same man who was conscience-stricken after he cut a little piece off Saul’s robe, when Saul was in the process of trying to hunt him down and kill him. This is the fighting general who once loved his men so deeply that, when they break through the enemy lines to bring David a special treat, a drink of water from the well in his hometown, David pours the water out before the Lord, saying to the men, “I could never drink this—it would be like drinking your blood!”

And now what has he done? Is this the same man? When the year turned and it came time once again to go out and fight the Lord’s enemies, David the brave fighting man says to Joab, “You go ahead. I’ll sit this one out here in Jerusalem.” And there in Jerusalem, David did that which even the most godless pagan in our whole depraved, MTV generation

would still recognize as a very serious sin. David draws first Bathsheba, then Joab, then the entire army into his web of evil. He behaves with a cold, reptilian cynicism that turns evil into good and good into evil, in a way that the narrator can only show us through a series of shocking ironies.

Think about those ironies. Good old Uriah has to die, not because he is disloyal, but because he is faithful. After his little unplanned furlough in Jerusalem, Uriah heads back to the front lines carrying, in his mailbag, his own death warrant, which he is too good a soldier not to deliver to his commander, Joab. Later a messenger comes back from the front lines with bad news. But the bad news doesn't bother David at all, because there's good news—Uriah is dead!—and that makes his whole day. The man after the Lord's own heart has become so callous, so spiritually dense, that he goes on this way for almost a year. Finally, in the greatest irony of all, David listens to the prophet Nathan's little story and flies into a rage—not recognizing himself until Nathan has to tell him, "That man you've just said deserves to die—actually, that would be you."

How did we get here? How could David? Well, the prophet Nathan makes very sure that we know what the reason is not. It is not that the Lord had deprived David in any respect whatsoever. David did not grow up in a dysfunctional family with inadequate role models. He did not suffer from low self-esteem. He had not been placed in one of those situations where the temptation would have been too strong for almost anybody. David's great fall is utterly impossible to account for. And so we are left with only one possible conclusion. The main reason David committed his grave sin was that he could.

And that, my brothers, is terrifying. The only explanation for David's sin is the restless, ferocious evil that lurked inside even the man after God's own heart, watching and waiting for its opportunity. Opportunity came. The evil struck, and struck hard. And that's terrifying, because the same evil lurks inside you and me. And at this season it is good for us to think about all that that means.

It is good for us, first, to recall those times that what kept us from doing what David did was primarily the fact that we're not the king. It is good for us to reflect on the times when the main thing that has kept you and me from crimes as bad or worse than David's was a lack of opportunity. My brothers, pardon me for speaking somewhat directly, but I must. The Lord is not impressed if we have avoided breaking the sixth commandment in the grossest possible way simply because there has been nobody who was willing to break it with us. The Lord is not impressed if we have avoided breaking the fifth commandment in the grossest possible way simply because there weren't any Ammonites around to do our dirty work for us, and we ourselves lacked the guts.

As we fall to our knees this year, and invite our people to fall to their knees, it is good for us to reflect on who the *peccator in simul iustus et peccator* truly is. Let us be aware that our spiritual problem, and our people's spiritual problem, runs a little deeper than the fact that too often we just get too busy and forget about God. Our spiritual problem runs a

little deeper than the fact that occasionally we miss an opportunity to tell that friend or that coworker about Jesus.

There was once a missionary in a remote village in the Third World. His family, his sending church, and the people whom he served all thought he was the kindest, saintliest man they had ever known. In his journal he reflected on what a high opinion everybody had of him, and what a farce it all was. He wrote, "If the children in my village knew the thoughts that sometimes pass through my head, they would have every right to take me out and stone me to death." How could David? When you think about it, that's really not such a difficult question at all.

The difficult question in this text is not, "How could David?" There's a much harder one. The difficult question in this text is, "How could God?" Think about this. "I have sinned against the Lord." In this text there is no "Through my fault; through my own fault; through my own most grievous fault." There isn't any kneeling. There isn't any sackcloth or ashes—not until later. There isn't any weeping, or attempts to make restitution, or promises to do better, or promises to stay off rooftops in the future. Those things would certainly have been appropriate, and we read about some of them in the Psalms; but here in this text there is none of that. "I have sinned against the Lord," nothing more, because there really is nothing more to say.

And Nathan doesn't even blink: "The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die." Just like that. "The Lord has taken away your sin." There will be no *satisfactio operis*. No probation period. No "if you believe" or "if you'll accept his forgiveness right now." Come to think of it, there's no word about an apology to Bathsheba or to Uriah's family. "The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die." Just like that. And please don't say, "Yes, but Bathsheba's child died." Don't say, "Yes, but David would soon be shamed in public, the same way he had shamed the Lord. Absalom's rebellion is going to break out. David is going to run from Jerusalem, while being taunted and pelted with rocks. And for the rest of his life the sword will never depart from his house." All true enough.

But let's weigh that against this. King Saul—remember him?—had his throne taken away because he offered sacrifice at Gilgal, to keep his troops from deserting when Samuel the prophet showed up late. David, on the other hand, wipes his feet on the Lord's generosity, steals a man's wife, impregnates her, and kills the man. And just like that, David is right back to being the man after God's own heart. And through it all, he remains the king. David's sufferings after this were real, they were necessary, and he embraced them—but never with any thought that they somehow made up for what he had done. David's crimes were made up for, but not by David. They were paid for by Bathsheba's son.

Not this poor little baby. Later, Bathsheba had another son named Solomon. Generations later, Solomon had sons and grandsons—Rehoboam, Hezekiah, Josiah. Generations later, there was a son named Jacob. And this Jacob had son—actually, a grandson—named Jesus. The "Son of David," they call him. Jesus would pay. As he paid, Jesus pondered the

great imponderable, the great unfathomable question of this text. *Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?* My God, how could you? My God, why? Interestingly, if God had an answer, neither Psalm 22 nor the Gospels tell us what it was.

As we draw to the foot of the cross this year, let us ponder this most of all: the “unconditional” in “unconditional forgiveness.” There is no reason for our forgiveness other than the death of Bathsheba’s Son. And the reason Bathsheba’s Son was killed, so that you and I could live—ultimately that lies hidden in the tender and merciful heart of God.

Our forgiveness by God is unfathomable, in the etymological sense. It is beyond deep, beyond profound. And so, brothers, it is not just forgiveness for the times when we have been something less than “nice.” It’s forgiveness for adultery and murder. It’s for rage and lies and theft and envy. It’s for the stuff inside us that, if the children in our village and the grandmas in our pews knew about, they would be right to take us out and stone us to death. Jesus didn’t die to make us nice. He died to declare us “not guilty.”

Come to the cross. Bring your secret sins, your imponderable, unfathomable sins. For the Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. Yes. Just like that. Amen.

APPENDIX 2

INVITATION LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE USED WITH

PASTORS AND OTHERS INVOLVED IN

CPE IN PREACHING

(There were slight differences in letter and questionnaire sent to those not from the WELS.)

Dear ,

“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’” (Isaiah 52:7).

The privilege to have the most beautiful feet in Zion is ours every time we step up into the pulpit and proclaim the good news to God’s people. Each of us knows what an awesome privilege it is to preach. We also know what a ministry-long challenge it is to develop our God-given gifts so as to proclaim that gospel ever more clearly and winsomely.

Because of the vital importance of the task, and the challenge it is to be faithful to that task, I am working on a research project on continuing growth in preaching as the final requirement of a doctor of ministry degree. The goal of this project is to develop a comprehensive plan for continuing education in preaching for WELS pastors. It is my prayer to be able to design a plan that covers well all the key issues and concerns of proclaiming the gospel in the 21st century with a design that matches new and available resources to the many different ways our pastors prefer to learn.

