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Foreword

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FOREWORD

In the fall of 1995 the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon was engaged in a search for a professor in the area of systematic theology. Five candidates were interviewed for the position, and in the course of the interviews each one gave a lecture on a topic that he or she considered significant. The lectures were all stimulating, so stimulating in fact that the idea of presenting them to a wider audience in *Consensus* under the title "Essays by Younger Theologians" seemed a rather desirable course of action. The first four essays presented here come from the search process I have just described. To maintain something of the structure of the original format, these four essays are presented in the same order as they were originally delivered as lectures at the seminary.

The first two candidates to lecture were the Reverend Dr. Gordon Jensen and the Reverend Clayton Beish, both of whom are graduates of our institution: Gordon in 1984 and Clayton in 1977. Gordon did his graduate study in theology at St. Michael's University College, Toronto School of Theology, and received his Ph.D. from there in 1992. He wrote his dissertation on "The Significance of the Cross for Contemporary Political and Contextual Theologies", and his lecture on "The Christology of Luther's Theology of the Cross" builds on ideas from the dissertation. Gordon is currently pastor of the Armena Lutheran Parish, Armena, AB. Clayton Beish has done graduate work in religion at both the University of Manitoba (M.A.) and McGill University, and he is presently working on his Ph.D. dissertation for the latter institution. His interest in Reinhold Niebuhr goes back to his seminary days in Saskatoon, and his discussion of "The Doctrine of Sin and Atonement in Reinhold Niebuhr's Theology" offers both an appreciation and a critique of some of Niebuhr's emphases. In addition to working on his dissertation, Clayton has been a sessional lecturer

in Religious Studies at the University of Saskatchewan and at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon.

The next two candidates were Dr. Ian McFarland and the Reverend Dr. Scott Gustafson. Ian was the only lay theologian in the group and the most junior candidate in terms of experience, having just completed a very distinguished course of theological training which included degrees from Union Theological Seminary, New York (M.Div.), the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (Th.M.) and Yale University (Ph.D.). Scott was the most senior candidate in terms of experience: his career after completing his theological training at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, PA (M.Div.), Catholic University of America, Washington, DC (M.A.) and Drew University, Madison, NJ (Ph.D.) has included extensive teaching and publishing, and he is presently engaged in parish ministry in Reston, VA. Interestingly, these two candidates took the same approach to their lectures, choosing to offer an introductory lecture to the study of theology. Ian's lecture asks "Why Engage in the Discipline of Theology?" and Scott's lecture lays out "The Place of Theology in the Life of the Church". Both essays show the influence of the Yale theologian, George Lindbeck.

The fifth candidate in our 1995 search was the Reverend Sharon V. Betcher, a Ph.D. candidate at Drew University, Madison, NJ. Her lecture on feminist pneumatology drew on material from the Ph.D. dissertation she was writing. When she learned that none of the material from her dissertation could be published before she submitted it, she withdrew her essay from this collection. In place of her essay I have included another essay by a "younger theologian", Darren Dahl, who completed his M.Div. requirements this year at our Seminary. Darren has done considerable work on theology in general and on Dietrich Bonhoeffer in particular while he has been at the seminary. His essay on Bonhoeffer, "Being Together: A Prolegomena to Ethics", adds a significant contribution to this issue and gives notice of a generation of theologians that will make its presence felt in the new millennium. When this issue of *Consensus* appears in the fall of 1997 Darren will be pursuing graduate studies in theology at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

Search processes are very labour intensive—on the part of both the candidates and those who are doing the interviewing

and calling. It is good to see that some of the work that went into that process in the fall of 1995 at our seminary in Saskatoon will now bear fruit for the church at large through this issue of *Consensus*.

John W. Kleiner
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