

Lake Superior Circuit Ad Hoc discussion and recommendations: Section 4-6

Place: Mount Olive Evangelical Lutheran Church

Date: August 18, 2008

In attendance at the meeting:

- Andrew Martens – St. Paul’s, Green Garden/Faith, Marquette
- Paul Doletzky – Salem, Escanaba
- Paul Meitner - Mount Olive, Iron Mountain (vacancy pastor for Grace, Powers/St. Paul’s Hyde)
- Phil Paustian – St. Martin’s, Rapid River
- James Backus-St. John’s, Florence
- Glenn Schwanke – Peace, Houghton
- Ron Leppala – Lay member, Holy Cross, Daggett, MI

#### **Section 4**

Discussion:

*Doletzky:* The committee considered on high school level: gifts also for attitude, effort (character). Seminary: Keep a general balance, not get too focused on specific gifts.

*Meitner:* Don’t want to see academic excellence to be the only standard. Some of our best pastors can be those who did not excel at academics. Also, on high-school level, have someone on-staff (not a new staff-member, but added responsibility) to personally recognize and encourage candidates.

*Martens:* Best scholars often don’t make good pastors. Often the middle ones academically are good pastors. Andy questions us fostering elitism/resentment.

*Glen:* Likes the principle: What do you use to be objective in gauging these gifts? (such as Vallesky’s course “Gifted to Serve”).

*Phil:* Limited in focus. Not designed to encourage people to train for ministry. Just to encourage excellence in their studies.

*Doletzky:* Professors at MLC try to fight idea of “we are here to socialize, not learn” at the college. Students need to be reminded that academics are their top priority.

*Meitner:* We need to recruit a lot of different gifts. Excellence is found in many different ways, not just academics. Broaden the definition of excellence to include more than just “book”.

*Backus:* Concerned with a perceived shifting of expectations of a pastor’s duty: Less emphasis on the biblical qualifications, away from “be a spiritual man of the word.”, to have practical “marketing, administration, delegating...etc (namely business skills). This is showing itself in a critique of our seminary (and generally Synodical) academic program.

*Martens:* Seminary students are desired to be generalists, additional studies should never take place at the expense of that.

*Doletzky:* Don’t want to spend too much time at seminary, creating specialists too early.

*Ron:* Concerned in “gauging”. How do you gauge excellence in the graduate level, who gauges it, and what gauges it? Also in post-seminary, what are the courses we want? How do you determine what additional studies should be chosen? Commented on what churches feel a pastor should be in call meetings (a superman). You get there

and you end up doing too many things outside of the “ministry”. And, do you have time for the post-graduate study?

*Glen:* As far as pastors’ ongoing studies requirements, the Ad Hoc is being as broad as possible.

*Doletzky:* Ad Hoc was looking at a BALANCE, not focusing too much on specifics.

*Ron:* Re: minimum standard requirements: Circuit pastor would evaluate and report on a pastor’s compliance. Who do they report to?

*Meitner:* A problem is not showing up at conferences (poor attendance), etc. This is part of the problem.

*Backus:* If pastors were allowed to spend time being pastors, they would be self-motivated to grow in their education. Imposing regulations from the top will only frustrate some and be ineffective. Also, synod’s responsibility to oversee the training of a pastor ends with the call to the congregation.

### **Returning to 4.5:**

*Doletzky:* Thinks we need general encouragement, and general accountability in your growth. Many guys are faithful, but some are not (in regards to constant growth.). Hard part is to do this without being too specific or law-oriented.

*Martens:* How do we do it?

*Ron:* I don’t know how we get the “minimum standards.” A pastor is already growing in his service in the ministry.

*Doletzky:* examples of why this is needed: Men at congregations 25+ years. From other people on their staff, they were not doing anything to help the congregation or themselves to grow, just doing bare minimum until they retire. No desire or intention of doing bare minimum until they retire. This is part of the issue.

*Glen:* To underscore this, there is an unhealthy tension about brothers stagnant in the ministry. Maybe it is good that a fresh approach be taken.

*Meitner:* Congregation’s role is to review pastor’s ministry. It is vitally important, and is being left out. Also handled by local brothers. Too much “synod pastor” Need laymen to be part of the process.

*Doletzky:* The laypeople need to be made aware of their responsibility to provide constrictive evaluation also.

*Backus:* What kind of growth is needed? Pastor has a library. What’s needed is to get him to use it, not to require him to attend seminars and all these other standards. These can be slacked at anyway. Minimum standards adopted = required.

*Ron:* Congregations have lost their accountability. Congregations think that the *status quo* is just great. The church council makes the decisions. Hard to get the people to be accountable.

Lot of discussion on congregations’ responsibility to do this.

### **On 4.5.1**

*Backus:* This is not synod's responsibility. Once a pastor has left the educational system, he is out of the oversight of the synod's training and is now responsible to the congregation.

*Glen:* This is law-motivated. We all want this, but could it be presented in a better way.