In order to complete this task, it is impossible for me to work alone. It is my goal to develop this plan by forging what I hope becomes an ongoing partnership with pastors, laity, and those charged with training our pastors. The first part of that plan is to spend time interviewing pastors and other leaders in our synod to gain their perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of preaching in our midst. This interview will also seek to gather ideas for the many different ways pastors already pursue or could pursue growth in preaching.

With this letter I would like to ask you to participate in one of those interviews. The interview will be conducted at a time and place of your choosing. I do not anticipate taking more than an hour of your time. I pray you will be able to accept this invitation. I will

be calling within a week to see if you have any further questions and, if you are willing, to set up a time for our interview.

Attached to this letter you will find two things. The next page is an informed consent form. If you are able to participate in this interview, please read that carefully and then sign and date the form. I will collect that from you at the interview. You will also find the questions that will be used as part of the interview.

In His service and yours,
Professor Rich Gurgel

You've been asked to participate in this interview to assist with the development of a comprehensive plan for continuing education in preaching for WELS pastors. Please rest assured your answers will be held in strict confidence. This interview should not last more than an hour. Thank you in advance for this gift of your time and your insights!

1. What do you perceive as the strengths in the preparation and delivery of sermons in the WELS?
2. What do you perceive as the weaknesses in the preparation and delivery of sermons in the WELS?
3. What are other issues/concerns/challenges in the preparation and delivery of sermons in our midst that you believe need to be addressed as we face the challenge of preaching in the 21st century?
4. In any of the categories listed below, what have you found helpful for growing in the skills of preparing and delivering sermons, or what have you heard of other pastors finding helpful that you would like to try? Please also list any specific resources that have proved helpful for you or others in any of these areas.

Individual reading and study?

Working together with one or more other pastors?

Partnering with mature lay members to give more formal feedback?

Online resources and Web sites?

Courses, workshops, seminars on preaching?

Other?

5. In any of the categories below, how could your seminary be a better partner or encourager to the pastors of our synod in their preaching?

Specific online resources on our Web site?

Specific courses, workshops, seminars on preaching?

Improvements to our Summer Quarter and Winterim program?
Help and direction for pastors to study on their own or with brothers?
Other?

6. If God, in answer to your prayers, would today provide one specific area of growth in your preaching, or to preaching in general in the WELS, what would you pray that would be?
 7. What haven't I asked that you think would be important to know/understand for someone working to put together this comprehensive plan?
-

APPENDIX 3

INVITATION LETTER AND SURVEY SENT TO PASTORS

(This was all sent electronically with active links.)

Dear Brother in Ministry,

“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’” (Isaiah 52:7).

The privilege to have the most beautiful feet in Zion is ours every time we step up into the pulpit and proclaim the good news to God’s people. Each of us knows what an awesome privilege it is to preach. We also know what a ministry-long challenge it is to develop our God-given gifts so as to proclaim that gospel ever more clearly and winsomely.

Because of the vital importance of the task, and the challenge it is to be faithful to that task, I am working on a research project on continuing growth in preaching as the final requirement of a doctor of ministry degree. The goal of this project is to develop a comprehensive plan for continuing education in preaching. It is my prayer to be able to design a plan that covers well all the key issues and concerns of proclaiming the gospel in the 21st century with a design that matches the many different ways our pastors prefer to learn.

In order to complete this task, it is impossible for me to work alone. It is my goal to develop this plan by forging what I hope will become an ongoing partnership with pastors, laity, and those charged with training our pastors. One part of that plan is to gather information from parish pastors that would help me understand their perspective on the strengths and weaknesses of preaching in our midst as well as gather ideas for the many different ways pastors pursue or could pursue growth in preaching.

With this letter I would like to ask you to participate by completing a survey. The survey can be completed either in print (using the attached copy) or online. This survey is being sent to a randomly selected sample of graduates of the seminary who have been in parish ministry for five, fifteen, or twenty-five years. If you would like to use the electronic option, you may do so by logging on to [Web site address listed in original document].

The purpose of this survey is not to form judgments about any single pastor's individual preaching habits or performance. It is intended to gather information that reveals general

strengths and weaknesses of preaching in our midst. It is intended to provide ideas and resources on how pastors in our midst are seeking to grow in preaching or would like to grow. No attempt will be made to identify whose responses are whose when the survey is returned. The surveys are not coded to identify the respondent nor will you be asked to put your name anywhere on the survey.

I know the parish ministry is busy and that your time is precious. But I also know that you consider precious the proclamation of Christ's gospel. Please set aside about an hour during the next seven days to complete the survey. If you choose the printed format, please return it to the seminary office using the enclosed postage-paid envelope. Please complete the online survey or mail your completed survey by October 27. A high response rate to this survey is crucial to being able to draw generalized conclusions for the project.

May God bless your participation in this process for the strengthening of preaching in our midst!

On the cover of the survey, you will find a paragraph concerning informed consent. If you have any questions about this or anything in this process, please do not hesitate to call or contact our faculty secretary, Mrs. Diane Heisler. She can be reached at (262) 242-8141 or [e-mail address].

In His service and yours,
Professor Rich Gurgel

1. Please estimate the percent of your Sunday sermons for which you use each of the following processes. If you did not use a specific process for selecting preaching texts, please mark the N/A column.

	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%	N/A
Text from a pericope	0	1	1	1	1	1	4	7	7	6	0
Preaching through a Bible book(beyond what's found in the ILCW series)	6	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	13
Texts selected for use in a series (a series on prayer, baptism, etc.)	14	4	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Individual free texts	14	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Topical (sermon based on several related texts that treat a common topic/point)	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10

2. Please estimate the percent of your Sunday sermons that are preached from each of the following sections of the Bible.

	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
Old Testament historical/narrative/prophesy	5	11	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Psalms (or other texts from Old Testament poetical books)	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gospels	0	0	8	14	4	3	1	0	0	0
Epistles	3	8	15	4	0	0	0	0	0	0

3. How far ahead do you typically plan your preaching texts?
- | | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| One year in advance or more | 1 |
| Six to eleven months in advance | 7 |
| Two to five months in advance | 6 |
| One month in advance | 6 |
| Less than one month in advance | 10 |
4. Please estimate how often your text study includes a study of the Greek when preaching on the New Testament.
- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| I do not study the Greek text | 0 |
| 1-24% of the time | 6 |
| 25-49% of the time | 2 |
| 50-74% of the time | 4 |
| 75-99% of the time | 9 |
| I always study the Greek text | 9 |
5. While time spent in the original languages may vary rather significantly depending on the length of the text, on average how much time do you devote to working with the original language when the text is Greek?
- | | |
|---------------------|----|
| One hour or less | 8 |
| One to two hours | 14 |
| Three to four hours | 7 |
| Five hours or more | 1 |

6. Please estimate how often your text study includes a study of the Hebrew/Aramaic when preaching from the Old Testament.

I do not study the Hebrew/Aramaic text	2
1-24% of the time	7
25-49% of the time	4
50-74% of the time	1
75-99% of the time	10
I always study the Hebrew/Aramaic text	6

7. While time spent in the original languages may vary rather significantly depending on the length of the text, on average how much time do you devote to working with the original language when the text is Hebrew/Aramaic?

