

**Lutheran Higher Education and the Spirit of Intellectual Freedom**  
**A Year-Long Wild Hope Seminar for Inquiry and Intellectual Exchange**  
**2011-2012 Academic Year, Pacific Lutheran University**  
**Moderator: Douglas E. Oakman, Professor of Religion**

*Christ freed us for freedom. . . . only do not use your freedom for self-service, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." — Paul, Galatians 5:1, 13-14*

*A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none.  
A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant to all, subject to all. — Martin Luther*

A dramatic generational change in faculty at Pacific Lutheran University has been underway since the late 1990s. This institutional development, given the diversity of the new faculty, poses significant challenges to understanding and sustaining the school's Lutheran educational heritage. Many new faculty are not Lutherans and may not come from liberal arts college backgrounds. A sizeable number are not conversant or only vaguely familiar with the specific language and core values of Lutheranism. Some may share in the common perception that church-related schools are at root parochial and anti-intellectual, or that religion inevitably contributes to unenlightened intolerance. An interesting dilemma is posed here, i.e., how peculiar religious institutional identity and tradition is commensurate with secular pluralism.

This present dilemma suggests the need within PLU faculty culture to examine the Lutheran tradition of higher education in order to discern and intentionally continue to reclaim its unique and positive contributions to higher education and the educational mission of PLU. This seminar proposes such an examination, albeit modest, which will include study of specific Lutheran language and core values, the origins of academic freedom, the relationship between faith and learning, and the notion of vocation.

Phil Nordquist has noted at the end of his centennial history of the university (p. 225):

As Christians and non-Christians alike battle the complexities and contradictions of the late twentieth century and search for meaning, it is important for all the constituencies of PLU to remember that the relation between faith and learning has complicated intersections and must be constantly and critically addressed. The process and the relationship are dynamic, not static; anyone who has wrestled with the theology of Martin Luther understands that. In his *Commentary on Galatians* Luther wrote: "Do not imagine that the life of a Christian is rest and quiet; it is a passage and a progress from vices to virtue, from light to light, from virtue to virtue. And if someone is not in transit, do not think that he is a Christian." It is also important for those concerned about higher education to remember that the "Christian faith does provide one of the few secure contemporary vantage points from which to take on the prejudices of modernity." That in itself may be enough to justify the existence of a church-related educational institution.

Seminar participants will be asked to engage intensively in discussions about the distinctive contributions of Lutheranism to higher education. Participants will work to understand key language, core values, and critical issues. Reading, discussions, further research, and the production of short papers will constitute the central work of the seminar. Participants will be asked to consider questions such as the following:

What is central language of the Lutheran tradition? What are its core values? Its chief aims?  
How do this tradition and these values relate to development of modern universities?

How has Lutheran language and values shaped a distinctive notion of higher education?  
What are the strengths of this educational heritage in the Pacific Northwest?  
What critique might be offered to this educational heritage within a pluralistic and global context?

### **Additional seminar background**

*Institutional assumptions.* Pacific Lutheran University is a university of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) system of 26 colleges and universities. PLU is “owned” by 620-some congregations of the ELCA’s Region I. PLU’s Faculty Handbook states that our legal foundation is “church-related.” PLU’s defining documents (FACHB, PLU 2000, PLU 2010, Principles Gen. Ed., Guidelines, etc.) all include a “Lutheran Heritage” reference.

*What this seminar is not.* This seminar is not intended to convert participants to Lutheranism nor to be a simplistic apology for Luther or Lutheranism. It is not overly “presentist,” so requires historical study. *What this seminar hopefully will be:* An academic inquiry engaging sophisticated readings and encouraging lively discussion; an inquiry into the institutional history of Lutheran higher education; an explicit examination of the core language and core values of Lutheran higher education in relation to modern universities; an appreciative presentation as well as a forum for critique and questioning.