*Doletzky:* How will this affect our faculty at seminary? Don't force em into a box they are not ready for.

## **Section 5**

Discussion:

*Doletzky:* Not much discussion on this, but how much responsibility do we want to give to the COP? They should be the ones to lead/oversee these.

*Martens:* Is this becoming more top-down, rather than the spirit of a grassroots study. Too top-down directed.

*Glen:* Feels that the Ad Hoc recommendations do show what Martens commented. This is somewhat already being done currently, although maybe not with such oversight.

*Meitner:* This was done with the synod-wide study of Christology.

*Backus:* This can be done at a conference level, but should stop at a congregational level. It is overstepping their bounds.

*Meitner:* COP has been given this charge. To him it is more of a stewardship thing.

*Glen:* Ask that the studies be submitted to that good papers and such can be gathered.

*Phil:* All this means is that materials will be made available. We don't have to use them. (but in 4.5. they will be required)

## **Section 6**

Discussion:

*Doletzky:* The first two (6.3 and 6.4) got a lot of discussion. Ron Hillman felt there has been a reluctance for the COP to meet with the Synodical Council, and could use better communication.

*Martens:* From a historical view, this has been being tweaked and changed a lot, sometimes good parts were thrown out with the bad. SC is good in theory. Martens has no problem with 6.3 and 6.4. Convention voted down the thing because it was too top-down. (reference p. 34 top).

*Meitner:* re: synod vs district parish services. Can we be more economical? Sometimes reduplication is happening between synod and district parish services. Also the overall structure of the Synodical Council, Meitner feels it is too large.

*Schwanke:* How do you do this without meeting with the COP? Glen agrees it seems to big to be effective. Could benefit from study.

*Martens:* A larger body keeps a wider, grassroots input, so that may be one good reason to have a larger SC.

*Meitner:* To sum up, nobody has a problem with 6.1-6.5. [agreed].

[no discussion on 6.6-6.7]

*Doletzky:* “There was lengthy discussion at district convention about 6.8-6.10. Long debate on whether the Synod President had authority to veto calling or hiring.”

*Meitner:* Likes it because there is a clear line of accountability, knowing where the buck stops.

*Doletzky:* Agrees exactly with Meitner’s comment above. Martens too.

*Schwanke:* Glen feels that these points DO follow the spirit and recommendation of the 2007 convention.

6.7-6.9 no objections.

6.10

*Martens:* Second Vice-President: There needs to be an appointed person to perform this function for when the situation arises. 1. We have to have someone to serve if the first-vice president can no longer function. 2. When Synodical praesidium needs to meet, we have another voice in that group to lend counsel. Also, he can be assigned duties to carry out on their behalf. He’s available for that.

[this is a part-time position].

#### **Section 4: Pursuing excellence among our clergy**

*In reference to recommendation 4.5.1, page 21 of Ad Hoc report.*

We appreciate the recommendation for continued spiritual and profession growth among our pastors. We appreciate the desire for flexibility in achieving this growth. We are concerned that the language of 4.5.1 referring to “minimum requirements” seems to be too law-oriented. We feel it is not the synod’s responsibility, but rather the congregation’s responsibility, to oversee ongoing education of their pastor.

We recommend that the congregation be encouraged to work with the pastor towards continued spiritual and professional growth. Also, that the congregations be encouraged to work with the circuit pastor as the need arises to encourage the spiritual growth.

*In reference to recommendation 4.3.1 and 4.3.2, page 27 of the Ad Hoc report.*

We recommend that before any implementation of these ideas a feasibility study be done with the faculty of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

*In reference to recommendation 4.1 and 4.2, page 25-26 of the Ad Hoc report.*

We appreciate the recommendations of the Ad Hoc committee to pursue excellence at the high school and college level academic and practical gifts for the ministry. We recommend that the same considerations for college students mentioned in 4.2.2 be considered for the high school students referenced in 4.1.1. We recommend that care be taken not to foster a type of elitism in the ministry and resentment among other

members of the student body. We recommend that the duty of recruitment be added to one of the members of the faculty of the ALHS to foster students for the public ministry.

## **Section 5: Synod-wide Theological Study**

*In reference to recommendation Section 5, pages 29-32 of the Ad Hoc report.*

We endorse the synod's encouragement for theological study on all levels of the synod and we concur with the topics recommended by the Ad Hoc committee.

We recommend that these studies which are done on a circuit and conference level be gathered electronically and made available for distribution after review by the Conference of Presidents. We recommend that the local pastor be entrusted with the time and manner of implementation of the study on the congregational level.

## **Section 6: Structure and Organization**

*In reference to recommendation Section 6, pages 33-37 of the Ad Hoc report.*

We agree with the rationale and recommendations of 6.1-6.9.

With regards to 6.10, we recommend that the office of second vice-president be retained so that he may fulfill any need that arise to function on behalf of the first-vice president and so that when the Synodical praesidium needs to meet, there is another voice in that group to lend counsel.