One hour or less	9
One to two hours	10
Three to four hours	8
Five hours or more	1

8. How often do you consult commentaries in the process of preparing the typical Sunday sermon?

I don't consult commentaries	0
1-24% of the time	5
25-49% of the time	2
50-74% of the time	6
75-99% of the time	7
I always consult commentaries	10

9. How often do you search the Internet for resources in the process of preparing the typical Sunday sermon?
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| I don't search for online resources | 9 |
| 1-24% of the time | 9 |
| 25-49% of the time | 3 |
| 50-74% of the time | 0 |
| 75-99% of the time | 8 |
| I always search for online resources | 1 |
10. How often do you prepare a text analysis (such as identifying a malady, telic note, propositional statement) in the process of preparing the typical Sunday sermon?
- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| I don't prepare a text analysis | 5 |
| 1-24% of the time | 6 |
| 25-49% of the time | 3 |
| 50-74% of the time | 2 |
| 75-99% of the time | 6 |
| I always prepare a text analysis | 8 |
11. If you follow a process of text analysis that is significantly different from the method taught at the seminary, please describe your method below. (No response is needed if you follow the method from our textbook.)
12. How often do you prepare a detailed outline in the process of preparing the typical Sunday sermon?
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| I don't prepare a detailed outline | 4 |
| 1-24% of the time | 7 |
| 25-49% of the time | 5 |
| 50-74% of the time | 2 |
| 75-99% of the time | 3 |
| I always prepare a detailed outline | 9 |

13. How often do you write out the complete sermon in the process of preparing the typical Sunday sermon?

I don't write out the complete sermon	2
1-24% of the time	2
25-49% of the time	0
50-74% of the time	0
75-99% of the time	3
I always write out the complete sermon	23

14. On a scale of one to five, rate yourself as strong or weak in each of the following preaching tasks:

	Weak	2	3	4	Strong
Planning your preaching	3	6	10	6	5
Studying of the text	0	6	9	13	2
Organizing the flow of the sermon	1	0	11	13	5
Applying specific law relevantly	0	1	8	15	6
Applying specific gospel relevantly	0	1	4	19	6
Finding/using good illustrations	0	4	11	10	5
Delivery of the sermon	0	0	5	19	6

15. What do you typically take with you into the pulpit? Choose all that apply.

Full written manuscript	19
Detailed outline	3
Brief outline	5
The Bible	16

16. Briefly describe the process you follow for committing your sermon to memory.

17. How long does committing your sermon to memory typically take before you feel ready to preach your sermon?

Five hours or more	1
Four hours	5
Three hours	9
Two hours	8
One hour or less	7

18. How long is your average Sunday sermon?

10-14 minutes	1
15-19 minutes	12
20-24 minutes	13
25-29 minutes	2
30-34 minutes	1
Other, please specify	1

19. Are you seeking to change the typical length of your sermons?

Yes	4
No	26

20. Are you working to increase or decrease the typical length of your sermons?

Increase	0
Decrease	4

21. In the typical week, how much time do you devote to the whole process from the beginning of studying the text until you are ready to step into the pulpit?
- | | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Twenty hours or more | 2 |
| Fifteen to nineteen hours | 12 |
| Ten to fourteen hours | 11 |
| Five to nine hours | 4 |
| Less than five hours | 1 |
22. Although some preliminary study of a selected text may have occurred when you planned your preaching schedule, how many days before you preach do you typically begin a thorough study of your text?
- | | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Seven or more days before | 2 |
| Five or six | 20 |
| Three or four | 8 |
| One or two | 0 |
23. How often do you make use of "old" sermons in preaching?
- | | |
|---------------------------|----|
| 10 times per year or more | 1 |
| 4-9 times per year | 7 |
| 1-3 times per year | 3 |
| (Almost) Never | 19 |
24. In our digital age, the availability of sermons from others has increased exponentially. Please indicate any of the following that you use: Do you use more than an occasional brief illustration or textual insight gained from others for your typical Sunday sermon?
- | | |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 9 |
| No | 21 |

25. I have used large portions of another WELS pastor's sermons ("large portions" means more, for example, than gaining an idea or two for an illustration).

Yes	5
No	4

26. If you do use large portions of another WELS pastor's sermons, what percentage of your sermons include such material?

1-24%	2
25-49%	1
50-74%	2
75-99%	0

27. I have used (almost) an entire sermon of another WELS pastor.

Yes	1
No	8

28. If you have used (almost) an entire sermon of another WELS pastor, what percentage of your sermons include such material?

1-24%	1
25-49%	0
50-74%	0
75-99%	0

29. I have used large portions of sermons from others beyond our fellowship ("large portions" means more, for example, than gaining an idea or two for an illustration).

Yes	3
No	6

30. If you have used large portions of sermons from others beyond our fellowship, what percentages of your sermons include such material?

1-24% 3
 25-49% 0
 50-74% 0
 75-99% 0

31. I have used (almost) an entire sermon from others beyond our fellowship.

Yes 0
 No 9

32. If you have used (almost) an entire sermon from others beyond our fellowship, what percentage of your sermons include such material?

1-24% 0
 25-49% 0
 50-74% 0
 75-99% 0

33. If you use significant portions of materials from others do you:

Indicate that verbally as you preach 1
 Note this in your written sermon 2
 Use the material with no indication of the source 7

34. Inductive style of preaching: Instead of stating a proposition/biblical principle early in the sermon (often already in the introduction), the sermon proceeds first to wrestle with the malady of the text (the specific law) and only later uncovers the gospel's answer to that problem (telic note). The movement of logic is inductive rather than deductive since the specifics (of the text and/or our lives) are dealt with first, and only later more general principles/conclusions of law and gospel are drawn

from those specifics. The goal is to lead listeners along the same path of discovery that the preacher followed as the text first cut and healed him. My use of the inductive style of preaching is best described as follows:

Never used: interested in trying it in the future	7
Never used: not interested in doing so in the future	3
Used in the past but stopped: interested in trying again	3
Used in the past but stopped: not interested in trying again	0
Use this style for a majority of my sermons	5
Use this style about once or twice a month	6
Use this style about once or twice each year	6

35. Narrative (biblical): The preacher seeks to honor the narrative quality of the text and designs the sermon flow more like the progression of a story than logically outlined points. It uses extensively in the sermon the specific story of human sin and divine grace at work in the lives of those described or first addressed in the text. While this is more easily done when preaching from “narrative” texts from the Old Testament or Gospels, even Paul’s epistles (or other less “narrative” portions of Scripture) often can be approached in a more narrative way. This sermon attempts to draw the hearers into the original story line before moving too quickly to appropriation/application. My use of the narrative (biblical) style of preaching is best described as follows:

Never used: interested in trying it in the future	0
Never used: not interested in doing so in the future	1
Used in the past but stopped: interested in trying again	2
Used in the past but stopped: not interested in trying again	0
Use this style for a majority of my sermons	5
Use this style about once or twice a month	9
Use this style about once or twice each year	13

36. Narrative (contemporary): This type of sermon has much in common with the previous, but the design of the sermon revolves as much if not more around a contemporary story (or stitching together several such stories) that parallels the biblical story found in the text. My use of the narrative (contemporary) style of preaching is best described as follows:
- | | |
|--|----|
| Never used: interested in trying it in the future | 7 |
| Never used: not interested in doing so in the future | 7 |
| Used in the past but stopped: interested in trying again | 2 |
| Used in the past but stopped: not interested in trying again | 0 |
| Use this style for a majority of my sermons | 0 |
| Use this style about once or twice a month | 2 |
| Use this style about once or twice each year | 12 |
37. First-person: This type of sermon can have much in common with either of the two types of narrative preaching listed. The preacher assumes the role of someone within the text (or contemporary story) and speaks the sermon as if he were witnessing the activity of the text (or contemporary story) from that perspective. This can be done with or without props. My use of the first-person style of preaching is best described as follows:
- | | |
|--|---|
| Never used: interested in trying it in the future | 8 |
| Never used: not interested in doing so in the future | 9 |
| Used in the past but stopped: interested in trying again | 4 |
| Used in the past but stopped: not interested in trying again | 1 |
| Use this style for a majority of my sermons | 0 |
| Use this style about once or twice a month | 0 |
| Use this style about once or twice each year | 8 |