*General theses for seminar consideration:* 1) The Lutheran Heritage colors our educational mission in ways that should be understood more fully and embraced self-consciously. 2) Our educational mission is rooted in a tradition that offers a distinctive and constructive basis for engaging the educational needs and aspirations of the globally-conscious 21st century. 3) The Lutheran Heritage provides a distinctive place and strength for engaging in higher education *in the Pacific Northwest*. 4) Lutheranism also provides distinctiveness to PLU in the local marketplace of higher education, which needs to be recognized and cultivated. 5) Our “market” does not necessarily understand us as Lutheran, but responds positively to the high quality of our educational programs that are informed by Lutheranism. 6) The Lutheran Heritage is valuable, worth keeping and cultivating, and worthy of higher prominence at PLU. 7) Some provision needs to be made for serious study of this tradition and for periodic institutional conversations about it.

*Core language and values.* These early Lutheran (Latin) terms— *Sola scriptura*, *Sola fide*, *Sola gratia*, *Solus Christus*—represent core language and will be utilized to organize the seminar topics. These core Lutheran values in higher education—academic freedom, faith, vocation—provide key seminar topics. The moderator is both biblical scholar and student of academic studies of religion generally. This shapes the seminar approach, especially in the readings and consideration of core values and enduring traditions. Luther, e.g., was abiblical scholar, but he was also alive to powerful early modern developments such as Renaissance Humanism (Erasmus). The Reformation itself provides a stunning example of the long-lasting power of religion, as captured in this formulation:

Religion is “(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in [human beings] by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.” — Clifford Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*

### **Bibliography for the seminar**

Besides providing grist for our consideration of Lutheran higher education, a number of these readings provide broader perspective on the history of higher education or key theological terms.

### Required texts

- Armstrong, Karen, *The Spiral Staircase: My Climb Out of Darkness*. Anchor, 2005.
- Borg, Marcus. *Putting Away Childish Things: A Tale of Modern Faith*. HarperOne, 2010.
- Hofstadter, Richard. *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. Vintage, 1963.
- Simmons, Ernest L. *Lutheran Higher Education: An Introduction*. Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1998.
- Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Dover, 2003.

### Various short articles available through LHES Sakai Site

- Ahlstrom, Sydney, "What's Lutheran About Higher Education? – A Critique," LECNA, 1974.
- Armstrong, Karen, "Preface" and "Introduction" *The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism*, vii-xviii. Ballantine Books, 2001.
- Bellah, Robert N., "What Is Axial About the Axial Age?" *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 46, no. 1 (2005): 69-87.
- Bellah, Robert N., and Mark Juergensmeyer, "Rethinking Secularism and Religion in the Global Age," Conversation transcript, University of California, Berkeley – September 11, 2008. Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara; Social Science Research Council, Brooklyn, NY.
- City University of New York, "University Faculty Senate Statement on Academic Freedom: The State of Academic Freedom at CUNY and What We Can Do About It," CUNY, 2009.
- Duling, Dennis C. "Jesus Christ in Rationalism, Pietism, and Romanticism" and "Jesus Christ in the Thought of David Friedrich Strauss," *Jesus Christ Through History*, 133-68 and 177-84. Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1979.
- Giddens, Anthony, "Introduction," to Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1-12(b). Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958.
- Hagen, Kenneth, "Luther, Martin (1483-1546)," *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*, Donald K. McKim, ed., 212-20. InterVarsity Press, 1998.
- Hoye, William J., "The Religious Roots of Academic Freedom," *Theological Studies* 58 (1997): 409-28.
- Kimball, Bruce A., "Foreword," and "Introduction," *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education*, ix-xiv, 1-11. Teacher's College Press, 1986.
- Lodewyckx, A., "Academic Freedom in Germany," *The Australian Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (Sept. 1941), 82-89. OPTIONAL READING
- Luther, Martin, "The First Commandment," Luther's *Large Catechism* in *The Book of Concord*, edited by Theodore Tappert, 365-71. Fortress Press, 1959.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Prefaces" (New Testament, Philemon, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, James, Jude, Revelation) *Luther's Works*, Volume 35, *Word and Sacrament I*, E. Theodore Bachmann, 357-63, 390-411. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1960.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "The Freedom of the Christian," *Martin Luther, Selections From His Writings*, John Dillenberger, ed., 42-85. Anchor Books, 1961.
- McGrath, Allister E., "Luther," *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden, eds., 414-16. SCM Press and Trinity Press International, 1990.
- Metzger, Walter P. "The German Influence," *Academic Freedom in the Age of the University*, 93-138. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1955.
- Morgan, Robert, "Strauss, David Friedrich (1808-1874)," *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*, Donald K. McKim, ed., 364-68. InterVarsity Press, 1998.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard, "Introduction: Theology and Faith, 2. Faith as Confidence and Fidelity" and "Radical Faith—Incarnate and Revealed in History," *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture, With Supplementary Essays*, 16-23 and 38-48. Harper Torchbooks, 1960.
- Nordquist, Philip A., "Athens and Jerusalem," *Educating for Service: Pacific Lutheran University, 1890-1990*, 4-12. Pacific Lutheran University Press, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "The Church," *Inquiry, Service, Leadership and Care: Pacific Lutheran University*,