38. **Dialog:** Two or more presenters participate in the sermon. The sermon takes the form of a discussion/argument/conversation that revolves around the key point of the text. This style of sermon tends to have much in common with elements of the inductive sermon listed above as questions that arise during study of the text become issues in the dialog. It also may have something in common with the narrative styles (biblical or contemporary) if used with a narrative text. It may also be very similar to a first-person sermon if each person involved in the dialog is a different person in the biblical or contemporary narrative. My use of the dialog style of preaching is best described as follows:
- | | |
|--|----|
| Never used: interested in trying it in the future | 9 |
| Never used: not interested in doing so in the future | 12 |
| Used in the past but stopped: interested in trying again | 5 |
| Used in the past but stopped: not interested in trying again | 1 |
| Use this style for a majority of my sermons | 0 |
| Use this style about once or twice a month | 0 |
| Use this style about once or twice each year | 3 |
39. **Homily (verse-by-verse exposition):** This type of preaching is not organized so much into “theme and parts” but instead follows more a verse-by-verse expounding of the text in the order that it appears. Often within each verse immediate appropriation/application is made to the hearers. The sermon may still have a general theme, but division into “parts” is not strictly followed. My use of the homily/expository style of preaching is best described as follows:
- | | |
|--|----|
| Never used: interested in trying it in the future | 1 |
| Never used: not interested in doing so in the future | 6 |
| Used in the past but stopped: interested in trying again | 4 |
| Used in the past but stopped: not interested in trying again | 1 |
| Use this style for a majority of my sermons | 2 |
| Use this style about once or twice a month | 6 |
| Use this style about once or twice each year | 10 |

40. Are there any other preaching styles not described in the previous questions that you have used or plan to use?
- | | |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 5 |
| No | 25 |
41. If you listed another preaching style in the question above, please describe your use of it:
- | | |
|--|---|
| Never used: interested in trying it in the future | 2 |
| Used in the past but stopped: interested in trying again | 1 |
| Used in the past but stopped: not interested in trying again | 1 |
| Use this style for a majority of my sermons | 0 |
| Use this style about once or twice a month | 0 |
| Use this style about once or twice each year | 1 |
42. The next several questions concern your use of computer technology in studying for and delivering your sermon. Do you regularly make use of computer technology in the study of your text?
- | | |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 21 |
| No | 9 |
43. Would you like more training or do you feel you are sufficiently trained in using such technology?
- | | |
|----------------------------|----|
| I would like more training | 10 |
| I am sufficiently trained | 11 |
44. If you do not use computer technology in studying for your sermon, would you like to get started with some training, or do you prefer not to use technology in this way?
- | | |
|--|---|
| I would like to get started in some training | 3 |
| I prefer not to use software in sermon study | 6 |

45. Do you make use of computer technology in delivering your sermon?
- | | |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 9 |
| No | 21 |
46. What technology do you use in delivering your sermons?
- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| PowerPoint | 8 |
| Other, please specify | 4 |
47. What visuals do you project?
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Pictures | 9 |
| Video clips | 4 |
| Outline of sermon/key points | 7 |
| Verses of the text/supporting verses | 9 |
| Other, please specify | 1 |
48. How many slides do you use in a typical sermon?
49. How often do you make use of these various technologies in delivering your sermon?
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Every Sunday or almost every Sunday | 4 |
| Two Sundays a month | 0 |
| One Sunday a month | 0 |
| Less than one Sunday a month | 5 |

50. Select all the reasons below that are significant in why you choose not to make use of computer technology in delivering the sermon.

- Believe it distracts from proclaimed message 9
- Too time consuming for amount of impact 9
- Lack of computer equipment 6
- Chancel not conducive to projected visuals 7
- Lack of personal technological expertise 8
- Lack of technological expertise in congregation 4
- Other, please specify 8

51. Which statement below best fits the use (or non-use) of a separate children's message in your congregation? Please check the one option below with which you most agree.

- I have not given much thought to including a children's message in the service. Agree 1
- Currently have a children's message and plan to continue this practice. 13
- If you agree, please describe the chief reasons for continuing this practice. 2
- Do not have a children's message but would like to begin this practice. 0
- If you agree, please describe the chief reasons for beginning this practice. 0
- Currently have a children's message but plan to discontinue this practice. 0
- If you agree, what do you see as the chief reason for discontinuing this practice? 12
- Do not use a children's message and do not plan to begin this practice. 12
- If you agree, what do you see as the chief reasons for not beginning this practice? 12

52. If your congregation currently uses a separate children's message, who delivers this message?

- Pastor 12
- Pastor or Teacher/Staff Minister 2
- Teacher/Staff Minister 1
- My congregation does not use a separate children's message 16

53. The Commission on Worship produces the bi-monthly publication *Preach the Word*. What percent of the time do you read through *Preach the Word*?

I don't read <i>Preach the Word</i>	1
1-24%	3
25-49%	0
50-74%	6
75-99%	3
I always read through <i>Preach the Word</i>	17

54. How would you respond to the following statement: When I have read *Preach the Word*, it has typically been helpful for my preaching?

Strongly disagree	2
Disagree	3
Agree	23
Strongly agree	1

55. Please list what you find most helpful in *Preach the Word*.

56. Please list any improvements you would suggest for *Preach the Word*.

57. Which of the following continuing education resources have you used to grow in your preaching? Please select all that apply and list specific resources when possible.

Books on preaching. Please list below the title and author of any books you've found helpful:	Have Used
Subscription to printed preaching magazine/newsletter. Please list below any helpful resources to which you have subscribed:	12
Reading good sermons of others in print or online. Please list below any helpful resources you have found:	6
	15

- Watching other preachers on television, videotape, or DVD. Please list below any helpful resources you have found: 7
- Online preaching Web sites/newsletters, etc. Please list below any helpful online resources you have found: 5
- Workshops or conferences. Please list below any helpful workshops or conferences you have attended. (Since the goal of this project is to develop an inventory of useful resources, please list whatever you can recall of the name of the conference/workshop, the presenter, and the place it was offered.) 9
- Courses taken for credit in a face-to-face class. Please list below any helpful regular courses you have taken. (Since the goal of this project is to develop an inventory of useful resources, please list whatever you can recall of the name of the course, the presenter, and the place it was offered.) 4
- Courses taken for credit online. Please list below any helpful online courses you have taken. (Since the goal of this project is to develop an inventory of useful resources, please list whatever you can recall of the name of the course, the presenter, and the group/school that offered the course.) 0
- Other helpful resources. Please list below any other resources you have found helpful. 8

58. Beyond occasionally discussing a sermon text with a brother in the ministry, have you ever been involved in working together regularly with one or more pastors on any aspect of preaching? This "working together" would include things such as regular joint in-person/online text study or reviewing video/DVD of one another's sermons.

- Never done so, and not interested. Agree 8
- If you agree, what about such group study makes it seem less than helpful for you? 2
- Previously did so, not interested anymore. 9
- If you agree, what about such group study makes it seem less than helpful for you? 5
- Never done so, but would like to try. 7
- If you agree, what are the barriers you see to resuming or beginning that study and what would you like to do if you became active in such study?
- Used to do so, would like to begin again.
- If you agree, what are the barriers you see to resuming or beginning that study and what would you like to do if you became active in such study again?
- Currently involved in study with another brother(s).

If you agree, please describe in some detail how you are working together with other brothers in the ministry.

59. Please indicate any ways you have sought more formal feedback on your preaching from members of your congregation.
- | | |
|--|----|
| Have not sought such feedback in any formal way | 8 |
| Seek regular feedback from my board of elders (church council, etc.) | 8 |
| Use surveys with all members about preaching | 5 |
| Meet with small group to discuss text before preaching on it | 3 |
| Make use of sermon summaries in confirmation to check understanding | 13 |
| Other, please specify | 13 |

60. How many days during the typical week do you spend time in personal devotional reading or study of the Word that is not directly related to preparing for a sermon or Bible class?

- | | |
|-------|---|
| None | 1 |
| One | 4 |
| Two | 3 |
| Three | 4 |
| Four | 5 |
| Five | 7 |
| Six | 3 |
| Seven | 3 |

61. If you do spend some personal devotional time in the Word, how much time do you typically spend per day in such study?
This does not include time you would also spend in prayer.

15 minutes or less	5
16-30 minutes	17
31-45 minutes	5
46-60 minutes	1
More than one hour	1

62. List the greatest challenge you face in your preaching ministry that would benefit from focused study.

63. Other than what you have already indicated earlier in this survey, what has proved most helpful to your preaching that might not typically be seen as continuing education in preaching?

64. Basic Homiletical Review

	Low	Medium	High
Relevance	7	13	10
Likelihood I would enroll on-campus	26	3	0
Likelihood I would enroll in my area	10	8	11
Likelihood I would enroll online	10	13	7

65. Preaching the Old Testament

	Low	Medium	High
Relevance	4	11	15
Likelihood I would enroll on-campus	23	6	1
Likelihood I would enroll in my area	9	8	13
Likelihood I would enroll online	9	14	7

66.	Preaching to the Heart				
	Relevance	Low	Medium	High	
	Likelihood I would enroll on-campus	7	6	17	
	Likelihood I would enroll in my area	23	7	3	
	Likelihood I would enroll online	9	8	13	
		10	11	8	
67.	Freshness/Variety in Law and Gospel				
	Relevance	Low	Medium	High	
	Likelihood I would enroll on-campus	3	7	20	
	Likelihood I would enroll in my area	22	7	1	
	Likelihood I would enroll online	8	8	14	
		8	13	9	
68.	Lutheran Festival Preaching				
	Relevance	Low	Medium	High	
	Likelihood I would enroll on-campus	9	11	8	
	Likelihood I would enroll in my area	25	5	0	
	Likelihood I would enroll online	13	7	9	
		14	10	6	
69.	Preaching to Foster Sanctification				
	Relevance	Low	Medium	High	
	Likelihood I would enroll on-campus	5	13	12	
	Likelihood I would enroll in my area	24	4	2	
	Likelihood I would enroll online	8	10	12	
		11	13	6	

70. History of Preaching

	Low	Medium	High
Relevance	19	9	2
Likelihood I would enroll on-campus	28	2	0
Likelihood I would enroll in my area	18	10	2
Likelihood I would enroll online	22	7	1

71. Preach the Text (text study skills)

	Low	Medium	High
Relevance	4	7	19
Likelihood I would enroll on-campus	20	8	2
Likelihood I would enroll in my area	9	10	11
Likelihood I would enroll online	11	12	7

72. Alternate Styles of Preaching

	Low	Medium	High
Relevance	7	8	14
Likelihood I would enroll on-campus	24	5	1
Likelihood I would enroll in my area	11	8	11
Likelihood I would enroll online	14	10	6

73. Use of Logos/Libronix

	Low	Medium	High
Relevance	9	12	8
Likelihood I would enroll on-campus	22	4	3
Likelihood I would enroll in my area	15	8	5
Likelihood I would enroll online	14	9	6

74. Using Technology in the Parish

	Low	Medium	High
Relevance	7	15	7
Likelihood I would enroll on-campus	26	2	0
Likelihood I would enroll in my area	13	10	6
Likelihood I would enroll online	13	9	7

75. Creative Theological Writing

	Low	Medium	High
Relevance	4	14	11
Likelihood I would enroll on-campus	21	5	2
Likelihood I would enroll in my area	10	9	10
Likelihood I would enroll online	8	15	6

76. Please suggest any additional courses, workshops, or seminars you would like to see your seminary offer in any area of preaching.

77. If the seminary offered an online collection of good sermons that you and/or your circuit/conference could study and discuss, what is the likelihood that you and/or your circuit/conference would use such a resource?

Very unlikely	4
Somewhat unlikely	5
Somewhat likely	12
Very likely	9

78. Which of the following would describe your view of the seminary's on-campus Summer Quarter and Winterim program?

	Agree
I haven't attended Summer Quarter or Winterim, and I don't plan to attend in the future.	6
If you agree, what could the seminary do to improve its on-campus offerings that could change your mind about not attending?	
I haven't attended Summer Quarter or Winterim, but I do plan to attend in the future.	13
If you agree, what could the seminary do to make your future attendance even more likely?	
I have attended Summer Quarter or Winterim, but I don't plan to attend in the future.	4
If you agree, what would the seminary need to do so that you would be inclined to return?	
I have attended Summer Quarter or Winterim, and I do plan to attend again in the future.	6
If you agree, what can the seminary do to make your Summer Quarter or Winterim experience even better?	

79. Assuming that the content of a particular course offered through the seminary was appealing to you, rate your interest level for the various ways that a course could be delivered to you.

	Low	Medium	High
Three-week morning course on-campus	25	1	1
Two-week morning course on-campus	20	4	3
One-week afternoon course on-campus	17	4	6
One-day workshop/seminar on-campus	10	8	9
Two to three-day workshop/seminar on-campus	11	6	10
One-week course in your area	5	10	13
One-day workshop/seminar in your area	1	6	21
Two to three-day workshop/seminar in your area	5	6	18
Course of any length offered online	6	9	13

80. In addition to offering courses and workshops online, what other online preaching helps or resources would you like to see WLS offer?

81. When dormitory space is available, I would be interested if the seminary offered room and board at a reasonable rate for pastors wishing to use the campus as a place for personal study, ministry planning, etc.
- | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
| 3 | 15 | 7 | 3 |
82. If God, in answer to your prayers, would provide one specific area of growth in your preaching, or in preaching in general in the WELS, what would you pray that would be?
83. What haven't I asked that you think would be important to know/understand for someone working to put together this comprehensive plan?
84. What year did you graduate from seminary?
- | | |
|------|----|
| 2003 | 10 |
| 1993 | 9 |
| 1983 | 11 |
85. What is the total baptized membership of your congregation(s)?
- | | |
|-----------------|----|
| 0-199 | 11 |
| 200-399 | 4 |
| 400-599 | 4 |
| 600-799 | 2 |
| 800-999 | 4 |
| 1,000 or larger | 4 |
86. In what synodical district do you serve?
- | | |
|----|---|
| AC | 1 |
| DM | 2 |

MI 5
MN 4
NE 2
NA 2
NW 1
PNW 3
SA 1
SC 1
SEW 4
WW 7

87. How many years have you served in your current congregation(s)?

0-5 years 14
6-10 years 10
11-15 years 3
16-20 years 3
More than 20 years 0

88. Please indicate the size of your pastoral staff.

Sole pastor 15
Sole pastor with regular preaching assistance 2
Two or more pastors 12

89. Please provide the contact information for a spiritually mature man from your congregation:

Name
Address
City
State
Zip

90. Please provide the contact information for a spiritually mature woman from your congregation:

Name
Address
City
State

APPENDIX 4

INVITATION LETTER AND FINAL RESULTS FROM
THE DELPHI GROUP OF LAY PEOPLE

Dear ,

“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’” (Isaiah 52:7).

The privilege to have the most beautiful feet in Zion belongs to each of us as God’s royal priests (1 Peter 2:9) whenever we share the gospel with others. In a unique way, pastors have that privilege whenever they step into the pulpit. To faithfully carry out that vital task of preaching is a ministry-long challenge. Part of that challenge is for pastors to continue to grow in the use of their God-given gifts so as to proclaim that gospel ever more clearly and winsomely.