- 1988-2008, 107-8. Pacific Lutheran University Press, 2008.
- Oakman, Douglas E., "The Perennial Relevance of St. Paul: Paul's Understanding of Christ and a Time of Radical Pluralism." *Biblical Theological Bulletin* 39 (2009): 4-14.
- Schwehn, Mark R., "Lutheranism and the Future of the University," *The Cresset* 73, no. 2 (Advent-Christmas 2009): 6-14. Cited 7 June 2011. Online: [http://www.valpo.edu/cresset/2009/Advent-Christmas/Schwehn\\_A09.html](http://www.valpo.edu/cresset/2009/Advent-Christmas/Schwehn_A09.html)
- Steinmetz, David C., "Luther, Martin (1483-1546)," *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation, K-Z*, John H. Hayes, ed., vol. 2, 96-98. Abingdon Press, 1999.
- Tillich, Paul, "Theology of Education," *Theology of Culture*, 146-57. Oxford University, 1959.
- Toulmin, Stephen, "The Modern Worldview," *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*, 89-137. University of Chicago, 1990.

### Recommended for reference (most on library reserve)

- Cole, Jonathan R., *The Great American University*. PublicAffairs, 2009.
- Gritsch, Eric W., *A History of Lutheranism*. Fortress Press, 2002.
- Hughes, Richard T., and William B. Adrian, *Models for Christian Higher Education: Strategies for Success in the Twenty-First Century*. William B. Eerdmans, 1997.
- Kimball, Bruce A., *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education*. Teacher's College Press, 1986.
- Marsden, George M., *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief*. Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Nelson, E. Clifford, *The Lutherans in North America*. Fortress Press, 1975.
- Nordquist, Philip A., *Educating for Service: Pacific Lutheran University, 1890-1990*. Pacific Lutheran University Press, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Inquiry, Service, Leadership and Care: Pacific Lutheran University, 1988-2008*. Pacific Lutheran University Press, 2008.
- Schwehn, Mark R., *Exiles From Eden: Religion and the Academic Vocation in America*. Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Senn, Frank C., *Lutheran Identity: A Classical Understanding*. Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2008.
- Solberg, Richard W., *Lutheran Higher Education in North America*. Augsburg Publishing House, 1985.
- Whitehead, Alfred North, *The Aims of Education and Other Essays*. The Free Press, 1957.

### Assignments

Each participant will

- 1) Complete all **core readings** for each session (and as much of the entire reading corpus as individual time allows). These are intended to inform as well as to stimulate thought and conversation. Copies of the six books will be provided to participants by Wild Hope.
- 2) Lead one session each semester as **provocateur, discussion stimulant, devil's-advocate, and moderator**. The leader/moderator prepares for distribution (6 copies) a **one-page guide** with questions, observations, basic issues, etc.
- 3) Produce in the spring a **short paper – a critical essay (1000–1500 words)**, that will address in some form or fashion the questions or theses above about Lutheran higher education. Ahlstrom's essay provides one model. (More detail on the paper to come.) These papers will be shared for discussion with all participants as well as the Wild Hope leadership.