Because of the vital importance of the task of preaching, and the challenge it is to be faithful to that task, I am working on a research project on continuing growth in preaching as the final requirement of a doctor of ministry degree. The goal of this project is to develop a comprehensive plan for continuing education in preaching for the pastors of our synod. It is my prayer to be able to design a plan that covers well all the key issues and concerns of proclaiming the gospel in the 21st century in a way that matches the many different methods by which our pastors prefer to learn.

In order to complete this task, it is impossible for me to work alone. It is my goal to develop this plan by forging an ongoing partnership with pastors, laity, and those charged with training our pastors. As part of that plan, your pastor has already completed a survey. In that survey, he was asked to suggest two spiritually mature members of his congregation who might be willing to assist in this project. That is why you have received this letter.

You are being asked to participate in what is called a “Delphi group” process along with about thirty other WELS men and women. If you are willing to participate in this process, there would be three things I would ask of you.

The first step would be to return your answers to the two attached questions in the stamped, self-addressed envelope included in this mailing. The two questions ask you to

list what you see as the strengths and weaknesses of preaching in the WELS. I would ask that you would mail your answers back to me no later than Friday, November 21.

Once all answers have been returned to me, I will mail back to you the complete list of everyone's answers. From that composite list, I will ask you to select what you see as the five most important answers to each question.

Once those "top five" lists have been returned to me, I will mail back to you the list of all responses weighted by the frequency with which they appeared on everyone's lists. For the last step, you will rank one through five your top selections from both preaching strengths and preaching weaknesses.

As the comprehensive plan is put together, this will give me a very helpful list of what members of our synod see as strengths on which to build and weaknesses to overcome in preaching.

If you are able to participate, thank you in advance for the gift of your time and your input on this project. Please don't hesitate to give me a call or e-mail me if you have any questions you would like answered. Beneath my signature, please notice an informed consent statement.

In His service and yours,

Professor Rich Gurgel

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to investigate what a comprehensive plan for continuing education in preaching might look like for the pastors of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The research is being conducted by Richard Gurgel.

In this research you will be participating in a Delphi group process in which you will be joining about thirty other men and women in our synod in sharing your views on the strengths and weaknesses of preaching in our midst.

Please be assured that any information that you provide will be held in strict confidence. At no time will your name be reported along with your responses. Please understand that your participation in this research is totally voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time during this study.

By your completion of the attached two questions, you will be giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research project.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this process. May God bless the responses you give for the strengthening of the preaching of the gospel in our midst!

Please be assured that your answers will be held in the strictest confidence. At no time will your name be used in connection with the responses gained from this process.

Please list up to five specific items under the two questions below.

Once you have completed this form, please return it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided. In order to keep this process moving, I ask that you place it in the mail by Friday, November 21.

Thank you!

What do you believe are the strengths of preaching in our Wisconsin Synod?

What do you believe are the weaknesses of preaching in our Wisconsin Synod?

Prioritizing *Strengths* of Preaching in the WELS

Here were the instructions given to the participants of the Delphi group in the final round of their work:

In the table below, you will find the seven preaching strengths that were mentioned by half or more of the members of our Delphi group.

Please *PRIORITIZE* the list by ranking the list from 1-7. As you rank these strengths, place a checkmark in the "1" column in front of the preaching strength *you think is the most important of those listed*. Continue ranking until you have ranked the strengths from one to seven by placing a checkmark in the appropriate box in front of each statement. *When you finish, there should be only one mark under each number*. Please also indicate your gender below as well. Thank you!

Note: ratings based on a scale of 1-7: one being the highest, seven being the lowest.

First Preaching Strength

Sermons give evidence of the conviction that Christ comes to us through the Means of Grace (the gospel in Word and sacraments) and Jesus (the message of salvation by grace alone in him) is kept at the heart/center of the sermon.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cumulative Weighted Total by Gender	Overall ranking
Male	5	1	1	0	1	0	1	22	1
Female	6	5	1	0	0	0	1	26	1
Unspecified	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	8	
Composite	14	7	3	0	1	0	2	56	1
Cumulative Weighted Total by Ranking	14	28	37	37	42	42	56		

Second Preaching Strength

Sermons are based upon the Reformation principle of sola scriptura (Scripture alone)—sermons give evidence that Scripture alone is the infallible source of spiritual information and authority.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cumulative Weighted Total by Gender	Overall ranking
Male	1	5	2	0	0	1	0	23	2
Female	3	5	3	0	0	1	1	35	3
Unspecified	0	3	0	1	1	0	0	15	
Composite	4	13	5	1	1	2	1	73	2
Cumulative Weighted Total by Ranking	4	30	45	49	54	66	73		

Third Preaching Strength

Knowledge of Hebrew and Greek assures our pastors have a comprehensive understanding of the Bible and gives greater insights to people in the pew.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cumulative Weighted Total by Gender	Overall ranking
Male	0	1	3	1	2	0	2	39	5
Female	0	0	3	3	1	4	2	64	5
Unspecified	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	24	
Composite	0	1	7	5	4	6	4	127	5
Cumulative Weighted Total by Ranking	0	2	23	43	63	99	127		

Fourth Preaching Strength

There is a proper distinction between law and gospel in every sermon to convict and refresh (reminding us of both our sinfulness and our forgiveness).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cumulative Weighted Total by Gender	Overall ranking
Male	1	2	0	2	2	2	0	35	3
Female	4	3	3	1	1	1	0	34	2
Unspecified	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	13	
Composite	7	6	4	3	3	4	0	82	3
Cumulative Weighted Total by Ranking	7	19	31	43	58	82	82		

Fifth Preaching Strength

An individual can go to any WELS church and have confidence that the preaching is trustworthy.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cumulative Weighted Total by Gender	Overall ranking
Male	2	0	0	3	0	2	2	40	6
Female	0	0	0	4	2	1	6	74	7
Unspecified	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	25	
Composite	2	0	1	8	3	4	9	139	6
Cumulative Weighted Total by Ranking	2	2	5	37	52	76	139		

Sixth Preaching Strength

Sermons give evidence of confidence that the Bible interprets itself. We do not try to explain what cannot be explained. We just accept God's Word.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cumulative Weighted Total by Gender	Overall ranking
Male	0	0	3	3	2	0	1	38	4
Female	0	0	1	5	4	2	1	62	4
Unspecified	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	23	
Composite	0	0	15	9	8	3	2	123	4
Cumulative Weighted Total by Ranking	0	0	15	51	91	109	123		

Seventh Preaching Strength

Pastors display an ability to apply the Word to our everyday lives—sermon content is applicable to the culture of 21st-century congregations.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cumulative Weighted Total by Gender	Overall ranking
Male	0	0	0	0	2	4	3	55	7
Female	0	0	2	0	5	4	2	69	6
Unspecified	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	32	
Composite	0	0	2	1	7	8	9	156	7
Cumulative Weighted Total by Ranking	0	0	6	10	45	93	156		

Prioritizing *Weaknesses* of Preaching in the WELS

Here were the instructions given to the participants of the Delphi group in the final round of their work:

In the table below, you will find the seven preaching weaknesses that were mentioned by half or more of the members of our Delphi group.

Please *PRIORITIZE* the list by ranking the list from 1-7. As you rank these weaknesses, place a checkmark in the "1" column in front of the preaching weakness *you think is the greatest challenge to preaching in our midst*. Continue ranking until you have ranked the weaknesses from one to seven by placing a checkmark in the appropriate box in front of each statement. *When you finish, there should be only one mark under each number.*

Note: ratings based on a scale of 1-7: one being the highest, seven being the lowest.

First Preaching Weakness

Not enough emphasis on missions and mission work (go and tell!), not enough challenging of the congregation to show their faith in the community.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cumulative Weighted Total by Gender	Overall ranking
Male	0	0	4	0	3	1	0	33	4
Female	2	4	0	3	1	0	2	41	3
Unspecified	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	12	
Composite	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	86	3
Cumulative Weighted Total by Ranking	4	12	24	40	60	72	86		

Second Preaching Weakness

Not enough preaching on Christian vocation (God's call to each of us as father, mother, husband, wife, son, daughter, employer, employee, etc.).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cumulative Weighted Total by Gender	Overall ranking
Male	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	35	7
Female	3	1	3	2	3	0	0	37	2
Unspecified	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	13	
Composite	3	4	5	4	6	1	1	85	2
Cumulative Weighted Total by Ranking	3	11	26	42	72	78	85		

Third Preaching Weakness

Pastors have too much to do, too little time. We fail to allow pastors more time to “retreat,” reflect, and to pursue classes for personal growth.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cumulative Weighted Total by Gender	Overall ranking
Male	2	0	0	1	2	2	1	35	5
Female	2	1	1	2	3	0	3	51	4
Unspecified	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	19	
Composite	4	1	2	4	6	2	5	105	5
Cumulative Weighted Total by Ranking	4	6	12	28	58	70	105		

Fourth Preaching Weakness

“Down-to-earth” application to our daily lives is too often lacking or is done in too abstract a manner (failure to connect sermon text to today’s world).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cumulative Weighted Total by Gender	Overall ranking
Male	0	2	3	1	1	1	0	28	2
Female	3	1	5	2	0	0	1	35	1
Unspecified	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	10	
Composite	5	4	8	3	1	5	1	73	1
Cumulative Weighted Total by Ranking	5	13	37	49	54	66	73		

Fifth Preaching Weakness

The WELS doesn’t have a consistent way to help pastors evaluate and improve their preaching.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cumulative Weighted Total by Gender	Overall ranking
Male	2	2	0	1	0	1	2	30	3
Female	1	2	2	1	0	5	1	52	5
Unspecified	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	12	
Composite	3	6	2	4	0	6	2	87	4
Cumulative Weighted Total by Ranking	3	15	21	37	37	73	87		

Sixth Preaching Weakness

Pastors use theological language (doctrinal terms newcomers don't know like *atonement*, *righteousness*, *sanctified*) and do not explain what such terms mean. Sermon language ends up being over the heads of some.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cumulative Weighted Total by Gender	Overall ranking
Male	3	1	1	0	0	1	2	28	1
Female	1	2	0	0	2	3	4	61	7
Unspecified	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	21	
Composite	4	3	2	0	3	5	7	110	6
Cumulative Weighted Total by Ranking	4	10	16	16	31	61	110		

Seventh Preaching Weakness

Pastors need to include more frequent encouragement to spend time on daily personal Bible study and regular family devotions.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Cumulative Weighted Total by Gender	Overall ranking
Male	1	1	0	3	0	1	2	35	6
Female	0	1	1	2	3	4	1	59	6
Unspecified	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	25	
Composite	1	2	1	5	4	6	5	119	7
Cumulative Weighted Total by Ranking	1	5	8	28	48	84	119		

REFERENCE LIST

- Adams, Jay E. 1971. *Pulpit speech*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.
- Allen, Ronald J. 2006. Assessing the authority of a sermon. *Encounter*, 67(1): 63-74.
- _____. 2004. *Hearing the sermon: Relationship, content, feeling*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice.
- Allen, Ronald J., Dale P. Andrews, L. Susan Bond, Dan P. Moseley, and G. Lee Ramsey, Jr. 2004. *Listening to listeners: Homiletical case studies*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice.
- Ammerman, Nancy Tatom, Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney. 1998. *Studying congregations: A new handbook*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
- Augustine, Saint, Bishop of Hippo. 1956. A select library of the Nicene and post-Nicene fathers of the Christian Church. John Chrysostom, saint, d. 407, ed. Philip Schaff. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Bailey, Carol A. 2006. *A guide to qualitative field research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Baron, Laurie. 1997. The CONnects Program at Western Seminary: A new vision for continuing education. *Reformed Review*, 50(3): 215-19.
- Beekmann, Darold H. 1993. Leadership for pastoral development. *Word & World*, 13: 42-50.
- Benedict, G. J. 1996. Continuing education and the pastoral vocation. *Word & World*, 16: 482.
- Bente, Friedrich. 1921. *Triglot Concordia: The symbolical books of the Ev. Lutheran Church*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia.
- Blickensderfer, Elizabeth, et al. 2006. Beyond content and design: Employment processes as the missing link in Web-based distance learning success. In *Web-based learning: Theory, research, and practice*, eds. Harold F. O'Neil and Ray S. Perez, 143-62. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Brooks, Phillips. 1810. *Lectures on preaching, delivered before the Divinity School of Yale College*. London, England: Wells Gardner, Darton.

- Brouwer, Douglas J. 1999. Called to be a loser? A theology of self-improvement for pastors. *Leadership*, 20(3): 31-33.
- Brown, George. 1997. Lifelong learning and ministry. *Reformed Review*, 50(3): 157-66.
- Brown, George, and William Lord. 2000. Where and how religious leaders learn. In *A lifelong call to learn: Approaches to continuing education for church leaders*, eds. Robert E. Reber and D. Bruce Roberts, 89-101. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
- Caemmerer, Richard. 1959. *Preaching for the church*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia.
- Cahalan, Kathleen A. 2006. Strengthening congregational ministry: A report on a program to enhance theological schools' capacities to prepare candidates for congregational ministry, 1999-2003. In *Theological Education*, 42(1): 63-114.
-
- Carter, Stephen J. 1986. Pastors on the grow: Continuing education can improve your ministry. St. Louis, MO: Concordia.
- Cervero, Ronald M. 2000. Building systems of continuing education for the professions. In *A lifelong call to learn: Approaches to continuing education for church leaders*, eds. D. Bruce Roberts and Robert E. Reber, 39-51. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
- Chapell, Bryan. 2005. *Christ-centered preaching: Redeeming the expository sermon*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Cherniavsky, John, and Eric Hamilton. 2006. Issues in synchronous versus asynchronous e-learning. In *Web-based learning: Theory, research, and practice*, eds. Harold F. O'Neil and Ray S. Perez, 87-105. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Chipman, Susan F. 2006. Putting the "advanced" into advanced distributed learning. In *Web-based learning: Theory, research, and practice*, eds. Harold F. O'Neil and Ray S. Perez, 143-62. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Craddock, Fred B. 2002. *Overhearing the gospel*. Rev. Exp. St. Louis, MO: Chalice.
- _____. 2001. *As one without authority*. 4th ed. Nashville, TN: Christian Board of Publication.
- _____. 1990. *Preaching*. New ed. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
- Creswell, John W. 2002. Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cunningham, Sarah. 2006. *Dear church: Letters from a disillusioned generation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