More detail about the assignments will be shared at the first meeting. During the summer, participants are welcome to read ahead. Be sure to take careful notes!

## READING PLAN AND TENTATIVE SHAPE OF THE MEETING SCHEDULE

### Scheduled meetings for the fall only, meeting locations still TBD

#### FALL 2011

##### **SOLA GRATIA (BY GRACE ALONE): HOPE & INQUIRY**

September 16

- ☞ Introductions, reviewing the syllabus expectations, seminar leadership
  - ☞ Beginning considerations and conversations: Core language, sensibilities, and values in Lutheranism
- E. Simmons, chs. 1-2**  
R. Bellah, "What Is Axial About the Axial Age?"  
P. Nordquist readings 1 & 2  
M. Schwehn, "Lutheranism and the Future of the University"

September 23

- ☞ Core language, sensibilities, and values in Lutheranism (continued)
- M. Luther, "Freedom of the Christian"  
K. Hagen, "Luther"  
A. McGrath, "Luther"  
D. Steinmetz, "Luther"

September 30

- ☞ How Lutherans see things
- M. Borg, Childish Things**

October 21

- ☞ How Lutherans see things (continued)
- M. Borg, Childish Things**  
**E. Simons, ch. 3**

##### **SOLA SCRIPTURA (SCRIPTURE ALONE): FREEDOM & THE INTELLECTUAL SPIRIT**

October 28

- ☞ Lutheranism, academic freedom, and the modern university
- W. Hoyer, "Religious Roots of Academic Freedom"  
W. Metzger, "The German Influence"  
S. Ahlstrom, "What's Lutheran About Higher Education?"  
[A. Lodewyckx, "Academic Freedom in Germany" OPTIONAL READING]  
CUNY, "Statement on Academic Freedom"

**November 2, Marcus Borg, Knutson Lecture, Lagerquist Concert Hall, 7:30 p.m.**

November 4

- ☞ Lutheranism, the modern university, and American culture
- B. Kimball, "Foreword" and "Introduction"  
**R. Hofstadter**, Part I: Introduction; Part II: The Religion of the Heart

December 2

- ☞ Biblical criticism and anti-modernity
- M. Luther, "Prefaces" (Selections)  
S. Toulmin, "The Modern Worldview"  
D. Duling (excerpt)  
R. Morgan, "Strauss"

December 9

- ☞ The spirit of intellectual freedom and American culture
- K. Armstrong (excerpt on Sakai)  
**R. Hofstadter**, Part IV: The Practical Culture (esp. "Self-Help and Spiritual Technology"); Part V: Education in a Democracy

January (no meetings) – ☞ catch up, integrate, ponder the final paper

**R. Hofstadter**, Parts III; IV; and VI

**SPRING 2012 (meeting time, dates, and location TBD)**

**SOLA FIDE (BY FAITH ALONE): FAITH & REASON**

February (2 meetings) – the dynamics of faith in a Lutheran educational context

**E. Simmons, chs. 5-6**

M. Luther, “The First Commandment”

P. Tillich, “The Theology of Education”

H. R. Niebuhr on faith

March (2 meetings) – the dynamics of vocation

**K. Armstrong, The Spiral Staircase**

**SOLUS CHRISTUS (CHRIST ALONE): LOVE & VOCATION**

April (2 meetings) – Christ and the world

D. Oakman, “Perennial Relevance of St. Paul”

R. Bellah and M. Juergensmeyer conversation

**E. Simons, ch. 4**

A. Giddens, “Weber”

**M. Weber, Protestant Ethic**

**[Concluding Banquet]**

May (1 meeting)

Short Papers, Distributed beforehand for reading and discussion