- Dembo, Myron H., Harold F. Junge, Linda Gubler, and Richard Lynch. 2006. Becoming a self-regulated learner: Implications for Web-based education. In *Web-based learning: Theory, research, and practice*, eds. Harold F. O'Neil and Ray S. Perez, 185-202. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Deutschlander, Daniel M. 2008. *The theology of the cross: Reflections on his cross and ours*. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House.
- Frazer, Randy. 2003. *Making Room for Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Fletcher, J. D. 2006. The ADL vision and getting there from here. In *Web-based learning: Theory, research, and practice*, eds. Harold F. O'Neil and Ray S. Perez, 31-53. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Freudenburg, Ben F. 2009. *Family friendly church*. Loveland, CO: Group Publishing.
- Gerlach, Joel. 1994. Revitalizing our preaching. *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 91, no. 4: 273-95.
- Glaeske, Vilas. 2009. Continuing education for public ministers. In the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 106, no. 4 (Fall 2009): 261-74.
- Goldsworthy, Graeme. 2000. Preaching the whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The application of biblical theology to expository preaching. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Greidanus, Sydney. 1988. *The modern preacher and the ancient text*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Heille, Gregory. 1997. Preaching as lifelong learning. *Reformed Review*, 50(3): 179-89.
- Hendricksen, William. 1981. *Gospel of Matthew*. Ada, MI: Baker Academic.
- Hess, Mary E. 2005. Engaging technology in theological education: All that we can't leave behind. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Hull, Stephen, and Kenneth E. Lane. 2006. Infrastructure for Web-based learning. In *Web-based learning: theory, research, and practice*, eds. Harold F. O'Neil and Ray S. Perez, 21-30. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Knowles, Malcolm Shepherd. 1980. The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy. Chicago, IL: Follett.
- Knox, Alan B. 2002. Evaluation for continuing education: A comprehensive guide to success. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Koehler, J. P. 1997. The connected study of Holy Scripture, the heart of theological study (2 Timothy 3:15-17). In *The Wauwatosa Theology*, 99-108. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House.
- Larsen, David L. 1998. *The company of the preachers*. Updated. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel.
- Lewis, C. S. 2001. *Mere Christianity*. San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco.
- Leyrer, Daniel P. 2005. Spiritual growth at the Seminary. *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, 102(1): 6-25.
- Long, Thomas G. 1990. *Witness of preaching*. 1st ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox.
- _____. 1989. *Preaching and the literary forms of the Bible*. Philadelphia, PA: Augsburg Fortress.
- Lord, William. 2000. Providers: Then and now. In *A lifelong call to learn: Approaches to continuing education for church leaders*, eds. Robert E. Reber and D. Bruce Roberts, 52-64. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
- Lowry, Eugene L. 2000. *The homiletical plot: The sermon as narrative art form*. Exp. sub. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox.
- Maehl, William H. 1999. Lifelong learning at its best: Innovative practices in adult credit programs. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mayer, Richard E. 2006. Ten researched-based principles of multimedia learning. In *Web-based learning: theory, research, and practice*, eds. Harold F. O'Neil and Ray S. Perez, 371-90. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Merriam, Sharan B., Rosemary S. Caffarella, and Lisa M. Baumgartner. *Learning in adulthood: A comprehensive guide*. 3rd ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Meuser, F. 1983. *Luther the preacher*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg.
- Meyer, Dale A. 2001. The place of the sermon in the order of service. In *Liturgical preaching: Contemporary essays*, eds. Dean W. Grime and Dean W. Nadasdy, 9-24. St. Louis, MO: Concordia.
- Meyer, John. 1921. Rhetoric. *Theologische Quartalschrift*, 18(2): 144-45.
- Mulligan, Mary Alice, and Ronald J. Allen. 2006. *Make the Word come alive: Lessons from laity*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press.

- Oehler, Carolyn Henninger. 2000. Welcoming the whole person. In *A lifelong call to learn: Approaches to continuing education for church leaders*, eds. Robert E. Reber and D. Bruce Roberts, 237-47. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
- O'Neil, Harold F., and Eva L. Baker. 2006. Web-based learning: Theory, research, and practice. In *Web-based learning: theory, research, and practice*, eds. Harold F. O'Neil and Ray S. Perez, 3-20. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- O'Neil, Harold F., Richard E. Clark, and William L. Bewley. 2006. Heuristics for selecting distance or classroom settings for courses. In *Web-based learning: theory, research, and practice*, eds. Harold F. O'Neil and Ray S. Perez, 133-42. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Peluso-Verdend, Gary E., and Jack L. Seymour. 2005. Hearing the congregation's voice in evaluating/revising the MDiv curriculum: The church relations council. *Theological Education*, 40: 51-62.
- Peters, Ted. 2000. *God—the world's future*. Rev ed. 2nd ed. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress.
- Pieper, August. 1997a. Anniversary reflections. In *The Wauwatosa Theology*, 229-94. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House.
- _____. 1997b. Forward to Volume 10 of the *Quartalschrift*. In *The Wauwatosa Theology*, 109-18. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House.
- _____. 1997c. Scripture study as the special task of the pastor. In *The Wauwatosa Theology*, 119-30. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House.
- _____. 1997d. The despising of grace is the death of the church. In *The Wauwatosa Theology*, 283-312. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House.
- Proceedings of WELS 60th biennial convention*. Milwaukee, WI: Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.
- Purdum, Elizabeth. 1999. Sanctifying ministers through lifelong education. *Dialog*, 38(4): 276-80.
- Queeney, Donna S. 1995. Assessing needs in continuing education: An essential tool for quality improvement. 1st ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Raabe, Paul R. 2004. Preaching like Amos. In *The Pieper lectures: Preaching through the ages*, ed. Chelsea Mayfield, 1-15. Ann Arbor, MI: Sheridan Books.

- Rainer, Thom S. 2008. Surprising insights from the unchurched and proven ways to reach them. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Reber, Robert E. 2000a. Educating out of the future: Where are we headed in continuing theological education? In *A lifelong call to learn: Approaches to continuing education for church leaders*, eds. Robert E. Reber and D. Bruce Roberts, 39-51. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
- _____. 2000b. Linking faith and work: Continuing education for professionals. In *A lifelong call to learn: Approaches to continuing education for church leaders*, eds. Robert E. Reber and D. Bruce Roberts, 120-27. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
- Reed, Eric. 1999. The preaching report card: Today's listeners grade pastors on what they hear from the pulpit. *Leadership*, 20(3): 82-87.
- Roberts, D. Bruce, and William Lord. 2000. Motivated learning and practice: A peer group model. In *A lifelong call to learn: Approaches to continuing education for church leaders*, eds. Robert E. Reber and D. Bruce Roberts, 105-19. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
- Robinson, Haddon W. 2001. Biblical preaching: The development and delivery of expository messages. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Rouch, Mark. 2000. From yesterday to today in continuing education. In *A lifelong call to learn: Approaches to continuing education for church leaders*, eds. Robert E. Reber and D. Bruce Roberts, 19-38. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
- Seymour, Jack L. 2005. Response: "Sleeper transitions" and religious education. *Religious Education*, 100(1): 75-77.
- Stott, J. R. W. 1982. Between two worlds: The art of preaching in the twentieth century. 1st ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Stych, Brad E. 1995. Improving workshop use with ministry professionals. *Christian Education Journal*, 15(2): 45-53.
- Thomas, Frank A. 1997. They like to never quit praisin' God: The role of celebration in preaching. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press.
- Tiefel, James. 1988. Men of God, do your best! *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 85, no. 4: 243-48.
- Tobias, Sigmund. 2006. The importance of motivation, metacognition, and help seeking in Web-based learning. In *Web-based learning: theory, research, and practice*, eds. Harold F. O'Neil and Ray S. Perez, 203-20. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Turner-Sharazz, Diane, Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm, and Ronald J. Allen. 2005. *Believing in preaching: What listeners hear in sermons*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice.
- Walther, C. F. W. 1929. *The proper distinction between law and gospel*. St. Louis, MO: Concordia.
- Wendland, Paul. n.d. *Paul the communicator*, 30. Unpublished essay.
- Wiley, David. 2006. Scalability and sociability in online learning environments. In *Web-based learning: theory, research, and practice*, eds. Harold F. O'Neil and Ray S. Perez, 295-306. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Wilson, Arthur L., and Elisabeth R. Hayes. 2000. *Handbook of adult and continuing education*. Rev sub. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
-
- Wilson, Paul Scott. 1999. *The four pages of the sermon: A guide to biblical preaching*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon.
- Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. 2009. Report and recommendations of the ad hoc commission.
- Zersen, David John. 1998. Finding better ways to clergy competence than mandatory continuing education. *Concordia Theological Quarterly*, 62(3): 209-18.